

political affairs

MAY 1957 • 35 CENTS



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COMMUNIST ACTIVITY TODAY
A PROGRAM FOR MINNESOTA [7-23]

IN MEMORIAM



EDWARD EUGENE STRONG
July 28, 1914—April 9, 1957

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A Theoretical and Political Magazine of Scientific Socialism

Editor: V. J. Jerome

In Memoriam: Edward E. Strong

By NATIONAL COMMITTEE, CPUSA

The National Committee of the Communist Party, on April 14, 1957, issued the following statement:

Edward Eugene Strong died on Tuesday, April 9th at the age of 43. With his passing the Communist Party, the Negro people's movement for freedom and all the democratic forces of the nation have sustained a grievous loss.

Comrade Strong was the living embodiment of all that is finest in mankind's struggle for peace, progress, security and brotherhood. He was a leader and an organizer of great skill, boundless energy and dauntless enthusiasm. He was profoundly convinced that the socialist aspirations of the working class and the liberation of the Negro people were worthy of the deepest devotion and sacrifice. His entire life served as an eloquent testimony to that belief.

From the earliest days of his acquaintance with Jim Crow oppression in his native Texarkana, Texas, Ed Strong dedicated himself unreservedly to the struggle for the freedom of his people. As a youth during the Great Depression of the Thirties, he found the path to that

Re-entered as second class matter January 4, 1945, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. POLITICAL AFFAIRS is published monthly by New Century Publishers, Inc., at 832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y., to whom subscriptions, payments and correspondence should be sent. Subscription rate: \$4.00 a year; \$2.00 for six months; foreign and Canada, \$4.75 a year. Single copies 35 cents.

freedom in the fight for the unity of Negro and white workers, in the world crusade against fascism and colonialism, in the liberating example of new and equal human relations which characterized socialist construction in the Soviet Union and in the militant role of the Communist Party of the United States.

He became the best-known and most eloquent spokesman of Negro youth in the Thirties. As first youth secretary of the National Negro Congress and as a founder and first executive secretary of the Southern Negro Youth Congress, he became a familiar and persuasive figure on college campuses, in union meetings, government halls and public platforms, advocating and organizing for equal rights. In the South he was a prime inspirer and organizer of countless campaigns for the right to vote, for equal education, against the humiliations of segregation and the brutality of the white supremacist police.

Thousands now engaged in daily battles for democracy in the South will recall the pioneering and self-sacrificing leadership of Edward Strong.

As Vice-President and Administrative Secretary of the American Youth Congress, he was one of the pre-eminent leaders, not of Negro youth alone, but all American youth of his generation. The great student anti-war strikes, the mobilization of millions of youth for the American Youth Act which resulted in the National Youth Administration, the firm alliance created between the youth movement and the labor movement, so essential in the struggle to establish industrial unionism—all these achievements bore the unmistakable imprint of Edward Strong's leadership.

Whether leading a fraternal delegation of American youth to Cuba, or to the youth of Madrid in Republican Spain; whether initiating among his fellow GIs of World War II campaigns of material aid for impoverished peasants and workers of India, where he served, or conferring with youth leaders of Europe on how to build a common youth front against Hitlerism—Ed Strong always served the best interests of his people and the whole American people. In his person there merged at the highest level the unremitting fight for the national aspirations of the Negro people and the principled struggle for true solidarity of the working peoples of the world.

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Returning from his service in World War II, Ed Strong became a leader of the Communist Party. As a member of its national committee, as chairman of the Eastern Pennsylvania District, as Southern Regional Secretary, he enriched the Party with the high quality of leadership which had won the admiration and respect of scores of thousands in the youth movement.

He was a teacher whose lessons were all the more effective because they were based on his personal example.

He was a leader and organizer who knew that nothing could be accomplished without collective work.

He was a constant student whose insatiable quest for knowledge to be used as a weapon in the struggle for human dignity and freedom carried him deep into the fields of politics, philosophy, history, literature and science.

His intense hatred of oppression was only matched by his enormous love of the oppressed and his profound faith in their power to change the world.

Above all, he was a man of sterling personal character. He was a fitting prototype of the new Communist man.

The memory of Edward Eugene Strong will long live in the hearts of his people, the working class, and the nation. In the spirit of his dedicated service our Party will go forward to make its essential contribution to the freedom of Negro Americans, the victory of the American working class, a world at peace and the achievement of socialism.

By JAMES E. JACKSON, JR.

(Remarks at the funeral, April 13, 1957, on behalf of the National Committee, CPUSA).

"MAN'S DEAREST possession is life and it is given to him to live but once. He must live so as to feel no torturing regrets for years without pur-

pose; so live as not to be seared by the shame of a cowardly and trivial past; so live that dying he can say 'all my life and all my strength were

given to the finest cause in all the world—the fight for the liberation of mankind.”

Such was a fond quotation of a great architect of the new world in being and everywhere aborning. This noble standard of measure in all particulars was achieved by our beloved brother before whose bier we gather in reverent homage.

From early youth Edward Strong was the bearer of a glorious vision. He dreamed of one community of mankind wherein the greatest happiness of the whole of the people would be the ardent endeavor of every man individually. A confraternity of men and women wherein brothers and sisters would dwell in peace one with the other and partake in full measure of the abundance of man's creation and nature's bounty. And no one would be poor and no one would pain for want of healing balms; where prejudices would be unknown and the spring of life unclouded by the shadows of the threats of wars.

We honor the memory of a man who dearly loved his fellowmen—

above all those uncomforted masses of his own and other peoples most in want and heavily burdened by the inhumanity of the exploiters of the toilers and the oppressors of the despised and unfree.

Here was a modern Gideon among us, who lived his day as a warrior against the hosts of evil, against the enemies of Man. He gave life to whatever he touched, inspired those with whom he worked to be greater than themselves—to be as great as the cause of mankind.

Children he loved, and they loved him, sensing in him the guardian, the protector, the father that he was. For as he loved mankind, he hated its enemies and thrust his own life as a shield against those who would hurt our young, our future.

And so living among us, a man of our time, he embodied the future. His life was a bridge between our unfulfilled todays and our glorious tomorrows. This man honored us with his life and we are here today to honor him with our promise to strive to live as he did—for the freedom and joy of all men.

By NEMMY SPARKS

(Remarks at the Southern California District Convention, Communist Party, Los Angeles, April 13, 1957).

ED STRONG was A Man to Remember. He was a product of the Negro Liberation struggle and of the Com-

munist youth movement at a time when we had almost succeeded in breaking down the quarantine that

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the capitalist class has always sought to build around the Marxist movement in our country. So it was natural that he was a Communist and one of the founders and leaders of the Southern Negro Youth Conference—an organization that helped to lay the foundation for the present mass struggle in the South. Later he was the Party District Organizer in Philadelphia, and currently he was one of the comrades responsible for leading our work in the South.

But one cannot measure the worth of a man only by his achievements. Our achievements are collective. And, as we have had to learn again recently, almost equally important is the *manner* of their achievement; and the things a man strives for and does not achieve.

Yesterday Dorothy Healey, in her report, quoted the *Communist Manifesto* that, "in the struggles of the present, the Communists represent the interests of the future." This is true not only of the role of the Party, of the nature of its work, but it is true also of the Communists themselves. And I have known some in whom this was visible and almost tangible. Ed Strong was one of these.

He seemed to bear the burden of the special oppression of the Negro people as something extra to fight against, which gave him an added touch of pride. He had the quiet dignity which has characterized such leaders of the people as Frederick Douglass and Paul Robeson.

In the past period, when so many comrades were going to jail, and others had to leave their families and social ties, we all developed a far greater appreciation of one another than ever before. We all considered that this would be a valuable legacy from that difficult and unhappy period.

But in the past year, the exposure of the so-called "cult of the individual," the disillusionment over errors, have tended to weaken our appreciation of one another, to weaken the ties of comradeship, and our appreciation of the role of Communists.

We have stated that Communists are ordinary Americans. That is true. We reject the cartoonist's conception of people leading monastic or Spartan lives; that we do not share the joys and sorrows, or the pride of ordinary Americans. We reject the idea that we are not rooted in the American tradition. But there *is* something additional.

Once a man or woman has caught the glimpse of the future—the future of peace, equality, the full possibilities of the development of humanity and of human sympathy—then he is armored to an extent against the greed, the gross acquisitiveness, the dog-eat-dog morality, the moral decay, the imploring of the advertisements all around us for greater and greater self-gratification as the aim of our lives.

It is this glimpse of the future that

distinguishes Communists among other loyal people's leaders, that shapes their work; and often rewards them by building them into its own image, as representatives in our day, of the day of peace, equal-

ity and brotherhood. This is what we have seen among many comrades around us, and this is what we shall especially remember of Ed Strong.

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Communist Activity Today: A Program for Minnesota*

By STATE BOARD AND
NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATION

WE WILL NOT be able to develop our own perspectives from the National Convention decisions unless we take into account the specific way the general problems of the nation are reflected in the economic, social and political life of this region and in the labor, farm and people's movements of this area.

Our policies and work must be tailored to fit our region, our problems and our own state Party. They should take into account our limited resources and make the best use of them.

Our Party must be concerned with local, community and state issues equally as much as the local labor and farm movements of which we are a part. We should help to show the connection between these local issues and the problems of the nation as a whole and their relation to the struggle against monopoly.

We urge that just as the National Convention stressed the need to apply Marxism to American conditions we must especially in the next year or two apply ourselves to this

* This Report was prepared prior to, and for the consideration of delegates attending, the State Convention, held early in April. It was unanimously endorsed by the Convention.

task by studying our own part of America, Minnesota and the Upper Midwest Region.

A PROGRAM FOR MINNESOTA

We recommend that the Communist Party State organization should prepare and publish a program for Minnesota some time in 1958 (at the latest for the 1959 Legislative Session). This program should stress unity and agreement of all labor, farmer forces—but especially of the Left, of radicals and socialist-minded people. It should deal as comprehensively as we can with the main economic and social problems of our state economic growth and resources development, conservation, reform of state government, etc., in broad outline.

We should project such a program from the point of view of Socialism, but not in opposition to the policies of the farmer-labor movement. Our program should help extend, round out and give long range perspective to the labor and farm movement in the struggle against monopoly domination of the state and nation.

THE MINNESOTA CENTENNIAL

We urge participation in the Minnesota Centennial celebration being organized for next year by a special committee. We should encourage the labor-farmer movement to join in this observance. May 1958 will be the 100th Anniversary of Minnesota Statehood.

This next year will commemorate 100 years of people's struggle to make this state a better place to live in, to preserve and develop its natural resources and beauties, to protect the people from the timber and land thieves, railroad sharks, grain speculators, steel-trust representatives, open shoppers, and others who have tried to run the state to suit themselves.

We will recall the early pioneers who opened the land, forests and mines. But we will emphasize the political pioneering of Ignatius Donnelly, Charles Lindbergh, Sr., Henry Teigan, the LeSueurs, Floyd B. Olson and many others yet unrecognized for their work.

We hope there also will be a progressive People's Centennial Committee that will use the balance of 1957 to organize this kind of commemoration and with which we will be able to cooperate. Our unique task should be to record the depth and breadth of radicalism, socialist aspirations and Marxist activity during these hundred years and to project their continuation and development into the years ahead.

The progressive contributions of our own Party should be related as part of the whole picture, in particular the important work of Communists in organizing the unorganized workers of the Twin Cities, Duluth, the Range and the lumber camps; our contributions to the big unemployed and farm movements of the 30's; our pioneer work in battling for civil rights; our acknowledged part in the social achievements of the Farmer-Labor administrations.

We would urge that this be done modestly and not boastfully and that we not hesitate to be critical of our past errors. Many of the seeds of present misunderstandings and divisions between us and others lie in the past and it might help overcome them if we frankly face all the facts of the past.

MINNESOTA ECONOMY AND MONOPOLY GROWTH

The National Resolution makes a good beginning in analyzing the present economic situation and the gigantic growth in recent years of monopoly and its influence in American life.

This opening part of the National Resolution should be a point of departure for an extensive examination of the local situation.

No doubt we find here the same conditions of "boom" economy. Also there are the same basic factors making for economic crisis.

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We find widespread illusions of prosperity among the workers, but also a more marked alarm over growing inflation and signs of economic downturn.

Farm discontent remains at a high level, for while farm income in Minnesota in 1956 was slightly up from 1955 the trend is to deterioration of the position of the family farmer.

The very substantial growth of Minnesota economy and industry in recent years needs study. In this connection the "Build Minnesota Program" of the DFL should be looked into. Governor Freeman's recent inaugural message has an outlook toward continued growth of the state economy and population and a consequent multiplying of social and economic problems.

The basic question is: will the future of this state lie in the hands of big business and monopoly or will it be determined by the people?

Over the past years we have had a substantial economic expansion and also a growth of monopoly. Part of this development is due to extensive capital investment in those industries connected with technological development as well as war production (Honeywell, Remington Rand, Northern Pump). Part is a radical extension of food processing in canning, beet sugar, poultry, etc., in smaller cities.

Capacity mining operations and taconite development has elevated

the Mesabe Range from a "depressed" to "boom" area.

Some manufacturing operations have held up well, especially in industrial products like Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company. Many small outfits both in consumer goods and machine manufacture have merged in the recent period with national chains or become in part "feeder" plants dependent on the big manufacturers. Big chain stores and "shopping centers" backed by Twin City capital have mushroomed all over the state, driving many local merchants off "main street."

The increased monopoly grip on local industry is apparent in many ways. Speed-up, increased automation, "teamwork," are sweating the workers harder and haunting them with the prospect of being displaced by machines.

The profit statements of Honeywell and Minnesota Mining lead the parade of record profit-taking. But the average working-class family finds that it takes two wage-earners to support the family and meet the rising cost of living.

At the negotiating table the unions deal more and more with chain units rather than small independents.

Construction has been at an all time high but is falling off in home building. The outlook seems good for a high rate of industrial, commercial and highway construction. But building trades and related employment will start sliding down-

ward fast unless home building is vastly expanded. The last months (with employment generally at a seasonal high) saw alarmingly high unemployment in Twin City building. Not all this unemployment is seasonal or due to slowdown in building; in fact, much of it is a result of speed-up and mechanization at a startling rate.

Some economists consider that the economy of this area is not as dependent on war economy as some regions. That is probably true in respect to direct armaments contracts, yet it would be incorrect not to see that the war economy and government spending are big factors in the local picture.

The Twin Cities have become one of the nation's major financial and insurance centers. A powerful grouping of capital has emerged here especially around the billion dollar Northwest Bancorporation. Tens of thousands of unorganized workers are now employed in this financial and insurance business. They need trade-union organization.

The growing monopoly stranglehold on the economy and business of the area emanates not only from the centers of Eastern capital. The rapid growth of monopoly concentration locally appears to be based upon the economy of the Upper Midwest region.

Nowhere is the expansion of monopoly so marked as in agriculture. Monopoly is developing rapidly in agriculture, from actual production

on corporation and "chain" farms to control of food processing through sale of food products in giant chain store operations and virtual control of the food market. *This is the root cause of the plight of the small and family farmer*, and even of the trend towards depopulation of some of our rural communities.

Monopoly has pretty well swallowed up the means of public communication, the area being dominated by the *Minneapolis Tribune* as far as newspaper coverage is concerned. The *Trib* strongly fights the battles of local business interests whether it be against the outside investors who want to "muscle in" or for a tax program benefitting the big banks and chain stores. But it must be said that the *Tribune* has generally voiced the view of that section of business that is anti-McCarthy and is critical of some aspects of administration foreign policy.

ECONOMIC PROGRAM

The economic outlook, employment and automation are big subjects of discussion in the local unions, shops, on the job and at the family dinner table. There has been some increased activity also among workers of some unions especially around the issues before the State Legislature of increased unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation and minimum wages.

We should get into this discussion and help take the lead in stimulating

rank and file interest and local union action. The *National Trade Union Resolution* will be of real assistance. *We also propose a State Party Labor Conference for the near future.*

The labor movement is beginning to develop an overall economic program, but it is not moving at the rank and file or local union level. Above all, the strength of the united labor movement will depend on its reaction to the economic issues. Among the major questions are introduction of *GAW*, the *30 hour week, extended social security, local housing and school construction, improved state unemployment compensation* and a *higher minimum wage*. Currently, especially in the building trades the workers are in a mood to fight for very substantial wage increases and other benefits.

Our members should participate 100 percent around these questions and the agreed upon program of the local unions. Their emphasis should be in helping stir up rank and file support to the fight labor must make.

What special contribution can our Party make?

Perhaps we should *put the emphasis in the Party program and propaganda on raising the long-range questions related to the outlook of increased automation and the significance of the shorter work week* (6 hour, 5 day week or 8 hour, 4 day week), which along with the Guaranteed Annual Wage, shapes up as

the major demand of the working class in the period ahead.

We also recommend that in the near future our state Party organization work out, publish and widely distribute, a basic program on upper Midwest agriculture directed to the family farmers.

A lead by our Party in projecting a more basic analysis will meet with a warm response from the ranks of the farmers and will greatly strengthen and make more militant the work of the 39,000 members of the Minnesota Farmers Union.

One special job we have to work on is to show that the family farmer can't get along without labor as an ally in the fight against monopoly. The farm leadership has relied heavily on the so-called "farm bloc" and "log rolling" tactics in Congress that actually made the Northern wheat, corn and hog farmers dependent on Dixiecrat votes in getting government price supports and other aid. The uneasy alliance of Dixiecrats, western Republicans, midwest Democrats and Republicans of the so-called farm bloc can't command a majority in this Congress. The FU leaders of Minnesota and the Dakotas are weeping bitter tears of disillusionment—especially as Democratic votes from the big cities where labor is strong, defeated their recent proposed corn program.

The lesson of the need for Farmer-Labor unity based upon independent political action—rather than reliance on either of the old parties

—could not be more drastically proven.

Our Party should above all agitate and work in every rural community for a real understanding now of the need for a labor-farmer bloc against Big Business and the special interests that men like Ezra Benson represent.

THE ANTI-MONOPOLY COALITION AND THE DFL

Monopoly control of political life is, however, being challenged in Minnesota. The labor and farm movement today exert substantial influence upon Twin Cities affairs through "labor" administrations, upon the state political situation through the DFL Freeman administration and "liberal" control of the house, and upon most of the Minnesota Congressmen on many issues.

Yet big business won't give up its two-party monopoly so readily. It is trying to bring the GOP back into state office. But at the same time a consistent and subtle effort is being made to influence and infiltrate the DFL. The endorsement of J. Cameron Thomson's tax program by Freeman and even top level labor and farm leaders was a case of just that.

The labor and farm movement have to fight for every iota of influence they exert over the DFL party; when they press forward on issues there are results as in the current legislative session where labor's eco-

nomic and social program is getting substantial backing.

This growing labor-farmer alliance—which is the backbone of DFL strength—is not yet organizing and moving with enough independence in developing a sharper and more conscious fight against monopoly. And it tends to follow the office-holders and officialdom rather than leading the DFL.

We have for some time agitated for greater independence and a more conscious anti-monopoly outlook. Only slow progress is being made. The fact is many Communists and Left-wingers still are not actively participating in the mass organizations of the people. *Yet the rank and file workers and farmers will, and do move independently when they sense important issues as in the Presidential primary of last year where Kefauver swept the election.*

Let's see if we can work out more clearly our own policy and role.

LESSONS OF THE TAX FIGHT

The biggest state-wide battle between monopoly and the people in many years has been over molding the character of Governor Freeman's tax program. We entered the battle late, it must be admitted, and we haven't done all we could have done, yet we ought to learn some important lessons from the experience.

The idea of making an over-all analysis to start with, was sound.

Nobody, least of all our Party, can do anything effectively without the facts at our command. The legislative conference we held and the published Analysis and Statement did equip many of our members with adequate information.

Our Statement was submitted to the House Tax Committee, the daily and labor newspapers in Minnesota, liberal legislators, labor and farm leaders and a substantial number of other labor-liberal individuals interested in such matters. Apparently it was considered by many to be informative and useful. We feel it had a positive effect.

Governor Freeman seemed to feel otherwise. He is quoted in the March 9 *Minneapolis Star* as saying:

I have seen the 16 mimeographed pages issued by the Communist Party of Minnesota, in criticism of this tax package. I have noted the objections put forth by the other extreme on the Right.

I am not sure what it means when the Communist Party and the Taxpayers Association agree in their opposition to a program that I recommend. I assure you that, although I do not believe in guilt by association, I have frequently experienced opposition from both of these groups. Their opposition does not disturb me unduly. But I should be greatly disturbed if it should turn out that the extremists at either end would prevail.

First, let us say, the Governor's remarks are a welcome departure from the McCarthyism of recent years;

our country is returning to political sanity if *everybody* will recognize our right to speak up and to be heard in the public debate over all questions. We on our part must discuss these issues and enter into the battles around them in order to win recognition and support for our views.

Now, what does it mean that the Left-wing Communist Party and the reactionary Taxpayers Association both oppose the same tax program?

Here the Governor is a bit wrong. They don't "agree in their opposition." The "tax package" is admittedly a "compromise."

The Taxpayers Association probably thinks the "compromise" is not favorable enough to all big business. For instance, the Thomson report proposed to close a tax evasion loop-hole (alternative allocations formula) under which Minnesota Mining has evaded several hundred thousand dollars in taxes each year. MM is squealing. The Taxpayers Association also might prefer a sales tax right now to the prospect of one in two years!

The Communist Party, on the other hand, said practically all the concessions went to the big business interests to the extent of shifting the tax load, and while there were positive recommendations of which we approve, the main underlying approach was wrong. We urged its drastic revision to introduce some real "equity" and to prevent it from being a means of shifting taxes off the "ability to pay" rule.

The Taxpayers Association is centering its fire on Freeman and the DFL administration, building up the opposition for 1958.

The Communist Party is *not* centering its fire on Freeman but against the big banks and chain-store interests who had the major hand in writing the program and are turning the heat on Freeman for concessions to monopoly.

We say flatly that *if the Governor does not have opposition from the Left and the rank and file of labor to the reactionary pro-Big Business features of this program it is going to pass as the most lop-sided and reactionary tax program this state has ever seen!*

It is time to point out what used to be ABC in the labor movement: that when there is no strong Left-wing pushing for a program all the watering down and compromising comes as concessions to the special interests.

This is one reason why our role in the promotion of a conscious anti-monopoly outlook and overall broad analysis of the issues involved in this and other struggles is so important to the *whole* labor-farmer-liberal movement, even to Governor Freeman.

The other big question is getting rank and file support and action. Governor Freeman's endorsement of the Thomson Tax Report is not solidifying the labor-farmer alliance and DFL base, though it will win some friends among the bankers.

The labor opposition to the tax plan, and our own Party have been weak in taking the fight to the rank and file. Outside of the Minneapolis Central Labor Union a number of DFL ward clubs have discussed the issue and registered opposition, but by and large the issues have not been heard by most local unions or by a large number of rank and file workers. The *Worker* article too had limited circulation.

Can we devise more effective ways to stimulate activity by our clubs on this and other questions?

The positive side of the tax fight lies in the victories won. The tax package as introduced eliminated the reactionary compulsory joint return and the cut in medical expense deductions. More victories can be won yet in this session—or in the special Legislative session that is almost sure to follow.

The independent position of some sections of labor has been greatly strengthened. But the same show of independence has placed strains on over-all labor unity that could be harmful. These tendencies should be overcome by finding basic points of agreement among *all labor* on such questions as no sales taxes, no cut in ore taxation, etc., or on other legislative issues where *joint action by all labor* must be improved.

As far as we are concerned, the tax fight is showing us how to regain our position as spokesmen of the Left-wing of the labor and farm movements. Only a *concrete expos-*

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ure of monopoly and its role is effective. Information and understanding of issues is decisive for the outcome of debates and decisions in the labor movement. In a small way we have been able to contribute something special, but only to the degree that our own members have participated in and understood the issues.*

THE PEACE ISSUE

Our delegation to the National Convention feels the national resolution is vastly improved with respect to foreign policy along lines we were seeking to formulate at the first session of our state convention.

It should help us look into the questions of developing a wider peace movement in this area, and aid the participation of individual Communists in peace discussions and action. . . .

What is the significance of the audience of 11,000 in Minneapolis to hear Walter Lippmann, who generally advocated a peaceful settlement of the German question and the cold war? And of the *Labor Review* appeal to all labor to turn out to hear Eleanor Roosevelt in order to help stop atomic war?

These sentiments perhaps explain

* Since the above was written, Governor Freeman, apparently recognizing the impossibility of passing the program for a "favorable tax atmosphere to business," sharply reversed himself, and new bills incorporating substantial relief to the individual taxpayer were introduced. Opponents of the original tax scheme consider this an important victory, for which the Minneapolis Central Labor Union merits major credit.

why hysteria over the events in Hungary did not sweep through the local labor movement and why speeches by Carl Ross at the University and Clarence Hathaway before the Saturday Lunch Club got good hearings on this issue at the height of those developments.

Those of our members who attended the Minneapolis AFL-CIO Labor Conference on Human Rights, or who have heard United Nations Association speakers at their unions, point out that peace discussions are getting down to the local union level, a new trend.

The U.N. Association, headed by York Langton in this region, has stimulated interest in and support to the U.N. in the labor movement at a moment when a solution through the U.N. to the Near East crisis is imperative and when new disarmament discussions have started in London before the UN sub-committee.

It is incumbent upon us to participate in this renewed discussion of foreign policy, and while expressing the views of the Left, give support wholeheartedly to all constructive activities implementing a program for peaceful settlement of international disputes and relations.

Likewise, some have pointed out the clear-thinking discussion of foreign policy, and peace action on issues like H-Bomb control, that are stimulated by pacifist groups as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Our own clubs spend too little time on current international developments. We are not informing our members well enough on these issues, and encouraging them to participate more fully in these movements. Those of our members who have participated in trade union and other discussions have had the experience of getting a warm reception, and finding many others share their opinions.

DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING, AND CIVIL RIGHTS

We call attention to the special Resolution of the National Convention dealing with the Negro freedom movement and the fight for civil rights. It should be considered part of this report and ought to be a subject of special discussion in each club.

Your State Board and National Convention Delegation recommend that for our Party the emphasis in the Twin Cities in the coming months (including in the Minneapolis City Election Campaign) shall be on the fight to eliminate discrimination in housing.

This campaign should:

1) Relate local activity on civil rights to the key issue before the nation at this moment: the enactment of a civil rights program by Congress over the threats of a Dixiecrat filibuster.

2) Lend full support to the plans

for action on discrimination in housing now being developed by a large number of organizations in both St Paul and Minneapolis.

3) Concentrate on helping mobilize the rank and file of labor, various local unions, labor committees on human rights, central bodies, etc.

4) Put emphasis on *clearing out the slums* and *rebuilding* the communities that have been allowed to deteriorate in our cities. Ending discrimination in housing, ghetto conditions and slums requires *large-scale construction of private and public low-cost housing* that is open to all without discrimination.

5) State and bring to the public the views of our Party on this issue, and offer where necessary, our own recommendations. We particularly want to relate the local issue to the historic national fight for civil rights, and the overall interests of labor and the people in the fight against monopoly.

This Convention should urge each club to work out its own modest and practical proposals for its members in its community.

What is the situation?

In St. Paul a public ordinance banning discrimination in the sale, rental, financing, use and occupancy of all property and setting up a city commission on housing discrimination has been prepared through the work of a local Citizens Committee, the NAACP, and other Negro organizations and interested citizens.

Our Party members in St. Paul have lent much active support already to this campaign.

In Minneapolis the Joint Committee for Equal Opportunity, co-ordinating the work of some 60 local organizations, has reached agreement on the preparation of an ordinance along the lines of the St. Paul draft.

A State Bill (House File No. 1454) has been introduced at the request of the Governor's Committee on Human Relations and various state organizations.

There is some dissatisfaction with the State Bill because it provides no commission and leaves only to the courts the enforcement of the new law, but it does strongly and clearly define no discrimination in housing as a civil right, defines acts of discrimination and provides penalties.

It is absolutely correct that the *main intent* of the state and local laws now proposed is to eliminate discrimination by the *real estate dealers, banks and mortgage companies*, who sell homes, etc. These are the big business interests who control, own and finance the bulk of housing, primarily enforce discrimination, and derive enormous profits from the situation both in high ghetto rentals and extra high prices to Negro home buyers.

However, there is some question as to whether the state bill is weakened too much by exempting from its penalties "a residence occupied by the owner wherein *four* or less sleeping rooms are available" or

"a homeowner personally selling his own personal residence." These exceptions to the law do not appear in the St. Paul draft ordinance, which further provides a Commission to which *any citizen or organization* can present a complaint for action.

Our view would be that the State Bill must be supported with recommendations to strengthen by amendment—and the remaining legislative weeks must be used to build up pressure for its enactment.

We urge simultaneous action in the Twin City campaign for local laws. It is fruitless to speculate on the merits of local or state action first—neither adoption of the State Law nor local ordinances will come without an articulate state-wide demand from local unions, local farm organizations, etc.

No other issue reflects such a fundamental change of local attitude and opinion over the past years as does the general question of civil rights, integration and desegregation.

We look around and find that Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth and the State have passed FEPC laws. The state Council of Churches and NAACP organize moral and material aid to the embattled Negroes of the South. A Negro is elected head of the state ministers' conference which heard the Rev. Luther King. City Councilman Milt Rosen was properly rebuffed in St. Paul for his insulting pro-segregation re-

marks in the South with even Governor Freeman and Senator Humphrey sending messages to the protest meeting at which the Rev. Shuttleworth of Birmingham spoke. The recent AFL-CIO Minneapolis Labor Conference on Human Rights was a landmark for labor on this issue.

Citizens from one end of the state to the other were shocked on reading Carl Rowan's recent articles on the status of our Indian citizens.

But: How do the deeds and the facts square with the new consciousness of civil rights as a basic issue in the South and North?

The crowded slum conditions breeding disease are still there! Only with this change: that thousands more of Indians, Mexicans, and Negroes fleeing jimcrow terror in the South, are being crowded into the same restricted and discriminated areas—while few indeed are finding decent homes (even at robbery prices) when they want to move or are dispossessed by "slum clearance" in the Glenwood area or by new "super freeway" plans! Our growing suburbs are a disgrace in respect to fostering discrimination—a color line at the city limits that Negroes are not supposed to cross!

We shall have to look into all aspects of the specific situation. We will have to show how this ties up with the still all-too-prevalent discrimination in employment that even restricts the natural growth of our population because refugees from

the white citizens council terror in the South don't get the facilities for finding jobs and homes here that "refugees" from Hungary do.

The fact is that enactment of the FEPC State law and Fair Employment ordinances in Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth has not eliminated job discrimination. This fact was pointed out at the Minneapolis Labor Conference on Human Rights.

These laws will not substitute for action by the labor movement in seeking out specific instances of discrimination in hiring, apprenticeship and upgrading or in demanding that employment be opened to Negroes, Indians, etc., in lily-white shops, companies and offices. These state and local commissions should be pushed to act, but the labor movement and the Labor Committee on Human Rights must insist on enforcement of these ordinances to end discrimination wherever it appears.

Our members who attended the Labor Human Rights conference or read Senator Humphrey's fine appeal for action on the Civil Rights Program he is sponsoring in the Senate (*Labor Review* of Feb. 28th) have noted the emphasis placed there on civil rights as a "moral issue." It is that.

But we Marxists should show labor further how its whole immediate and future interests rest upon winning the fight for Negro rights and democratization of the South. Civil rights legislation, that will make possible the eventual ousting

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from Congress of the anti-labor Dixiecrats, must be passed in this Congress by *Northern votes*.

Labor is fighting in alarm against new anti-labor legislation and anti-labor moves thinly disguised as "investigations" of corruption. It should not allow a diversion like this from the civil rights issue. Labor should see that *new horizons for labor and welfare legislation*, for ending Big Business domination of the government, yes, for Socialism, can be opened up by a defeat to the Dixiecrats.

We suggest that the keynote for helping prod labor and others into action be borrowed from the testimony of Senator Humphrey (*Labor Review* of Feb. 28th) before the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights: "No conscientious observer who has ever examined the American scene has failed to put his finger on our greatest national weakness: the gap between our pretensions and our performance in the field of civil rights."

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

The National Convention helped a great deal to give our Party a "new look" in the eyes of labor and the people.

J. Edgar Hoover is screeching because *the non-McCarthy version* of what we are is breaking through. The *Minneapolis Tribune*, for instance, reported on March 11th, in a

front-page story regarding our new Party Constitution, that anyone who "conspires or acts to subvert, undermine, weaken or overthrow any institution of American democracy" will be expelled from our Party; that "we advocate a peaceful, democratic road to Socialism through the political economic struggles of the American people within the developing constitutional process"; that the Party is "an American working class organization which bases itself upon principles of scientific socialism"; and that all members are obliged to fight "all forms of national oppression, national chauvinism, discrimination and segregation, against all ideological influences and practices of 'racial' theories, such as white chauvinism and anti-Semitism."

These are not new principles to our Party. But this Convention did place them more clearly. It also forcefully rejected the myth that Marxism is "alien" to America or that our Party is subject to "foreign control."

The main thing is that the policies and decisions of the National Convention already have had an impact favorable to our Party—and *these policies, when explained to the people and put into practice by the Party, can vastly improve the relationship between the labor movement and our Party.*

It is not enough for us Communists to decide that we are a part of the mainstream of labor in our

country. The problem is to cut through the smog of McCarthyism to persuade the labor movement to listen to our views and to judge us by our actions.

We can't do this by talking among ourselves, but only when we are in contact with the people and actively participate in the labor, farm and other movements.

Certainly it can't be done by a "wait and see" attitude. When we get into motion the results are interesting—what could look sillier, for instance, than the request of the Republican Women's Club of St. Paul that the Communist Party should be "investigated" because it has a "legislative program" and is "lobbying" for it at the state capitol!

THE NUB OF OUR PROBLEMS

The considerably more favorable situation for our Party at present, nevertheless, contains startling contradictions:

1) There is a great deal of public curiosity about our Party and sympathy both for our stand on many immediate issues and our Socialist goals. We are well beyond the 50 percent mark of our goal of 250 *Worker* subs! Yet our ideas and opinions are not reaching even the most advanced and militant people through the *Worker*, Party statements, literature or through word of mouth.

2) Public halls like the CIO Hall

are practically closed to the Party itself. But we can get a hearing before the public as shown by the fact that Party and Left speakers have spoken on other platforms including the University socialist club and YWCA, the Saturday Lunch Club, and the Twin City Labor Forum symposium.

3) Many individual Communists are accepted in the trade unions, farm and other groups and have a high standing among their friends, neighbors and fellow shop workers. Yet they are not in a position to publicly state their Party affiliation even if it is often tacitly "understood."

4) Socialism is a respectable word in wide labor circles and is constantly discussed among many rank and file workers or farmers. But public meetings or gatherings where Socialist ideas about any subject can be heard and discussed (and to which the most progressive people may go or be invited) are not a regular feature of labor-political life in our state.

5) Finally, thousands of rank and file workers and farmers agree with our position on current issues. A wide basis for unity and action by our Party with this rank and file force exists. This was shown in the response to our State Tax analysis, experiences on some other state Legislative issues and in the St. Paul campaign on discrimination in housing. By and large we are not reaching enough people consistently with

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the kind of *basic analysis* of issues and program they expect from us nor effectively widening the *organized base* of our Party among them.

Call these points "contradictions," problems or questions. It doesn't matter. But they are the nub of the things that need to be solved in the area of Party activity, propaganda and organization.

Their solution calls for developing further the "new outlook" of our Party projected by the Convention. The State Board recommends some points of emphasis:

HOW WE CAN BEGIN TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS

First, we should fight harder for our right to be heard especially because we have new things to say. McCarthyism will not be really down and out until *our* right to speak and participate in legitimate political and labor activities is established.

We should utilize every avenue open to Party spokesmen for a platform before other groups and cooperate in every public forum or discussion that will get us a hearing before the people.

Our right to hold meetings free of molestation and surveillance by the FBI, our right to use halls that are available for public rental to other groups, our right to circulate newspapers and literature without interference by the FBI *will be established by the fight to do these things.*

Second, we should state our views

and circulate them widely on important questions of general interest. The objective should be primarily to influence and move the rank and file workers and farmers and the most militant and Left among them.

This should be done on the issues of discrimination in housing and on the farm question to begin with. Our budget and method of work should allow for far more such activity.

The key question for regularly and systematically reaching people with a Marxist analysis of daily events is through the circulation of the *Worker*. *The proposed plans for Worker circulation are decisive especially from now to the annual Freedom of the Press Picnic next July.*

Third, we should consistently develop a new attitude toward and cooperation with others outside of our Party who hold socialism as a goal.

Socialist thinking is a broad current in the labor movement even now, but it lies very dormant and lacks vitality. In our opinion the Communist Party and individual Communists will enjoy a *legal, open and recognized existence* in our trade unions and farm groups *only as the whole Left and socialist current grows stronger and exerts more influence upon the farmer-labor rank and file.*

The recent Forum at which Professor Sibley, Mike Baker, Vince Dunne and Carl Ross spoke was a

constructive experience. The *Tribune* was right in saying that it was the biggest radical gathering in a decade. We wish to benefit from that experience by cooperating in more public discussions of many issues from a Left and Socialist view. They could be developed in both the Twin Cities and other areas.

A few thoughts are in order on this, however. There is no point in sharing sectarianism among Left groups—their common problem is to get a hearing from the wide mass of labor-farmer circles. Hence these things should develop, not just be repetitions.

Likewise, major attention should be devoted in this regard to the youth, but particularly is it necessary to win participation of labor rank and file and socialist-minded leaders.

Further, while we have shown that we will meet with the Socialist Workers Party in public discussion or even in co-participation in some events, we do not agree with the effort they now make to project their own concept of a specific program for socialist unity, an effort that can only be premature and even divisive.

Nor is it our view that the chief function of socialists now is the organization of discussions on Socialism, which is the view of some of those with whom we will join in discussions, symposiums and debates.

Our view is that the socialist-

minded people must be the most energetic and active fighters on immediate issues if they are to get support for their socialist or Marxist ideas. We must certainly overcome our past failure to propagate Socialism (or to state a socialist view of current issues) but we stress that it is the struggles of today for democratic advance that open the door to socialism tomorrow.

Again, it is clear that among Left people a debate will take place on electoral tactics—and there is not yet, even here in Minnesota, a basis for joint electoral work. The Left-wing, in our opinion, must take part *within* the existing labor-farm political movement in all struggles for a better policy, more independence and eventual political realignment. To advocate, for instance, a boycott of labor or other candidates simply because they appear on the DFL ballot would be unthinkable to us, yet it is common enough to the Trotskyites and others in radical circles. In the discussion within the Left it is incumbent upon us to outline and win support for our concept of a people's anti-monopoly coalition.

ROLE OF THE MARXISTS

Our National Convention did a lot to clear up the relationships between the mass movements of labor and the people who work essentially for reform of capitalist society and the movement for socialism

which strives ultimately to abolish present social conditions.

It stresses that it is incumbent upon the Socialist or Marxist current to participate in and support these movements, including seeking all possibility of cooperation with their leaders.

At the same time it shows that the Marxists need to work always toward giving perspective and direction, especially to the more advanced and militant people within these movements, and to win them for adherence to the cause of Socialism.

These are Marxist principles—that Communists in all honesty and sincerity support every movement for reform and democratic advance, that we don't seek to "bore from within" or "capture" trade unions or mass movements, that we want only the legitimate and reasonable right to advance ideas, to argue and persuade others of the validity of Socialism and scientific socialist analysis of contemporary problems.

This emphasis upon Communists being part of the "main stream" does

not run contrary to tradition in the labor-farmer movement.

Socialist thought and Marxist individuals and leaders have been a creative part of the labor movement here for more than half a century.

That many of the rank and file and some leaders of these movements were dedicated to Socialism made them more devoted and effective members and leaders. This is pointed out by Robert Morlan in his excellent book, *Political Prairie Fire*. Among the people who best exemplified this, he describes the role of Henry Teigan, life-long, clear-thinking socialist, leader of the Non-Partisan League and Farmer-Labor Party, former Congressman from the Minnesota 3rd District, who is remembered for his dedicated service to labor and the people.

We stress these questions of relation between our Party and the mass movement because they are decisive and we are convinced that a solid place for the Socialist current, including us Communists, will be won in the labor and people's movement of our state.

For a New Approach to Culture

By HENRY ARNDT

IN A TIME of general reappraisal, it is unthinkable that there should fail to emerge a new attitude toward the cultural as well as other sectors of struggle. And indeed awareness is growing among Marxists that the "errors," "weaknesses," "mistakes," etc., that have best socialist movements around the world, have originated not in the socialist base, socialist production relations or socialist objectives, but in the cultural, ideological and organizational superstructure of those movements. Culture is being recognized as a potent force for good or ill in social change—not merely a reflection of it—a factor which may be neglected only at the risk of serious setbacks in the campaign for socialism. It is hoped, therefore, that these notes may stimulate American Marxists to devote serious and continuous attention to cultural problems.

Culture may be defined on three levels. In its broadest (anthropological) sense, culture is all the aspects by which the character of a civilization, and its position on the ladder of

progress, may be measured. More specifically, culture is, according to Webster, "the intellectual content of civilization." On this level, culture includes the body of principles, knowledge and intellectual activity involved in such categories as science, historiography, politics, law, religion, aesthetics, philosophy, morals, art, etc. In its narrowest aspect, culture means conversance with the fine arts, their production, consumption and evaluation.

Since we of the cultural sections are mostly involved in artistic creation and interpretation, we shall use the word *culture* in this narrower sense, although keeping the broader definitions in mind.

The general neglect of culture by Marxists has been encouraged in our country by two factors:

1. The bourgeoisie is most firmly in the saddle here, its influence on intellectual life most compelling—therefore the traditional philistinism and pragmatism of the bourgeois class is especially prevalent.
2. Bourgeois philistinism is strong-

ly reinforced by our pioneer tradition of anti-intellectualism. The backwoodsman who prided himself on his ability to hack a living out of the wilderness with ax and hoe felt only scorn for the "tenderfoot" whose "book-larnin'" could not insure survival. In no other land are the words "poet" and "professor" terms of contempt; in no other literature are the *villains* of popular fiction named The Brain or The Master Mind.

This climate of contempt for culture makes it peculiarly difficult for Americans of the Left to gain recognition for the importance of intellect as a dynamic social force. They tend to accept only certain compartments of it as useful—such as technical knowledge or factual information—and to ignore as superfluous the more refined or specialized aspects, such as art, scholarship, sensibility, philosophy, theory, speculation, taste, etc. Yet the necessity of finding the place of culture in a Marxist worldview is peculiarly ours, since we are most in need of cultural development.

CULTURE AND THE PEOPLE

The usefulness of culture lies far deeper than its direct impingement on current events. Perhaps by far its greatest influence is exerted upon such insubstantial national traits as popular initiative, capacity for self-

renewal, ability to think, self-reliance, courage, spirit, devotion to truth, personal and domestic relations, emotional resources, humor, frankness, decency, etc. According to Walt Whitman, "the plentifully-supplied, last-needed proof of democracy," and "towering above all talk and argument" will be the "grand personalities" of the men and women of the future (*Democratic Vistas*). But since influences of this character leave such a faint trail through the jungle of hard fact, we shall not attempt to track them down here.

The practical usefulness of even the most "impractical" arts is obvious enough. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* taught a whole generation of Americans the rudiments of socialism. Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* helped bring about important reforms in national pure-food laws. The murals of Orozco, Refregier and Rivera in public buildings have captured the attention of millions of Americans otherwise insulated from the history of capitalist exploitation. The flowering of Left-wing theatre, art and literature in the 1930's, although seldom attaining a very high cultural level, nevertheless heightened the social consciousness of the entire country. Even in the worst days of the cold war, artistic works like *Youngblood* and *Spartacus* exerted a progressive influence at home and abroad in spite of extreme efforts by the

ruling class to suppress or belittle them.

It is a paradoxical fact that the utility of art, both on the obvious and the unobvious level, has always been recognized and combatted by the class in power, while the working class remains largely unaware of the valuable services available to it in various cultural forms. Save for rare instances, when unions have employed technical and talent workers to mount a theatrical production in their behalf, such as *Pins and Needles*, or a motion picture like *Salt of the Earth*, or hired an artist to decorate a union hall, or helped to promote a book club, the labor movement has hardly begun to tap the tremendous resources at its command. It is significant that today's belated and timid campaign for a Fine Arts Bill is being conducted by intellectuals unaided by the working class and that the most effective argument in its favor is not that it will bring cultural advantages within range of the people but that it will constitute a valuable instrument in the cold war!

So long as the mass of the people—including their most progressive leaders—exhibit the traditional backwoods contempt for culture and ignore it in favor of exclusive concentration on pork chops, we shall not even begin the job of creating a humanist American culture indispensable to the overall campaign for socialism.

CULTURE AND CULTURAL WORKERS

The main enemy in the cultural as well as other fields is the monopolist-imperialist who owns, controls, vulgarizes, censors or suppresses culture and cultural institutions, media of communication, etc. On this question we professional practitioners of the arts exhibit no confusion; but our fight against the enemy is retarded, if not negated, by two main errors:

1. Idealist aestheticism, better known here as formalism. Individuals infected with this virus tend to belittle the importance of content and magnify that of form, to deny the class bias in art, to avoid partisanship in the class struggle, and to seal art up in an ivory tower out of reach of the people. As critics, idealist aesthetes split hairs, worry words, honor obscurity and mysticism for the fanciful interpretations that can be put upon them, and "explicate" artistic wholes into mere heaps of whimsical fragments.

This kind of error has never been dominant in our movement since Plekhanov, in *Art and Society*, exposed the true significance of "art for art's sake" and stimulated an embattled vigilance against it that has resulted in an overcorrection.

2. The dominant error among us is the habit of concentrating on the transient political content of art—its conformity to the technical "line"

of the moment—while failing to accord it adequate artistic analysis, neglecting its form, imaginative power, eloquence, insights, imagery, and in general the qualities that differentiate art from other cultural activities. This rigid or mechanical approach to culture has, when pursued over a long period, as it has been in our movement, a most appalling effect upon all engaged in cultural work, particularly upon cultural leaders. Since art is a metaphorical medium of communication (hence not limited to a single rigid interpretation), mechanical critics are always able to force the content of an art work to fit their preconceptions. To switch the image, they play the role of what Ira Wallach has called in the *Contemporary Reader*, “a political Javert determined to trace the ingénue back to the means of production.” Artistic values get pushed into the background, and the critical rule of thumb is, “When in doubt say No.”

As a result of years of such critical malpractice, many cultural workers left the Party—a few to enter to join the aesthetes, a few to enter the lucrative stoolpigeon business, but by far the larger proportion to search in vain for a place in which both their political convictions and their artistic talents might be respected. Of those who remained members out of loyalty to the overall struggle for socialism, most ceased to do any independent crea-

tive work and concentrated on politics and organization. Apparently they decided that in the cultural sphere it was better to stop struggling, to say nothing and do nothing, rather than to produce art-works and be sent to the gallows by Javert for failing to be as proletarian as Gorki, for omitting to solve current problems in a poem, or for inadequately portraying the Promethean Worker-Hero of our day.

So the strong flow of Left-wing creative work that constituted the *main intellectual current in the thirties* dwindled down to the pitiful trickle of today.

It may be claimed that this is an overstatement of the contrast between the radical thirties and the cold-war late forties and fifties. It is of course true that the ultimately decisive factor in cultural as in all history is the economic factor. In the depression thirties economic pressures drove most intellectuals to identify their interests with those of the workers, and to feel hospitable to the aims of depression-proof socialism; whereas in recent years it has cost cultural workers their jobs, their audience, even their personal liberty to defy the ruling class and side with socialism and peace against capitalism and war. Desertion of the field by many middle-class intellectuals under cold-war pressures was inevitable. Still, candor compels us to recognize that cultural leaders of the Left did little

to slow the retreat; indeed, the mechanical rigidities of their critical line accelerated it to a rout.

THE SPRINGS OF ERROR

The Rightist error of idealist aestheticism stems from ignorance of, or a denial of, Marxist materialism (dialectics); the Leftist error of vulgar materialism and sectarianism is the result of mechanical application of the theory that forms the cornerstone of Marxist aesthetics.

Because of the controversy among us over this theory, it is necessary to recapitulate it from the sources.

Marx holds that art, like ideology, philosophy, law, etc., and the institutions giving them effect, is one element of a cultural superstructure erected by the ruling class to serve and consolidate the economic base of any society, be it feudal, capitalist or socialist; and that therefore the superstructure (and art as one element of it) necessarily reflects the interests, attitudes, ethics and ideology of the class in control of that society. Thus we properly speak of feudal art, bourgeois art or socialist art.

Under capitalism the basic property and production relations (what Marx called the economic base) are antagonistic, the capitalist owning the means of production and pocket-antagonistic, the capitalist owning nothing but his labor power and fighting the capitalist for a living

wage (whereas under socialism the workers are themselves the owners, so that the basic relation in production is one of voluntary cooperation for a common end). Capitalist art, therefore, will reflect in artistic, metaphorical terms the competitiveness, individualism and class antagonisms of capitalism in the most favorable light and will ascribe to the ruling class many of the virtues of a superior species. Only the greatest humanist art, as a rule, transcends the narrow class view of current reality.

We can avoid a thousand stupidities if we recognize at the outset that this thesis is a *generalization*. That is, it is true in an overall or statistical sense, not necessarily true in any single case. Thus, to say that "Americans are a tall people" is *not* to say that all Americans are tall. Similarly, an art-work does not necessarily reflect ruling-class interests in any particular instance—or in all of its parts—or precisely—or immediately—or forever. The most that can be said is that it reflects ruling interests metaphorically and in general, after a time lag that may be either short or long.

In the later stages of capitalism, inner contradictions multiply and weaken the system. Progress slows down. Eventually retrogression sets in. The ruling class ceases to think in terms of national interests and begins to think only of preserving its class privileges. It opposes fur-

ther change and defends the status quo ever more desperately. The humanism that served and was served by it in its mature vigor is discarded as a threat to its survival.

The exploited classes, however, are not blinded by the fear of change. On the contrary, they come to see that exploitation is not eternal, not ordained by the will of God, and that a higher organization of society is indispensable if man is to become truly human and not revert to the beast. They espouse the discarded humanist principles and adapt them as weapons with which to fight for the cause of humanity as a whole against the privileged few. Thus scientific socialism arises as a projected new and higher stage of humanism. And lest there be any doubt as to the meaning of that term, let us note Webster's definition of humanism:

A system, mode, or attitude of thought or action centering upon distinctively human interests or ideals, especially as contrasted with naturalistic or religious interests.

Manifestly, "distinctively human interests" have changed in the course of social development from ancient Greek society, based on slavery, to the emergent socialism of today. Only a socialist form of humanism, ending forever the exploitation of man by man, can offer acceptable incentives to the modern

creative artist.

In the senile stage of capitalism, the cultural superstructure no longer serves its base with the old efficiency, but increasingly reflects the division between the dying order and the new order struggling to be born. This is what Lenin meant when he said there were two cultures under capitalism, bourgeois and proletarian. This is how it happens that under a dying capitalist dictatorship Gorki was able to write and publish his great anti-capitalist novel, *Mother*. This is why works of socialist humanism may be created and to a limited degree circulated in spite of the opposition of the decadent ruling class.

Another important question concerning Marx's theory needs clearing up. When Marx said that the cultural superstructure *reflects* the base and *serves* the ruling class, did he mean that it was an automatic mirror of the base? that it was the passive servant of the élite? Relating the question to our own problem, to what degree is art the defender and servitor of its class? To what degree, if any, is it able to influence or modify the social system or its basic property and production relations? Here is what Engels had to say on the subject in a letter dated January 25, 1894:

Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic develop-

ment. But all these react upon one another *and also upon the economic base*. It is *not* that the economic base is the sole cause and solely active while everything else only has a passive effect. There is, rather, *interaction* on the basis of the economic necessity which ultimately always asserts itself. . . . So it is *not*, as some people try conveniently to imagine, that the economic position produces an automatic effect. (*Italics supplied.*)

Of the more rarefied elements in the superstructure, he wrote:

The further the particular sphere which we are investigating is removed from the economic sphere and approaches that of pure abstract ideology, the more shall we find it exhibiting accidents in its development, the more will its curve run in a zig-zag.

In other words, the course of development of art or philosophy will parallel the curve of economic development only *approximately* or *over a broad average* and not necessarily in any individual instance. And indeed such "accidents" as "the great man" or "the great artist" are forms under which necessity appears to us out of the welter and clash of human wills.

Toward the mechanists who make rigid dogma out of dialectical principles, Engels was merciless. Writing in October 1890, he said:

What these gentlemen all lack is

dialectic. They never see anything but here cause and there effect. This is a hollow abstraction. Such metaphysical polar opposites only exist in the real world during crises, while the whole vast process proceeds in the form of interaction (though of very unequal forces, the economic movement being by far the strongest, most elemental and most decisive). Here everything is relative and nothing is absolute. This they never begin to see.

If Engels is right, in a time of acute crisis antagonistic classes approach the condition of polar opposites, and we may expect art to reflect the intense partisanship of direct and decisive conflict. At such historical moments art may be difficult to distinguish from propaganda, expressing all the strident partisanship and employing all the violent distortions of the tract, the cartoon, the apologium and diatribe. It is in such periods that the slogan arises, "Art is a weapon," and the words are meant literally, and they are true.

Unfortunately, however, the mechanists and sectarians insist that art is and must be of this character at all times and under all circumstances—and it just isn't. All over the world Marxists are recognizing this fact at last. Art is always and everywhere an instrument of communication, of persuasion, of education, of humanization—only rarely an instrument of war.

There is a crying need of continuous research and theoretical work

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in the cultural field. We shall not have the sort of art, the sort of criticism, the sort of aesthetic standards that can be respected and useful in ideological struggle, until we get rid of our mechanistic vulgarization of dialectical problems—until the theorists dig down to solid foundations and shape serviceable cornerstones.

A CULTURAL PROGRAM FOR BEGINNERS

A beginning must be made somewhere, and we submit that in a period like the present, when creative activity on the Left has all but petered out, the first step should be to encourage cultural activity on every level and in every form. The best encouragement to this end would be a new attitude toward culture in our ranks from top to bottom—a whole-hearted, not merely verbal recognition of culture as a dynamic force in the total campaign for socialism.

Such a new attitude is in the making in many countries. As long ago as 1953 the great Soviet composer Aram Katchaturian called publicly* for an end to “administrative guardianship” over art by party bureaucrats who “stand aloof from creative work but imagine that they are ‘in charge’ of creative work” and assume “the functions of an in-

fallible appraiser” of art-works, issuing directives on content, form, methods and values.

“Place more confidence in the artist,” Katchaturian pleaded, “and he will address himself to the solution of the creative tasks of our times with ever greater responsibility and freedom.” Above all, he demanded “principled, impartial” criticism, more and freer discussion of creative work, reminding us that “Truth is born in argument.”

Amen!

Our need is for a modest program designed to liberate the creative powers that make for a rich, useful and enjoyable culture; to cut away the underbrush of prejudice and contempt; and to stimulate the most adventurous questing and ranging of the human mind. Such a program, we suggest, might include the following points:*

1. Because of our heritage of pragmatism and anti-intellectualism, take pains to establish the positive, active role of culture in social change, not merely on the immediate, agitprop level but in the less obvious, long-term sense. Combat not only the snobbery and isolation of the idealist aesthete, but also, and especially, the mechanism, sectarianism and philis-

* No attempt is made here to compile anything like a full or even a minimum program. For example, an obvious omission is the immediate need of a campaign against the black-listing of cultural workers. But we have preferred to emphasize theoretical, historical-critical, and creative work.

* Published in *Masses and Mainstream*, Feb., 1954.

tinism within our ranks, among trade-union, party and cultural leaders. Demonstrate that Marxist culture is the culmination of humanist culture and can be neglected only at the cost of obstructing socialism itself. Inculcate respect for the creative work of the professional scientist, artist, teacher, theorist; and cease requiring him to be also party functionary, trade-union or guild organizer, orator, toastmaster, skit-writer, pamphleteer, money-raiser and master of the revels—except as his professional work permits.

2. Make culture a normal and regular party of Party life. Institute a campaign to read *critically* all Party literature, challenge all double-talk, throw out clichés, stereotypes, formulas and gobbledygook. Review books, plays, art exhibits at branch meetings—not only informational but also creative works, Marxist and non-Marxist—not only Plekhanov's *Art and Society* but also Cassirer's *Essay on Man*, stories like *Youngblood* and *Kingsblood Royal*, *Martin Eden* and *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists*. Cultural branches could study poets like McGrath and Mayakovsky or a critical work like Van Wyck Brooks' *The Writer in America*. This kind of activity is especially needed, however, in leading bodies and branches other than "cultural."

3. Struggle for the beginnings of a sound Marxist aesthetics. The dis-

ussion may be carried on in technical terms in *Mainstream* or *Political Affairs*; but a parallel discussion in popular terms, from the reader's (audience's or beholder's) standpoint, ought to be featured in the daily press. Trace the historical development of socialist aesthetics from the "artists in uniform period" to the present, making clear that the concept of socialist realism is simply socialist humanism with another and poorer name, and that it is merely a guiding principle or ideal, hospitable to *all* forms and techniques of artistic expression, *not* an imposed or decreed method of work.

4. Start a collective project in each cultural centre: say, the compilation of a bibliography of Marxist creative works and critical pieces on art, literature and aesthetics; or, better, the actual assembling and housing of a library of such works. At present there is only one Marxist reference library in the land, and that one is in the remote provincial town of New York from which alert cultural workers flee young.

Because of today's tragic events—the failure of the socialist cultural superstructure truly to reflect and reinforce and serve the socialist base—it is doubly important to remind ourselves of the indispensability of culture in helping to birth the future. These events, far from invalidating socialism, add up to a warning to the world to socialize now or risk the terrible alternative—but to so-

cialize *all*: superstructure as well as base, mind as well as matter, men as well as machines. The present pause for thought may turn out to be the salvation of our cause. Properly used, it can be an opportunity to re-group and re-form our ranks for the final victory of man over his brutal past—the beginning of truly human history.

Draper's "Roots of American Communism"

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

THEODORE DRAPER'S new book, *The Roots of American Communism*,* is one of a series of studies to be published on various aspects of Communism in the United States, under the auspices of the Fund for the Republic, which has the backing of the Ford millions. The book in question, summing up C.P. "history" until 1923, is just one more bourgeois attempt to demean and distort the history of the CPUSA. It is part of the current intense ideological campaign being waged against the Communist Party of this country.

The Draper volume has been composed with all the ordinary bourgeois limitations in history writing. Besides, its author is an anti-Communist and the book is marred by evidences of the characteristic prejudice of such elements. He has also had the active cooperation of various ex-Communists, including Earl Browder, and his book shows it. Draper is obviously out to make a case against the Party, hence to speak of his book as an objective study, as some reviewers are doing, is nonsense.

* Theodore Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, 500 pp., \$6.75, Viking Press, N. Y.

Draper's book is characterized by the customary bourgeois superficiality. If the author, during his years as a member of the Communist Party, learned anything about Marxist historical analysis, his writing betrays very few, if any, signs of it. Draper pictures the history of the Communist Party in a sort of economic and political vacuum, having no visible connection with the living conditions, organizations, and struggles of the working class. This shallowness, however, has much more significance than the usual tendency of bourgeois historians to ignore the basic driving forces in society. What the author is striving to prove is that the CPUSA is an artificially created Russian political instrument in the United States, without any basic connections with the American working class and its struggles for economic and political betterment. This obvious bias and superficiality of Draper's book eliminates the possibility of its standing as an authentic history of the American Communist Party for the period it covers, up to 1923.

Manifestly, the fledgling Communist Party in the United States, as in other countries, was profoundly

influenced by the combined effects of the Russian Revolution and the newly-organized Communist International; but especially it represented the historic Left wing of the Socialist movement in this country, reaching back for many decades and reacting to the conditions, struggles, and aspirations of the American working class. No work can presume to be a history of the CPUSA which does not give full weight to these national considerations, as well as to the international factors entering into its formation. Failure to do this is a central weakness of Draper's book.

Characteristic of Draper's studied attempt to divorce the CPUSA from the American class struggle, he portrays the formation of the Communist Party mostly in the shape of more or less sinister international forces at work creating the new Party, almost without any reference whatever to the huge and bitter struggles of the workers during these years. The period of the formation of the CPUSA, especially between 1919 and 1922, was marked by one of the sharpest series of mass struggles in the history of the American labor movement—with millions of workers on strike, with an active repressive policy by the government, with a fierce, anti-union drive by the employers, and with almost every trade union in the United States fighting for its very life.

One of the keenest storm centers of this great mass struggle, which

was part of the worldwide post-war battles of the workers, turned around the formation of the Communist Party—with its violent repression by the government, the mass arrests of the Party leaders at Bridgeman in 1922, and the Communists' widespread participation in the class battles of the period. Draper completely ignores all these facts as though they never existed, because they do not fit into his preconceived thesis that the establishment of the CPUSA was a "Russian conspiracy," without real connection with the life of the American working class, nor to his conception that the Party's founding leaders and members were empty dreamers and incurable factionalists. Although Draper does not establish the fundamental relationship of the newly-formed Communist Party with the great class struggles of the times, the employers and other reactionaries currently did not fail to do so.

Specifically, Draper virtually ignores the activities of the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL) during these early years. The fact is, however, that, especially after the beginning of 1922, this organization, which was led by Communists, was a real factor in the labor movement and in the big strikes and other struggles of these years of hard battle for the workers. The TUEL had as its key slogans, the amalgamation of the craft unions into industrial organizations, the organization of the unorganized, the forma-

tion of a labor party, the recognition of Soviet Russia, and generally the development of a militant fighting policy by the workers to counter the powerful offensive of the employers. With its active participation in many big strikes of the period, the TUEL, based upon a Left-progressive united front, quickly became a national influence in Labor's ranks.

Beginning with a favorable vote of 114 to 37 in the Chicago Federation of Labor on March 19, 1922, the TUEL amalgamation movement spread like a prairie fire throughout the national trade union movement. During the next year and a half no less than 16 international unions, 17 of the biggest state federations of labor, scores of city central bodies, and thousands of local unions (3,377 in the railroad industry alone) formally endorsed the amalgamation slogan. The TUEL rightly claimed that the majority of organized labor in the United States (and also in Canada) had voted for this fighting slogan. Almost as broad results were achieved for the TUEL slogans for organizing the unorganized, for the labor party, etc. The heart of the TUEL's initial success was the active backing of the Communist Party. It was to participate more effectively in the big labor party movement of the period that the CP at this time moved its national headquarters to Chicago, and in open alliance with the C. F. of L. (Fitzpatrick forces), the Party, almost overnight, became a national force

in the growing labor party movement, which culminated in 1924 in the independent candidacy of Senator La Follette.

Draper ignores all this Communist participation in the mass struggle as though it never existed. This is necessary if he is to give a show of reality to his narrow conception that the young Communist Party was only a collection of factionalists, foreign-inspired intriguers, and people hypnotized by the Russian Revolution. Contrary to Draper's sneers and belittlements, Communism, during the latter of the years he deals with, showed a basic adaptation and relationship to American conditions. Notwithstanding its intense initial sectarianism and dogmatism, the deep confusion and ideological uncertainty accompanying the Socialist Party split, the ensuing splits in Communist ranks in mastering the principles of Marxism-Leninism, the severe persecution by the government, the lack of previous experience in trade-union work, and other handicaps — nevertheless, the Communist Party, only 2½ years after its birth in 1919 in two sections, was able to come forth as an active factor in the national labor movement and in the current intense class struggle. This was a major achievement, indicating beyond question that Marxism-Leninism, contrary to the theories of the Drapers, was not an alien doctrine in the United States and that Communism had genuine roots among the workers in

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this country. Mr. Draper may not have been able to find any strong and practical Communist influence in the labor movement at that time, but certainly the government, the employers, and Samuel Gompers were very well aware of it.

In his bourgeois fashion, Draper devotes his main attention to the specific role of individuals in the formation of the CPUSA, rather than to the basic economic and political forces involved. Characteristically, he devotes several pages to the FBI spy, Morrow, of the Bridgeman convention, and he delights in tracing the many Party factional fights to their farthest nuances. He is always playing up the deserters and renegades from the Party, and when he deals with loyal Party leaders, especially John Reed, Robert Minor, and others, he gives distorted pictures of them. Also the book could almost pass for a biography of Draper's favorite figure, Louis C. Fraina, one of the Party's founders but a dubious political adventurer. Draper has a point in indicating the failure of the Party History to deal with Fraina; the book does not presume to outline all the leaders, but he is incorrect when he virtually plays up Fraina as the main founder of the Party. The leader in establishing the Communist Party was C. E. Ruthenberg, who gets a playdown in Draper's book. This fact is shown curiously on the book-cover, where the blurb-writer says: "Mr. Draper brings to life the individual leaders

[of the Party], including Foster, Browder, Fraina (Lewis Corey), and Reed." Significantly Ruthenberg is left out of this list—probably because the blurb writer had seen so little of Ruthenberg in the book. It comes almost as a surprise to the reader when, rather suddenly on page 193, Draper announces that, "The man who emerged from the convention in 1919, as the outstanding American Communist was Charles Emil Ruthenberg."

Of course, I, personally, am a special target for Draper's anti-Party animus. He dismisses as worthless "my" Marxist history of the Party. This book was, in fact, prepared by many co-workers, with me doing the actual writing. The text was read and passed upon by no less than 30 comrades. Naturally, the book now requires considerable re-writing in part (as is true of every Communist history in the world), especially in view of the recent long and intense Party discussion, the sweeping revelations of the Stalin cult of the individual, and particularly the new Communist policy of a more critical attitude towards other Communist parties and the countries of Socialism. But basically the book remains a sound presentation of the history of the CPUSA.

Letting slip no opportunity to take a dig at me, Draper, of course, dwells at length (page 313) upon my testimony before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor in 1919, in the midst of the great steel

strike and with regard to my attitude towards World War I. As I have explained in my book, *From Bryan to Stalin* (pages 126-139), I was opposed to the war, proposing that it be met with a general strike. But once the war had begun, following the German Social Democratic betrayal in 1914, I followed the line of actively organizing the trade unions in the basic industries, incorrectly holding, as a Syndicalist, that this was the most revolutionary work that could be done under the circumstances. I took the position that, with the high state of militancy existing among the workers, it would have been relatively easy for organized labor to unionize several millions of workers and to anticipate the C.I.O. by 15 years. Even with our group's tiny resources and with almost no financial help from the AFL, we led in the organization of the national packing industry (200,000 workers) and the national steel industry (365,000 workers). As for my Senate testimony, it in no way represented a complete picture of my views. It was a rather desperate attempt on my part to prevent the national steel strike, of which I was the central leader, from being torn to pieces by the red-baiters of the period upon the pretext that it was a militant revolutionary movement.

Mr. Draper, in dealing with the Russian Revolution and world Communism in general, displays the same shallowness that he does in

analyzing Communism in the United States. Considering Socialism a failure in the Soviet Union, as everywhere else, Draper completely underestimates the fundamental significance of the Russian Revolution, which struck the world capitalist system a blow from which it has never recovered and never will. By the same token, the writer has not the faintest conception of the general crisis of world capitalism, and thus really understands nothing basic of international economic and political conditions.

Draper takes many cracks at Lenin, whom he obviously considers less intelligent than his Fraina. He calls Lenin an "acrobatic opportunist," and he particularly scoffs, among many other things, at the general revolutionary perspective advanced by Lenin in the early stages of the Russian Revolution. But Lenin was fundamentally right in doing this. Following the brutal slaughter of the imperialist first world war, the workers were in a highly militant and rebellious mood, as Lenin foresaw. The consequence was the outbreak of powerful revolutionary movements, not only in Russia, but also in several other countries. In Germany not only did the workers overthrow the Hohenzollern empire, but also, for a short time, they had Soviets throughout the country; in Hungary they had a short-lived Soviet regime, and in Italy they brought the country to the very brink of a Socialist revolution. Obviously, it was a general

revolutionary situation. Had it not been for the Social Democratic betrayal in many countries, undoubtedly most of Eastern and Central Europe would have become Socialist, European capitalism would have received a mortal blow, and the whole world capitalist system would have been sent tottering. But of course all this is a blank to the bourgeois historian, Draper. Contrary to his political fantasies, the revolutionary course of events since World War I, with capitalism sinking ever deeper into general crisis and with one-third of the world now living under Socialist regimes, constitutes sufficient proof of the historical correctness of Lenin's general revolutionary outlook at the birth of the first Workers' Republic.

Reviewers are now generally praising the research work done by Draper in his book; but he has also committed a number of errors of fact. One of the lesser breed is his going along with the old horse-chestnut that my middle name is Zebulon—actually the "Z" is just a "Z" and nothing more. Inexplicable, however, is Mr. Draper's statement on page 251 that Lenin, in his famous booklet, "*Left-Wing*" Communism, cited no "American examples" in support of his devastating argument against sectarianism. But the reality was that Lenin specifically criticized the Industrial Workers of the World* for their sectarian dual unionism. Moreover, this criticism had profound effects upon the young

American Communist movement, which was dedicated to IWW dualism, but which broke with it under Lenin's sharp attack. It was precisely this position of Lenin's, as expressed in the pamphlet, "*Left-Wing*" Communism, that brought me into the Communist Party. For ten years previously, in various Syndicalist organizations, I had been fighting against IWW dual unionism; hence when the Communist Party was launched (as twins) I did not go along with it because it carried over the IWW dualist line, which I considered to be an impossible handicap. However, when Lenin, in his historic pamphlet, sharply condemned this disastrous expression of ultra-Left sectarianism, and I learned of it, I decided to join the Communist Party, which I did early in 1921.

Notwithstanding all the foregoing strictures there is considerable of value to be gleaned from the Draper book. From the standpoint of theory, the work stands almost at zero; but with the ample resources of the Fund for the Republic at his disposal, Draper has been able to assemble much important data. This includes, among other items, such as statistics and composition of the Communist movement at its outset, the names, circulation, and editors of the Left wing press of the times, facts upon the very im-

* See, V. I. Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" Communism, An Infantile Disorder (International Publishers, N. Y., 1940), pp. 36-38.

portant "foreign-language" federations, organizational details (if not sound political analysis) of various early conventions, conferences, Party factional fights and splits, numerous valuable quotations from key documents of the Party's foundation period, factual material upon such little-known organizations as the Socialist Propaganda League and the Workers' Council.

Draper also makes many valuable thumb-nail sketches of American and international Communist leaders of the period; but here one has to tread

carefully, as the author's thick prejudices tend to give a lop-sided character to such studies of leading figures and their activities. Measuring, therefore, the limited and superficial good qualities of the book against its many basic theoretical and analytical weaknesses, the only conclusion that a Marxist-Leninist can arrive at regarding it is that in no decisive sense can it be taken as an authentic history of the Communist Party during its formation period, with which the book deals.

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A Letter to Mcmillan

By N. A. BULGANIN

On April 20, 1957, Prime Minister Nikolai A. Bulganin, of the Soviet Union, sent a letter to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan of Great Britain. The text of this letter was released from Moscow on April 24. It is published below in full—ed.

Esteemed Mr. Prime Minister:

In April last year N. S. Khrushchev and I had meetings in London with leaders of Great Britain which we all remember and which enabled us, notwithstanding different views on many problems, to ascertain the common purpose of both Governments in a number of important international questions. The joint Soviet-British statement signed at the time has preserved its importance to date.

Though the exchange of opinion which began a year ago between both Governments produced positive results, this however cannot be regarded as sufficient in the present situation, the more so because, during the year since the talks, events have taken place in the international arena which led to an undesirable aggravation of international tension and a certain deterioration in the relations between the Soviet Union and Great Britain which, as we are confident, is neither in the interests of the Soviet nor the British peoples.

We noted with satisfaction the

statement made by Sir Patrick Reilly, the British Ambassador in Moscow, in a conversation with myself on April 12 that the British Government, like the Soviet Government, is striving for better relations between both countries.

ON MIDDLE EAST PROBLEMS

However, the Ambassador also expressed the opinion that there can be no encouraging prospects of any marked improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations unless progress is made in settling those main international disputes which, in the Ambassador's words, have brought about the present tension in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain, specifically the Middle East problems.

Indeed, the situation in the Middle East still causes serious anxiety. But we believe that the present tense situation in that area is, above all, due to the unwillingness of certain circles in Great Britain and some other countries to take into account

the legitimate interests and rights of the Arab countries which took the road of national independence and regeneration.

The tasks of safeguarding a lasting peace in the Middle East demand, in our profound conviction, that the great powers strictly adhere to the principles of peaceful settlement of all their disputes connected with that area, respect the sovereignty and independence of the Middle East countries and do not intervene in their domestic affairs.

It must be regretted that the United Kingdom Government did not deem it possible to support the Soviet Government's proposal on the joint proclamation by the four powers of the above principles.

The Soviet Government recently set forth its views on the situation in the Middle East in special notes to the Government of Great Britain and the Governments of the United States and France, which relieves me of the need to examine in detail this question in this letter.

It is however important to emphasize that the Soviet Union, like Great Britain, is interested in the early solution of the Middle East problems, since the situation in that area, directly adjacent to the frontiers of the Soviet Union, cannot but affect the interests of the security of the U.S.S.R., a fact, Mr. Prime Minister, to which we have more than once called the attention of the British Government.

During our discussions in London

last year, N. S. Khrushchev and I pointed out that we were far from under-estimating Britain's economic interests in the Middle East. Neither does the Soviet Government deny this today. The safeguarding of these interests, and this has been confirmed by all recent developments, should, however, not be pursued along the road of using force, but along the road of negotiations and sober consideration of the just interests of the sides concerned, along the road of developing normal economic relations between states without infringing in any way the sovereignty of the countries of that area.

Holding the opinion that the possibilities of such a settlement have by no means been exhausted, I do not lose the hope that, given the good will of the Governments of the states concerned, agreement can be reached on the disputed issues.

TO RENOUNCE FORCE

Taking into consideration the complexity of the existing problems, one should, with the object of improving and normalizing the situation in the Middle East, immediately take such measures to reach agreement. We believe that the great powers would make a big contribution to the normalization of the situation in the Middle East if they renounced the use of force as a means of settling the unsolved problems of that area.

One may differ in the views on some problem or other, for instance,

connected with the use of the Suez Canal, but it is impermissible that disputed issues are settled by armed force, that reckless actions by one or another state, still brandishing weapons, imperil the peace of that area.

Attaching great importance to the settlement of the Middle East problems, I deem it necessary at the same time to set forth the views of the Soviet Government on some other important questions of the present international situation which are of mutual interest, and on questions pertaining to the development of Soviet-British relations.

The Soviet Government believes that Great Britain and the Soviet Union, which together with the other great powers bear special responsibility for the maintenance of world peace, can and must make a very important, if not decisive, contribution to the easing of tension still existing in the relations between the countries of the East and the West, and to the settlement of international disputes which lie as a heavy burden on Soviet-British relations. It can hardly be doubted that the further development of the whole complex of international relations, especially in Europe, largely depends on the positions of the Soviet Union and Great Britain on the main problems of world peace and security, on the existence or on the contrary the lack, of mutual understanding and confidence between them.

PROBLEM OF DISARMAMENT

My colleagues and I have formed a perfectly definite opinion that the present situation makes necessary, above all, an approximation of views on the most pressing, most vital international problem—the problem of disarmament.

The continuing arms race, and primarily the competition between the great powers in the manufacture of atomic-hydrogen-rocket and other types of modern and most dangerous weapons, inevitably aggravate the international situation, strengthen suspicions between states and intensify the cancer of war.

The expenditures on armaments, which in many countries increased tens of times over pre-war, weigh down heavily on the economy of those countries. Tremendous national resources are senselessly wasted and the peoples who made so many sacrifices for the sake of establishing a lasting peace cannot properly enjoy the fruits of their efforts and make their life as tranquil and safe as they are entitled to.

For many European countries the expenditures on armaments are becoming ever more unbearable and have exhausted their treasuries. The growing budget appropriations, which are paid for by the masses of the people, the expansion of munitions production to the detriment of the peaceful branches of the economy, not only prevents economic

progress but obviously places in jeopardy the possibility of maintaining production, trade and living standards at the level attained by those countries in the first post-war years. Under these circumstances we understand the anxiety of the British Government over the burden of military expenditures, which you expressed in your recent speech in Sheffield.

It is not out of place to recall that in the joint Soviet-British statement on April 26, 1956, the Governments of the Soviet Union and Great Britain recognized the necessity of taking immediate practical steps to reduce armed forces and national armaments and emphasized the exceptional importance of the task of ridding mankind of the threat of nuclear warfare.

The interests of the peoples of the Soviet Union and concern for safeguarding international security impel me to urge you to exert, in the spirit of the above joint statement, the requisite efforts to put an end to the absolutely abnormal situation when futile talks on the necessity and desirability of disarmament are being held in authoritative international agencies while in fact disarmament does not make any progress but, on the contrary, the arms race is being stepped up and some powers are doing everything to condition mankind to the savage, monstrous thought of the inevitability of atomic war.

It will be recalled that the latest

session of the United Nations General Assembly unfortunately did not examine the question of disarmament on its merits. The greater the responsibility resting with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and its subcommittee, which recently resumed its session in London, or, to be more precise, with the states represented on the subcommittee.

Having thoroughly studied the positions of the sides and the proposals made by the parties to the disarmament talks, I draw the conclusion that at the present time there are objective prerequisites to attain agreement between the powers, if not on the problem of disarmament as a whole, then at least on some major aspects of this problem. Whether progress in disarmament and the prevention of the danger of atomic war is made or not depends only on whether all the parties to the talks display a sincere desire jointly to find an acceptable solution of the problems under discussion.

POSITION OF THE SOVIET UNION

You, Mr. Prime Minister, know of course that the Soviet Union submitted for the examination by the above subcommittee proposals covering all aspects of the disarmament problem and envisaging specifically the conclusion of an international convention on the reduction of arma-

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ment and armed forces and the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons.

The Soviet Government is convinced that the great powers could now show their goodwill for a solution of these problems by agreeing, first of all, to the immediate banning of atomic and hydrogen weapon tests—the more so as such a solution is not connected with any intricate organizational measures and, given the present state of science, can be reliably controlled.

The Soviet Government holds the opinion that this question should be separated from the general problem of disarmament and settled independently without making the settlement dependent on agreement on other aspects of the disarmament problem.

Taking into consideration that Great Britain and the United States evidently are not willing at the present time fully to abandon atomic and hydrogen weapon tests, the Soviet Union made the proposals to suspend such tests for a certain period in order to facilitate in the future agreement on the final discontinuation of atomic and hydrogen bomb test explosions.

It seems to me possible to agree at the outset, for instance, that atomic and hydrogen weapon tests are to be suspended for a period. Of course, one cannot disregard the fact that Governments, insisting on the continuation of tests of these weapons of mass annihilation, assume a grave

moral and political responsibility and set themselves against the unanimous demand of the peoples as well as Parliaments and Governments of many countries of the world, including, by the way, those belonging to the British Commonwealth.

BAN ATOM TESTS

I should like to hope that Great Britain deems it possible to join its efforts with the efforts of the Soviet Union and many other states directed toward the reaching of agreement, and shows a constructive approach on the disarmament problem, specifically on the question of suspending nuclear test explosions, which undoubtedly would play an important role in securing positive results in the work of the subcommittee of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and in an improvement of the international situation as a whole.

While speaking of this I should like to stress at the same time that the Soviet Union is not more interested in the solution of the problem of test explosions than Great Britain or the United States, yet if we attach such great importance it is only because, in our opinion, statesmen responsible for the future of their peoples must not gamble with the destinies of these peoples.

It seems to me that the Soviet Union and Britain have similar interests in safeguarding peace and security in Europe. It is not accidental that our two countries for many

centuries were drawn in one way or another into every major armed conflict in Europe.

The complexity and tension of the present situation in Europe is, in my opinion, determined above all by the fact that as a result of the establishment of NATO most of the European continent has been divided into two antagonistic military alignments of countries between which relations of distrust and suspicion have developed. The Soviet Union has never supported the policy of setting up closed military alignments of states and, while forced to take jointly with friendly countries measures to safeguard universal security, it has advocated and continues to advocate the elimination of the division of states into military blocs.

The British Government, for instance, knows very well the proposals of the Soviet Government designed to replace the systems of military blocs by collective cooperation between all states in the interests of universal security as the proposal to conclude a general European treaty on collective security, the proposal to conclude a treaty on non-aggression between the NATO members, on one hand, and the Warsaw Treaty states, on the other.

However, these efforts by the Soviet Union and the other states backing its proposals have not yet met with understanding on the part of the Governments of the NATO countries, including the British Gov-

ernment. On the contrary we regret to note that the leading circles of NATO set the course to the further exclusiveness of this alignment and the intensification of its war preparations.

Such a step as the inclusion of the Federal Republic of Germany in NATO further aggravated the situation in Europe.

A peculiar situation took shape when Great Britain and France, which but recently sustained such big losses in the struggle against aggression by German militarism, are now, to say the least, benevolent onlookers while in Western Germany, with the active support and vigorous encouragement on the part of their NATO ally, the United States, the positions of this militarism are being restored, which runs counter not only to the interests of European security but also to the interests of restoring the national unity of Germany as a peace-loving and democratic state.

Fresh attempts have of late been made seriously to aggravate the relations between European states and to create in Europe a still more dangerous situation. I am referring, above all, to the well-known plans of the United States Government envisaging the stationing of American atomic-support task groups on the territories of some NATO members and some other states under United States influence.

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the West German Army with atomic weapons, not bear out that the NATO alignment is intensively preparing for atomic warfare at a time when the people are persistently demanding the prohibition and the destruction of atomic weapons?

This is also borne out by the decision, made public in the communiqué of the recent Anglo-American conference in Bermuda, to deliver American rocket nuclear weapons to the armed forces of Great Britain. We do not think, however, that such measures could help to strengthen Britain's security. In the conditions of the arms race they would rather have opposite results. As far as I know many people in Great Britain are aware of this also.

The Soviet people, of course, cannot close their eyes to the above measures by the NATO member states and cannot but draw the appropriate conclusions from this. The Soviet Government has already had the opportunity to declare with all determination that, if the need should arise to repel an atomic attack, the Soviet Union would be forced to use all means at its disposal to render harmless bases and territories used for attack on the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Government is far from the thought of resorting to threats. On the contrary, it expects that those who resort to the method of threats will abandon this method and, what is most important, will abandon the very actions which threaten the

security of other states.

Indeed, reciprocal threats cannot but encourage the arms race and weapons themselves, of course, cannot be affected by threats. It is not said without reason that loaded guns go off on their own accord. You cannot but agree, Mr. Prime Minister, that a very dangerous situation is created by the very fact that large armies, equipped with up-to-date highly destructive weapons, are facing each other, and this precisely is the situation created at the present time, especially in Europe.

Everyone, of course, understands well that British scientists, engineers and workers, whose creative genius is appreciated throughout the world, can also design the most up-to-date weapons which for the time being are at the disposal of two states alone. But this is not the point. Must the people compete along these lines?

Granted that not everyone believes today that the Soviet Socialist state is guided by one desire alone—the desire firmly to insure a peaceful life for its people. But even the most hopeless skeptics should understand that the Soviet Government not less than the Governments of some other countries, realizes that the use of atomic weapons by one side would call forth their use by the other and understands what such developments hold out even for the Soviet Union, with its vast expanses and great progress in anti-atomic defense.

What remains to be said of the consequences of bombardment by hydrogen bombs or thermonuclear rocket weapons of such a comparatively small and densely populated territory as the British Isles? Leading British military experts themselves do not conceal that under such conditions one cannot rely on means of defense against up-to-date atomic weapons. I repeat, nothing would be further from the truth than possible attempts to interpret my words as implying threats and intimidation. No, they have been prompted only by the desire to state my views openly, not evading serious questions raised by the current situation, and in the most friendly spirit.

Must not our two countries, in the face of these facts, concentrate their efforts on averting any threat of the outbreak of atomic war? The Soviet Government regards this as its absolute duty.

It is understandable that, given the peculiar historical development and differences in the social and state systems of the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain, there are and will rise certain divergencies on some questions or others between our countries. But does it follow that our countries cannot live in peace? And can joint efforts not bring about such a situation in which atomic bombers and rockets of one state will never sow death in the territory of another?

Today it has become more obvious that at any other time that

the only sound way of safeguarding genuine security in Europe is not the further stockpiling of armaments, and not the policy of dividing states into antagonistic military alignments, but the joint efforts of the European countries for the maintenance of peace, the establishment of extensive cooperation between them, the strengthening of mutual understanding and confidence.

EDEN'S PROPOSAL ENDORSED

Since it is evidently difficult immediately to abolish the military alignments of the powers and to replace them by a system of collective security in Europe, one should in the interests of both countries and European security as a whole try to come to terms on temporary, transitional measures, which would gradually lead to this goal.

Thus the Soviet Government would be willing to resume the discussion of the proposals made some time ago in a general form by Sir Anthony Eden, ex-Premier of Great Britain, on the establishment in Europe of demilitarized zones and also of areas with restrictions of armament. The Soviet Government proceeds from the assumption that in this connection its corresponding proposals would be also examined, such as the proposal for a zone for aerial survey in Europe.

The Soviet people noted with

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great satisfaction recent reports from London on some reduction in the strength of the British armed forces and the intention of the government you head to take new steps in this direction and specifically to cut the strength of the British armed forces stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany. We duly note the far-sightedness you and your Government displayed in connection with this decision. We believe that until agreement on the problem of universal disarmament is reached the great powers could facilitate its solution precisely by such unilateral measures. It is common knowledge that the Soviet Union has long since taken the road of a considerable reduction of its armed forces.

Thus in 1956 the Soviet Union evacuated over 30,000 servicemen from Germany and is willing further to reduce its forces in Germany if the other great powers follow suit.

We are not inclined to underestimate, as has become the fashion in some places of late, the role which Britain continues to play in the international arena as a great industrial, commercial and maritime power. The Soviet people profoundly respect the courageous and industrious people of your country, who have added to the wealth of mankind by high models of age-old labor efficiency, brilliant discoveries and achievements in many spheres of science, technology, literature and the arts. This alone creates not a bad

foundation for the development of Soviet-British relations.

For the maintenance of peace in Europe and throughout the world it is exceptionally important that the certain tension now existing in relations between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain give way to good, friendly relations. It is but natural that our two countries are particularly interested in this. You probably remember that both sides recognized in their joint statement on the results of the London talks that the strengthening of Soviet-British relations in the sphere of politics, commerce, science, culture, etc., corresponds to the interests of the people of both countries.

TRADE IMPROVEMENT ENVISAGED

The Soviet Government still holds that the London talks last year correctly determined the prospects for the development of Soviet-British relations. These talks undoubtedly were an important advance toward the establishment of understanding between the two countries. An immediate result was the pronounced expansion of cultural contacts, a certain increase in Soviet-British trade.

This successful beginning to cooperation between the two countries has of late unfortunately not been further developed, and not through any fault of ours.

As for the Soviet Government, it holds the opinion that no transient consideration could or should pre-

vail over the fundamental interests of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain and these interests demand that relations of confidence and cooperation are established between our countries.

History knows quite a few instances when our two countries had serious differences, when their relations were darkened by distrust and even hostility, but more than once they were together in years of serious trials. It is not accidental that our peoples fought shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy in two world wars.

In my opinion it is high time, in the spirit of existing agreement, to exert efforts to improve Soviet-British political relations, further expand trade and resume extensive cultural and scientific-technical exchange between the U.S.S.R. and Britain.

One cannot but note that the traditional commercial contacts between the U.S.S.R. and Britain, which date back many centuries and benefitted both countries, are now not fully used. Our foreign trade organizations informed the Government that there are practicable possibilities for a more considerable expansion of trade than in recent years. In this context I should like to emphasize that the statement made last year to the Government of Great Britain still holds good, namely that the Soviet Union, if there are no restrictions and discrimination in trade, will be able in the next five

years to increase purchases in the United Kingdom to the amount of about 9,000,000,000 to 11,000,000,000 rubles, i.e., to the amount of £800,000,000 to £1,000,000,000 sterling, given a corresponding increase in the export of Soviet goods to the United Kingdom.

There is no doubt that the expansion of mutually advantageous trade would favorably affect the economy of Britain and the Soviet Union and would simultaneously provide a firm foundation for the improvement of their political relations.

Attaching also great importance to the expansion of fruitful contacts between the Soviet and British peoples in the field of culture and desiring to promote in every way reciprocal acquaintance with the achievements of science, technology, the arts and sport, the Soviet Government proposes with this object in view to concert joint measures which would insure a considerable expansion of cultural and scientific-technical exchange between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain in the near future. On its part it is willing to authorize plenipotentiary representatives to discuss appropriate questions with British representatives.

FOR PERSONAL CONTACT

In conclusion I should like to return to the thought which statesmen of your country have also repeatedly expressed, namely, that the improve-

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ment of Anglo-Soviet relations demands both the desire of the two sides and confidence between the leaders of the Governments of the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain.

That is why my colleagues and I continue to attach great importance to the maintenance of personal contacts with British statesmen which, of course, benefitted both countries in the past and undoubtedly can produce positive results in the future too.

I expect that the considerations set forth in this letter will be duly examined by you and your colleagues in the Cabinet and that, as a result

of an exchange of opinion between us, effective methods will be found for a radical improvement in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and Britain and new possibilities will be ascertained of settling important international issues which are now subject to differences.

On our part we are, of course, willing most carefully to examine the considerations which you, Mr. Prime Minister, will find it necessary to set forth to the Soviet Government.

Respectfully yours,

N. Bulganin.

The General Elections in India*

By AJOY GHOSH

General Secretary, Communist Party of India

POLLING IN THE second general elections in India began on February 25 and concluded in most States on March 14th, both for the Lok Sabha (the Union Parliament) and for 13 out of 14 Vidhan Sabhas (State Assemblies). Also elections were held to the Territorial Councils of Tripura and Manipur. All these elections were on the basis of adult franchise. Each adult has a vote for the Assembly as well as the Parliament candidate and votes directly for both. The Parliamentary constituencies are, on an average, six times larger than Assembly constituencies.

Elections to the Kashmir State As-

sembly have not yet been completed and elections will be held in Himachal Pradesh in June for 41 members of the Territorial Council and four members for the Lok Sabha.

The total electorate consisted of 193 millions of people of whom about 51 per cent, exercised their franchise.

Official figures of the votes secured by parties and candidates have not been published yet and, therefore, one has to rely on the information given in newspapers. These, however, are sufficiently accurate for drawing broad conclusions.

The figures for the Lok Sabha elections are as follows:

Parties	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Votes Polled (Millions)	Percentage of Votes Polled
Congress	483	366	54.0	47.1
Communist Party	122	29	12.1	10.6
Praja Socialist Party	175	19	11.6	10.0
Jan Sangh	103	4	6.7	5.8
Socialist Party of India .....	.....	6	1.5	1.3
Other Parties .....	.....	39	10.6	9.3
Independents .....	.....	25	17.7	15.9

(NOTE: The Jan Sangh is a party of Hindu communalists allied to feudal elements in many areas. "Other Parties" are mostly parties confined to certain States and also include some parties which operate in several States but are not recognized as all-India parties because they polled less than 3 percent of the total votes in the last general elections. Among independents, there are several who stood with the support of the Communist Party and other Left parties.)

* The manuscript for this article was sent to *Political Affairs* from New Delhi on April 9, 1957.—Ed.

the five years since the general elections were held in 1951-52. By its role in world affairs, India has won an eminent position in the comity of nations. The Communist Party of India, which played a major role in the struggle for peace and against weapons of mass destruction, for establishment of bonds of friendship with the Socialist States and with all peace-loving forces, against colonialism and war alliances, and for Afro-Asian unity, has welcomed the orientation in the Government of India's foreign policy and tried its utmost to strengthen it further. It has demanded a break with the British Commonwealth, and determined measures to liberate Goa and other Portuguese-occupied territories on Indian soil.

Certain changes have taken place in the internal sphere also, changes in bringing about which the struggles and movements conducted by the Communist Party and other democratic forces have been a major factor. The princely States, bastions of reaction, have disappeared. Except for Bombay, the States of India have been reorganized on a linguistic basis. The national urge for the reconstruction of the country has found partial reflection in the greater emphasis on heavy industries in the Second Five Year Plan, in the nationalization of the Imperial Bank of India and of Life Insurance as well as in the declared objectives, aims and some of the proposals of the Second Five-Year Plan.

All this, however, falls far short of the needs and possibilities of the situation.

Commenting on the position that prevails inside the country, the Communist Party in its Election Manifesto, stated:

... The claims made by the Congress that all-sided advance has been registered by the country in recent years are belied by the facts. Some little progress has been made here and there—but the totality of the picture that emerges from a study of the Indian scene is far from what the ruling party would like us to believe. Not merely has very little advance been made but even the foundations of real advance have not been laid.

Conditions have not been created for effective utilization of the vast resources and manpower of the country for national reconstruction. Conditions have not been created for forging that popular unity and for rousing that ardor and enthusiasm without which the gigantic task of rebuilding the country cannot be carried out.

This is not an accident. Nor is it due to factors beyond human control. It is due to the policies of the government in the internal sphere—policies which in vital respects are anti-people and undemocratic.

They are policies of appeasement of foreign capital and of refusal to nationalization. They are policies of reliance on the profit-motive of the big capitalists, of serving their interests and of succumbing to their pressure. They are policies of concessions to landlords

and of opposition to radical agrarian reforms. They are policies of throwing the main burden on the common people, while refusing to introduce an equitable taxation system. They are policies which, under phrases of socialism, enrich the wealthy few and pay little attention to the needs and requirements of the vast majority of our people—workers, peasants, artisans, middle-class employees, teachers, traders and small manufacturers.

These are not sweeping generalizations unrelated to facts. The pamphlets published by the Communist Party, as part of its election campaign, prove this on the basis of irrefutable facts and figures supplied by official sources. The agrarian reforms are half-hearted and inadequate and even these have been implemented only in a few States. Profits have soared high while wages remain practically at the same level as in 1939. The burden of taxation on the common man has continuously increased while the proportion of taxes borne by the rich has grown less. Unemployment figures have steadily mounted. There is rampant corruption in every sphere. The powers of the bureaucracy and police remain as sweeping as ever and these powers are used to suppress popular struggles.

The Communist Party did not content itself with merely a criticism of the Congress. It formulated a concrete and detailed program showing the measures that have to be carried out in order to ensure

national advance and the rebuilding of the country.

The Communist Party held that the elections have to be fought primarily as a struggle against the anti-popular policies of the Government and with a view to revise and modify them so that the task of national reconstruction could be carried out effectively and measures could be taken which would facilitate the growth of the forces of socialism and democracy in our economic, social and political life.

The democratic front which the Indian people have to build is a front embracing all democratic sections and elements in the country—including those inside the Congress. There are vast sections inside the Congress which desire progressive and radical policies. At the same time, it was evident that the modification and reversal of the policies of the Government could be achieved only by a determined effort to weaken the monopoly position which the Congress, still dominated by its Right-wing leadership, held in our country—while simultaneously combatting the parties of feudal and communal reaction.

The power of reaction inside the Congress was eloquently demonstrated in the choice of candidates—among whom there were a number of former princes, as well as many big landlords and direct representatives of big business.

The Communist Party knew that in the existing situation and with the

present correlation of forces, it was impossible to remove the Congress from power in the Centre and in the majority of States. Hence the specific tasks it placed before itself were:

In those States where the democratic forces are especially strong, the Communist Party will strive to create conditions in which democratic governments, based on a coalition of democratic parties and individuals, can be formed. Such governments will work on the basis of an agreed program and serve the people to the best of their capacity.

In other States, the Party's endeavor will be to strengthen its own position and the position of the democratic opposition in the legislatures.

The Party stressed:

A determined effort has to be made in the coming elections to put an end to the monopoly position which the Congress enjoys. This position has meant callous betrayal of pledges, defiance of popular will, stifling of political life.

Through their experience, the masses have come to recognize the necessity of a strong opposition. Democratic-minded Congressmen themselves whose sentiments and opinions are often ignored by the ruling circles, desire such an opposition. They know it will help their own struggle inside the Congress. They know it will increase their strength and make their voice effective.

The emergence of a democratic opposition will strengthen the fight for

the rights and liberties of the people. It will strengthen the forces of socialism and democracy in our political and economic life.

The slogan of alternative Government wherever possible (Kerala and West Bengal offered such possibilities in our opinion) and the slogan of strengthening of the democratic opposition were, therefore, not conceived in a narrow sectarian spirit. They were advanced as essential tasks for the strengthening of the democratic movement as a whole.

Some people saw a contradiction between the *general* slogan of the Party—the slogan of unity of all popular forces—and the *specific* slogan advanced by the Party in the elections—the slogan of assault on the monopoly position of the Congress, the strengthening of the democratic opposition and the establishment of non-Congress democratic governments where possible. In reality, there was no contradiction because it is the anti-popular and undemocratic policies of the Congress government that stand as the biggest single obstacle in the path of national unity and the Congress is able to pursue these policies with impunity because of the overwhelmingly dominant position it occupies in the Parliament and in State Legislatures. Due to this, even democratic elements inside the Congress feel frustrated. They are not able to assert themselves and make their

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voice heard. The weakening of the position of the Congress, the strengthening of the position of the Communist Party and of the democratic parties were therefore essential for the building of popular unity. These were the key tasks to be carried out in the elections.

With these tasks in view, the Communist Party strove for united front with the Praja Socialist and other Left Parties. A great measure of success was achieved in Bengal and in certain States. In Bombay State, the main issue on which electoral alliance was achieved was the formation of linguistic States of Maharashtra and Gujerat, as well as opposition to the police atrocities against the people. In many of the States, however, no agreement could be reached—primarily because of the attitude of the Praja Socialist Party.

ELECTION FORECASTS AND AFTER

Various predictions were made by political pundits on the eve of the elections. They differed among themselves on some minor points. But on major points there was unanimity. *Firstly*, the Congress would sweep the polls, securing a much higher percentage of the votes and capturing many more seats than in 1951-52. *Secondly*, the parties of the democratic opposition would be unable to retain even their existing position. *Thirdly*, the Communist Party would suffer a "debacle" and

would emerge much weaker than before.

So powerful was this propaganda on the basis of these assumptions that even many democratic-minded people, including friends of the Communist Party, were influenced by it. Dazzled by the apparent achievements of the Government, totally underestimating the depth of mass discontent and extent of mass radicalization, they too apprehended "sweeping victories" for the Congress and "debacle" for the Communist Party.

A typical comment about the position of the Communist Party is given below:

The Communist Party faces India's second general elections at a particularly depressed period of its history. . . . The conflict at Madurai (Third Congress) between the two wings, the great debate at Palghat on the tactical line and the continuous reports of divergent approaches inside the Party to the ruling party in India are facts of great importance. But even more than this, the crisis in international Communism as indicated by the denigration of Stalin, the events in Poland and Hungary and the post-Hungary trends in the policy statements of the USSR have confused and demoralized the Party as never before. Even the most ardent Communist would not doubt the validity of this statement.*

* *National Politics and the 1957 Elections in India*, published in Feb. 1957, by the Indian Council of World Affairs, pp. 31-32.

Stalin," "Russian atrocities in Hungary" and all similar familiar "arguments" were the main propaganda weapons.

Not content with this, the ruling party sought to make use of the crisis that appeared to develop over Kashmir on the eve of polling. Mr. Govind Vallabh Pant, Home Minister of the Government of India, and one of the top leaders of the Congress declared on February 7: "Every vote cast against the Congress in the coming elections will be an expression of no-confidence in the Kashmir policy of the Government."

We combatted this campaign, pointing out that the stand taken by the Government of India on the issue of Kashmir had the backing of the entire people and to make this an election issue would, therefore, damage the cause of Kashmir and of India in the eyes of the whole world. It would make it appear that the Indian people were divided on the issue of Kashmir. Imperialists and their agents would make use of this argument against India if—as was likely—the Congress did not win a majority of votes in the elections. Mr. Pant and other leaders of the Congress, however, continued this campaign in the same vein.

Big business subscribed to the Congress election fund lavishly. In many areas, the State machinery was used to help the Congress Party. Money flowed like water to buy over votes. Appeals were made in the name of religion and even caste.

Besides this, in many constituencies intimidation was practiced on a large scale.

Writing in the *Sunday Standard* of March 31, Mr. Suresh Ram, a devout Gandhite and a follower of Acharya Vinoba Bhave, narrated his experience in a village in Uttar Pradesh about how votes were being secured for the Congress.

"We are all landless laborers," said a Harijan to him, "working for the zamindar of the locality. We are his subjects. He is a Congressite and has ordered us to vote for the Congress."

"If any stranger comes to us, the zamindar gets suspicious that we might vote against the Congress. Then he maltreats us, rebukes us."

All these facts, it is necessary to bear in mind in order to understand the tremendous difficulties under which the Communist Party and the democratic forces had to conduct their election campaign, as well as to grasp the significance of the voting figures.

WHAT THE ELECTIONS HAVE SHOWN

It can be seen from the figures given earlier that the Congress has secured 47 per cent of the votes and a massive majority in the parliament. It has won the majority of seats in all State Legislatures except in Kerala and Orissa. In Bengal, the Left opposition, while it has strengthened

its position in the Assembly, has failed to dislodge the Congress from office. From this, however, the conclusion should not be drawn that nothing has changed in the Indian political scene. The factors whose significance it is necessary to grasp are the following:

Firstly: The Communist Party of India has doubled its votes since 1951-52 and has emerged as the second party in the country in terms of seats won as well as in terms of votes polled. The Party has won seats in every State Legislature in the country, whereas it had none in several States before the elections. In most of the industrial and working-class centers of the country, the Communist Party, unlike in the last general elections, has fared very well. The Communist Party has increased its strength from 28 to 46 in Bengal Assembly. In the City of Calcutta, the Communist Party won 10 out of the 26 seats and 8 more seats were won by the Left Alliance as against only 8 in all secured by the Congress. The Communist leader, S. A. Dange, has polled the highest number of votes secured by any candidate in the country. In the State of Kerala, the Communist Party, together with independents allied to it, has won 65 out of 126 seats.

Secondly: The democratic opposition has been able to strengthen its position in most of the State Legislatures. Of great significance are the successes of the Communist Party

and Left Parties in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bombay, Bihar and Bengal which were the main bases of the national movement and in the former three of which the democratic opposition was extremely weak in the legislatures. Detailed figures are not yet available but it is evident that the Communist Party, together with the Praja Socialist Party and other Left Parties and the Scheduled Castes Federation which joined hands with Left parties have polled a substantial proportion—not less than 28 per cent—of the total votes.

Thirdly: The Congress has suffered heavy defeats in the major industrial and working-class centers of the country—a clear verdict of the working class against the labor policy of Congress. Among the defeated Congress candidates is Mr. Khandubhai Desai, the Labor Minister. In most of the major working-class centers it is Communist candidates who have won.

Fourthly: The parties of communal reaction have failed at the polls. It is true that the Jan Sangh has doubled its votes but the proportion of votes secured by it has increased by less than 3 per cent. Further, if we take all the three parties of Hindu communal reaction together—the Jan Sangh, the Hindu Maha Sabha, the Ram Rajya Parishad—their combined votes come to only 8 millions—an increase of less than 2 millions since the last general elections. In Punjab, the Jan Sangh has been able

to strengthen its position among the Hindus largely due to the Congress policy of alliance with Sikh communalists (Akalis), but even there the Communist Party has polled 1,093,506 votes—as compared with the Jan Sangh which has polled 42,799 votes. The parties of Hindu communal reaction have won a fair number of seats in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh where feudal elements are still powerful and in certain areas of Uttar Pradesh where the Government itself under Mr. Sampurnand has pursued a communal policy. The Ganatantra Parishad of Orissa, a party led by former princes and big landlords has won 51 out of 140 seats in the State Assembly by using radical slogans and thanks mainly to the State Government's policy of appeasement of and concessions to feudal elements. All the seats won by the Ganatantra Parishad are from the former princely areas of Orissa. In the greater part of the country, the parties of communal reaction have failed to make any impression. In Bengal they have suffered a total rout—losing all the 12 seats they held.

Fifthly: Some of the most reactionary elements in the country—both inside and outside the Congress—have been defeated. These include Mr. C. B. Gupta, the “strong man” of Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee and Mr. Mahesh Prasad, the Transport Minister and prospective Chief Minister of Bihar, Mr.

Bansal, the Secretary of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Mr. N. C. Chatterje, President of the Hindu Maha Sabha, Mr. Pardiwalla of the “Democratic Research Service” (an American-financed organization), Mr. Homi Mody and Mr. Da Costa, direct representatives of monopoly interests who mouth slogans of “free enterprise.”

Sixthly: The Congress itself has been able to retain its present position to a great extent only because of the progressive foreign policy of the Government and its declarations about socialism. A large number of those who have voted for the Congress, have done so not because they approve all its actual policies but because they see no alternative to it and also because they have been influenced by its foreign policy, certain progressive measures, and promises.

Seventhly: And above all, in the State of Kerala, a new Government led by the Communist Party has been formed—an event of tremendous significance for our country.

In its totality, therefore, the elections have belied the confident predictions made by bourgeois commentators. They indicate an *important shift of the masses to the Left*. It is a shift towards ideas of socialism—which in the concrete situation in India has come to be associated with the urge for radical agrarian reforms, extension of the State sector and curb on monopoly,

equitable burden of taxation and reduction of the disparity in income, living wage and trade-union rights for workers, drastic reduction in the power of the bureaucracy and police and extension of civil liberties, combatting of corruption, determined measures against unemployment and fuller democracy in every sphere, creating conditions for popular unity and all round national advance.

It is significant that all major political parties in the country conducted the election campaign in the name of socialism. The only exceptions were the parties of communal reaction who failed to win support except in some areas. The tremendous popularity which the ideas of socialism have gained has been strikingly revealed in the elections.

The elections have vindicated the line of the Communist Party of India and proved the correctness of its slogans. They have shown a considerable strengthening of the forces of peace, democracy and socialism in our political life.

At the same time, it would be a mistake not to see serious weaknesses that have been revealed and the setbacks that have been suffered. Parties of feudal and communal reaction, though unable to register advance in most areas, still remain strong in several States, and in Orissa have gained ground. In the State of Madras and in the Telengana areas of Andhra, the Communist Party won only 4 and 22 seats respectively—as compared with 13 and 32

seats in the last elections. In many of the rural areas of Bengal, we failed to win seats. A large number of sitting members were defeated in several States. The causes of these defeats will be reviewed by the Central Committee in its next meeting. These defeats and set-backs, however, do not alter the general picture which is one of growing strength of the Communist Party and of Left forces in general.

DEVELOPMENTS IN KERALA

The developments in Kerala* have attracted attention of people all over the country and also abroad. But Kerala is no isolated phenomenon. It was in Kerala that the rising tide of the democratic movement reached its highest level. The advent of the Communist-led Ministry in Kerala has to be viewed in the context of the big strides made by the democratic and socialist forces in the country, and the 12 million votes polled by the Communist Party.

At the same time, Kerala has a significance all its own. That significance lies in the fact that for the first time in India—and perhaps in any capitalist country—a Communist-led Government has been formed through the process of elections conducted under bourgeois rule. It

* Kerala is a newly-formed state in south-west India. Its area is 15,000 square miles—about twice the size of New Jersey—and its population amounts to 14,000,000—about that of New York. It has the highest degree of literacy in India and the most developed system of primary education—ed.

would be an illusion to think that a socialist revolution has taken place in Kerala. And no Indian Communist suffers from that illusion. The powers of the Government are limited. It has to function within the framework of the Indian Constitution which proclaims all private property to be sacred and inviolable, besides conferring wide powers on the President of the Republic. Further, the Ministry has to carry out its work through the existing judicial and bureaucratic administrative machinery whose higher officials have been trained to look upon themselves as a privileged caste. It must also be borne in mind that Kerala is a small State, with a high density of population, heavy pressures on land, very few industries and a large unemployed population.

Although the Communist Party, together with the independents supported by it, won a majority in the Assembly, it extended an invitation to the Praja Socialist Party to join it in forming the Government. This invitation the PSP has rejected. The PSP had no hesitation in joining hand with the Muslim League of Kerala in the elections nor in trying to form a Coalition Ministry in Orissa, headed by the Maharaja of Patna, leader of the Ganatantra Parishad, but it would have no truck with the Communist Party.

The complex problems which the Communist Government of the State, headed by Comrade E. M. S. Namboodiripad, a member of the Polit

Bureau of the Communist Party of India, is confronted with and the manner in which these problems are proposed to be tackled cannot be dealt with in this article. That will require adequate treatment on a future occasion.

It is also to be noted, however, that already difficulties are being created for the Ministry. Under the Constitution, the President of the Indian Republic is empowered to nominate an Anglo-Indian to the State Assembly. Hitherto, the custom has been that this nomination is done in consultation with the majority party. This custom was abandoned and the nomination was made without any reference to the Ministry. Further, not satisfied with the public declaration and letter of the five independent members of the Assembly that they would support the Communist-led Government, the Governor insisted on meeting them individually to "satisfy himself" that their declaration was genuine. This is in striking contrast to what was done in Orissa only a few days later where the Congress with a strength of 56 in a House of 140 was asked to form a Government on the basis of oral assurance by the leader of the Congress Party that he had a majority. Finally, on the eve of the Ministry taking office in Kerala, a notification was issued by the Governor increasing the pay-scale of gazetted, i.e., higher officials—thus facing the new Ministry with a *fait accompli*.

Cooperation between the Central Government and the Government of Kerala is essential in order to carry out the stupendous tasks that face the people of Kerala, and the Kerala Ministry will strive its utmost to secure this cooperation. It is to be earnestly hoped that this will be forthcoming.

The working people all over the country and democratic elements in all parties, including the Congress, have hailed the formation of the new Government in Kerala. They hope that the measures adopted by the Government will not only benefit

the people of Kerala but will have its impact on other State Governments as well.

Our Party is faced with complex and difficult tasks in the new situation that is opening up. The status it has won in the political life of the country places heavy burdens on its shoulders. It shall be our constant endeavor to improve ourselves, our work, and strengthen our Marxist-Leninist consciousness, so that we may discharge our responsibilities to our great people and further develop the people's movement for peace, democracy and socialism.

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