

# *The American* **Socialist**

OCTOBER 1956

35 CENTS

The Power Elite:

**WHO RUNS  
AMERICA?**



## *The 1956 Elections*

# CLIPPINGS

**A** "LABOR'S Daily" columnist reminds us that the Democratic Party added a billion dollars to the arms budget over Eisenhower's objection. "They have reinforced the glue on the label which may have been pasted on them. The label says 'war party.' This does not mean the Democrats are about to provoke a war or even want one. It does, though, mean that they have adopted the philosophy of 'Arm-to-the-teeth.' Unless they produce a genuine peace platform the Democrats will have no chance—and no right to supplant Eisenhower."

**"FORTUNE"** magazine philosophizes about labor-management relations and long contracts in its August issue: "Why companies seek long term contracts is plain enough. They want an end, as one steel executive put it, to the 'Guaranteed annual argument.' For somewhat the same reason union leaders like long-term contracts too. The rank-and-file members don't; they dislike being tied up for years—a leader of the Glass Workers admitted, for example, that the union officers 'caught hell' from the members last year for the three-year contract. But many union leaders would welcome a breather from the pressure of having to 'deliver' each year.

"Long contracts will become more commonplace, particularly in large corporations which believe they can calculate rising productivity and commit themselves to sizable wage increases three or more years in advance. More important, labor relations continue to grow more bureaucratized, and so will labor itself."

**T**HE August 17 British "Tribune," paper of the Bevan wing of the Labor Party, carries this information on the discussion going on among British Communists: "The honeymoon is over in the Communist Party. The Stalin revelations and the apparent free-for-all discussion marked a new era in the CP, or so some comrades believed. But they have been told: 'Enough.'

"First to hear the King Street whip crack have been the party members around the new unofficial paper, the 'Reasoner.' Its success within the party has put the wind up the executive. Requests for copies even reached King Street! Already branches are being asked to pass a special resolution, directing members not to buy the news-sheet.

"Besides this attempt to check the spread of 'subversive' literature, there has been a vigorous attack on the intellectual group that started the discussions.

"Under the title 'Don't Disarm Our Party!' in a recent issue of the Communist Party policy organ, 'World News,' G. L. Jones knocks soundly on the head the idea of disbanding the party. . . ."

**D**OROTHY Day, editor of "The Catholic Worker" says in the September issue of the paper: "We are happy to see the peoples

of Iceland and others objecting to our air bases and we hope that the people will awaken to the fact that our occupation of islands like Formosa for defense of our coasts is just as fantastic as if the Russians occupied Vancouver and Newfoundland as air bases to defend themselves. The principles we stand for in the moral order, in the natural order, and, of course, in the supernatural order cannot be defended by force of arms."

**T**HE recent steel contract contains a superior Supplementary Unemployment Benefits plan to the one negotiated by Reuther last year for auto. Maximum benefit duration is 52 weeks against auto's 26 weeks. Administration costs are borne by the companies in steel, instead of by the fund as in auto. Accumulation of credit units depends on seniority in auto while all employees get a one-half credit for each week worked in steel. On several points, though, the steel arrangement is inferior. UAW has equal representation in administering the plan, but in steel, the companies have sole authority. Auto benefits are reduced only if the fund falls below 13 percent of its maximum, then benefits are cut 20 percent. Steel benefits are cut as the fund falls.

A big UAW delegation attended the recent convention of the Plumbers Union and put on a dazzling display with anti-Kohler banners. They tried to get the delegates to

adopt a resolution not to install Kohler plumbing fixtures. But the resolutions committee reported unfavorably on the proposition. The convention thereupon adopted a mild resolution opposing the appropriation of federal funds to purchase the company's products.

AFL-CIO President George Meany told a conference of union economists and researchers that automation "could turn out a curse to civilization rather than a blessing." He said that the drive for the shorter work week with no cut in pay had to be labor's next goal. "The history of the progress towards the shorter work week and day is the history of the labor movement."

**O**N July 12 Federal District Judge Edward P. Murphy in San Francisco ordered the coast guard to return forthwith the validated papers of screened seamen. The Coast Guard appealed the decision and continued stalling. On August 27, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Judge Murphy's order. The Coast Guard now has thirty days to decide whether it will obey the order or appeal to a still higher court.

"Friends of Diamond Kimm" have sent out an urgent communication concerning the proposed deportation of Diamond Kimm to South Korea. They point out that the sole offense alleged against him is the overstaying of a visa, and as he is publisher of the paper, "Korean Independence," and an all-out opponent of the Syngman Rhee government, he very likely would suffer death if deported. The committee urges that letters be sent to Mr. David M. Carnahan, Southwest Regional Director, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Terminal Island, San Pedro, California, urging him to cancel the deportation order.

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## The 1956 Elections

THE major-party conventions this August were treated with more or less open contempt by leading political commentators and analysts. For preposterous and sub-juvenile antics, the conventions seem to have been about standard—similar to previous years. But, perhaps in part because of television, perhaps because the politicians are behind the country in growing up, they were considered more shocking to behold this year than ever before.

Foreign observers have great difficulty in comprehending the institution. Sixty years ago, M. Ostrogorski took an amazed look and wrote:

*You collect your impressions and you realize what a colossal travesty of popular institutions you have just been witnessing. A greedy crowd of office holders, or of office seekers, disguised as delegates of the people, on pretense of holding the grand council of the party, indulged in, or were victims of intrigues and maneuvers. . . . You cannot help repeating the American saying: "God takes care of drunkards, of little children, and of the United States."*

Some of the confusion of those who observe these circus-and-revival displays comes from a failure to understand that their object is anything but deliberative. From the time they originated in the Jacksonian period, when the growing complexity of sectional, class, and patronage interests as well as mass suffrage made the old Congressional caucus too narrow a device for encompassing a national party, the conventions have evolved into a standardized ritual. The extravagant keynote speeches, the vagaries pro-

duced by the platform committees—designed, in the words of Lord Bryce, "neither to define nor to convince, but to attract and confuse"—the frantic nominating speeches and the frenzied floor demonstrations (known in the trade as "fakes"), all follow a stylized pattern that was established years ago.

LIKE the Indians' war dance, the conventions ready the tribe for battle. Three-and-a-half years out of four, the parties are loose conglomerations of local machines, most of these having no more special affinity for their own party than for the other. They must be, as the London *Economist* put it, "conjured into a sense of cohesion before each presidential election." The party managers need the show badly to convince the wardheelers from Podunk that there is actually such a thing as a Democrat or a Republican, and that it's better to be one than the other—this being a deep point of philosophy not generally encompassed by local politics as she is played.

The ritualistic nature of a Democratic or Republican convention is never so clearly marked as in a period like the present, when the differences between the parties are slight and becoming slighter.

Since both parties defend the same economic system and overall philosophy, in the nature of things the course of the two-party system is one of brief outbursts of conflict punctuating long stretches of peace which leave the party functionaries desperate for battlecries to rally the lukewarm. The parties take their coloration from the most recent of the big battles, and the memories of these provide a rallying ground for the times when there is little to fight about.

In the eyes of most Americans, our two parties are still indelibly marked by the contrasting stands with which they met the Great Depression of the thirties. In the actual fact, however, only the slightest of remnants of the raging battles of the thirties attaches to either party. The New Deal is a long time dead, and some of the social gains won through it have long since been recognized by both parties as irreversible features of our society. The parties have changed to the point where only a small minority in each stands for the things which dominated them in the thirties. And finally and most important, the times have changed. The issues of today are considerably different, and the answers naturally have to be also.

The two conventions, coming towards the close of the first Republican administration after 20 years of continuous Democratic rule, put the capstone to the process. It has been foolish for some time to judge the parties of today by the moods and emotions of Roosevelt's first five years and Hoover's last three, but now it has become downright insane. Both parties have served clear and unmistakable notice of the existence of an entirely new era of American politics, notice which may be disregarded only at the risk of completely missing the mark in understanding the country.

EISENHOWER'S acceptance speech at the Republican convention emphasized the theme he has been hitting for a number of months: The Republican Party must be transformed into the "party of the future," and the Old Guard elements must be re-educated in the new philosophy. While socialists and other radicals don't exactly have to clutch their laurels of progressivism to make sure Eisenhower is prevented from stealing them, still this theme is not all rhetoric. The Republican Party has gone through a considerable evolution in the past two decades.

The Rooseveltian nostrums for fighting the depression were of very dubious success, and the decade of the thirties ended in a stalemate between the government and the economic breakdown, with some nine million unemployed and production still below the 1929 level. But the war made a success story out of the New Deal, wiping out unemployment, getting the economy back into high gear, enriching

the corporations as never before in their history, and thus providing the classic happy ending to a story that seemed fated to be a tragedy.

With the war, Federal spending was transformed—for good and all—from welfare and make-work spending on a small scale to arms spending on a massive scale. Problems of foreign policy took precedence over domestic policy. Business executives, bankers, industrialists, and investment brokers swarmed into Washington after 1939, replacing the professors or elbowing them into the background. Social legislation came to a halt, and the pressure for it declined among the workers and other groups at the bottom of the economic ladder as war prosperity replaced depression.

In these circumstances, the old Republican stance of ferocious opposition to the Democratic policies rapidly lost sense, as the more acute and responsible Republicans saw. While many small-change matters still remained open to discussion and dispute, it was soon plain that on the broad lines of policy there was nothing to fight about. The opening of the cold war in 1946 underlined this fact, made the cohesion all the more solid, and emphasized the lack of difference between the parties.

**E**VER since the Willkie campaign, it has been a matter of widespread suspicion that the Republicans were offering as candidates only twin brothers, policy-wise, to the Democratic candidates. But, so long as the Democrats won, the Republicans remaining out of power were an indeterminate quality. Many unreconstructed elements remained in the party, their policies based upon memories of the thirties, lunatic-fringe rightism, or stiff-necked traditionalism. What would result from the pulling and hauling inside the Republican Party when it held power was an open question.

After the Eisenhower victory, the Republicans passed through a number of crises, the most serious of which was the McCarthy affair. That famous affray was disguised under McCarthy's lurid "anti-communist" war paint, but it represented a clear and aggressive bid for power on the part of those Old Guard and extremist elements of the Republican Party which wanted

to: (1) Launch an all-out offensive against the social legislation of the thirties and, most likely take on the labor movement in the process; (2) Break all limits on the witch-hunt and work a transformation in America's political structure in the direction of police dictatorship; and (3) Replace the massive and cautious anti-communist alliance-building and containment policy with a reckless adventurism, probably heading towards war very soon. The cry of "communist" was to be used against any one that stood in the way, including not only the Democratic Party, but also recalcitrant elements in the leadership of the Republicans as well.

Although the Republican big-wigs met the challenge very gingerly, and fought it with kid gloves, there should have been no real doubt about the outcome, as there was no significant section of our ruling class that was attracted by such a sharp break in

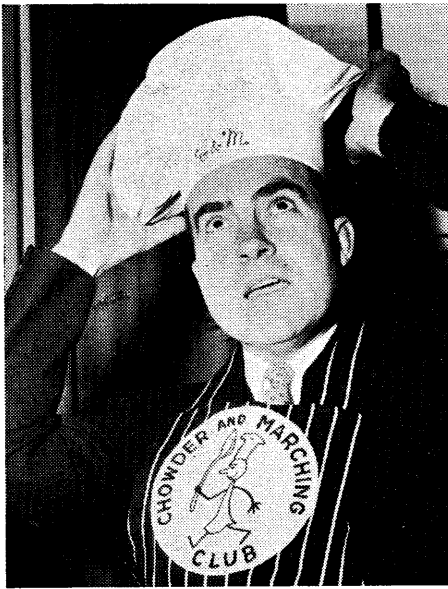


Aides and the press turn out to follow Eisenhower's doings in a congenial scene of the Presidential office, 1952-56.

policy. The sentiment in 1952 for continuing the course that had been set under Democratic auspices in the preceding ten years was all but unanimous among the holders of economic and political power. The McCarthy rebellion was—messily and in cowardly fashion—put down. In the months that followed, the bid was repeated in limited form by Knowland, Radford, and Nixon as crises came up in foreign policy. But even these more restricted attempts met with no success, neither in the Indo-China nor Formosa crises. The Democratic Party's overall course was being faithfully continued.

**I**N the sphere of domestic economic policy, the Republicans were going to show the country what "hard money" and "a sound dollar" meant. Early in his regime, Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey tried to tighten up credit by raising the interest rates on new Treasury bonds and by other manipulations. But the resulting wobbliness in the bond market and the shakiness of other economic indicators caused an outcry from good Republican businessmen all across the nation. "We are glad to know the brakes work but we don't want to go through the windshield," cried *Business Week*. The administration was soon back on looser credit and "softer" money in the best Roosevelt-Truman tradition.

Administration Republicans who had long decried easy credit and "inflationary consumer borrowing" soon found themselves riding the biggest credit binge in our history, a binge that is still on its rocketing way and which has a questionable end ahead of it. In 1953, only about six percent of Veterans Administration mortgage loans were on home purchases with no down payment; by 1955 nearly two-fifths of VA loans were in that category. When the Republicans came into office, the government was guaranteeing one-fourth of all mortgages; by 1955 this had risen to one-third. Many other like statistics can be cited to show that while the Republican National Committee proposes, the hard fact of a crisis-threatened economy disposes. Programs that seem to be adopted out of the minds of men can often be traced to unalterable circumstances that come ahead of any set plans or propaganda speeches.



NIXON

In the field of government spending on social services, there has been no noticeable break between Truman and Eisenhower. While all such spending has been severely limited by the war budget, that happened a long time ago, and the Eisenhower spending plans in this sphere are, if anything, a little larger than Truman's; witness the highway program. So far as government intervention in the working of the economy is concerned, no break is discernible here either, and the Humphrey-Burns team is apparently even more watchful of every dip and shift that might require government attention than were their predecessors in office.

ALL of this causes the Republican minority to rail that there are now "two New Deal parties," or even "two Marxist parties." What it really means is that the money barons and men of influence in both parties have become fully convinced that a break with the policies of the past fifteen years would blow the equilibrium sky high, and they are sufficiently satisfied with the present drift to reject extreme counsels.

The shift in the Republican Party was epitomized at this last convention in San Francisco. For the first time since the Landon campaign of 1936, there was no fight. The Willkie-Dewey-Eisenhower line of succession has taken over unquestioned dominance. McCarthy and MacArthur, both of whom

played a big role in the 1952 convention, did not even put in an appearance this time.

One fly remained stuck in the ointment. Richard Nixon, chosen as a compromise offering to the Taft Old Guard in 1952, remains the Vice-Presidential candidate, and as such nurtures right-wing hopes for a comeback. There is no question that the top Republican figures—men like Lucius Clay, Sherman Adams, John J. McCloy, and Winthrop Aldrich—did try to do something about this unwelcome vestigial remain, and, it is rumored actually inspired Harold Stassen's trial balloon. But not even the combined financial and technological brains of Chase National Bank and Continental Can could solve the problem. That is the price which must be paid for running a man who remains—whatever the doctors say—in a poor spot on the mortality tables: You can't draw attention to the fact by starting a last-ditch fight over the Vice Presidency. But there is more than one way to bell a cat, and no law says that Nixon has to remain an enemy of the Republican Party's new orientation. After all, Chase National Bank and General Motors can still raise a bigger campaign fund than any group of California businessmen, and Nixon is a smart young man.

THE Democratic Party, since the New Deal, has been the repository for the class feelings of the low-income groups. Contrary to all the propaganda, this country *does* vote by economic class. Pollsters who make the rounds asking people why they vote as they do find that the most common reason given for voting Democratic is that it is the "workingman's party," or the party "for poorer people." Samuel Lu-

bell, in "Revolt of the Moderates," worked out some truly amazing breakdowns of voting by economic status, and the consistency of class voting they show is phenomenal. There is, for example, his table of presidential voting in Houston, Texas. The figures give the percentages of the votes received by the Democrats in the last five presidential elections. The votes are broken down by precincts according to the average home valuation in each group. The trend away from the Democratic Party is clearly apparent, but, more important for our present purposes, if one looks up and down the list for any one year it is seen that the Democratic vote increases with iron consistency as the average value of homes in the area declines—and this has been true for every Presidential election since 1936. Analyses of votes in every part of the country yield similar results.

The Negro people vote 75 to 90 percent Democratic, and evidence gathered by conscientious investigators like Gallup and Lubell assures us that the basic push behind this voting is *not* the Democratic Party's civil-rights record—how could it be?—but the poverty-stricken condition of the mass of the Negroes. The union vote, facts show, has continued to go Democratic by 2-to-1 or 3-to-1 majorities.

Voting by class and economic status, polarized in the depression, has therefore given the Democratic Party the aura of a lower-class or "labor" party. The emotional and psychological attachments established in a time of stress generally die hard, and the Democratic reputation has continued long past the time when there are facts to warrant it. The Democrats have been moving at a fast pace towards the center of

DEMOCRATIC PERCENT FOR PRESIDENT IN HOUSTON PRECINCTS RANKED BY AVERAGE HOME VALUATION

Average Valuation	1952	1948	1944	1940	1936
Over \$30,000	6	7	18	29	57
\$19,000	13	29	35	47	71
\$15,000	22	25	50	58	81
\$13,000	22	23	52	60	79
\$10,000	26	33	64	74	86
\$ 9,000	33	40	68	80	90
\$ 8,000	50	61	79	85	93
\$ 7,000	49	57	78	88	93
\$ 5,000	60	66	84	89	94
Under \$5,000	60	72	87	89	91

the road where they have met, and in some respects even passed, the Republicans. The rightward swing of the Democratic Party also got its shrill formalization at the August convention.

The civil-rights plank of the Democratic Party is a clear reversal of previous promises. Far from being a "compromise" clause, as the Democrats pre-



fer to have the country believe, it declares for the Southern racists as flatly and clearly as politicians ever say anything. The generalizations in favor of Negro rights mean nothing at all, as the Dixiecrats proved by voting for them. Specifically, all the previous commitments of the Democrats to work for certain Federal measures were knocked out of the plank. And more important, on the great school-integration struggle now wracking the South, it incorporates the Dixiecrat contention—even to the wording—that the Supreme Court decision is "part" of the law of the land, thereby inferring what the racists openly state: that other "parts" of the law, notably state legislation, can run counter to that ruling. And the rejection of "force" in the application of the Supreme Court ruling is a barely concealed promise not to use Federal machinery to "enforce" the law.

**A** SPOKESMAN for Reuther's United Auto Workers told the press after the convention about this plank: "The important thing now is how the party's candidates interpret it. We feel certain Governor Stevenson and Senator Kefauver will interpret it the same way we do. Therefore our basic objective has been realized." But, strangely enough, the Dixiecrats also feel certain that Stevenson will see things their way. Of course, it is hardly rare in politics for candidates to leave room for enough ambiguity so that they can get support from directly opposing sides of

an issue. This fine art has come to a state of great perfection in this country. But, in this case, the labor spokesman is just talking through his hat. He has nothing but a hope and a prayer to go on, while the South has firm commitments from Stevenson dating back three years and too plain to be misinterpreted.

After his defeat in 1952, Stevenson set out on a national tour with two objectives. He wanted to consolidate his position with the party regulars and machine men by helping to clear off the debts accumulated by the Democrats during the campaign. And he wanted to arrange an accommodation with the Southern Democrats, whose defection had been costly to him. He spoke from the steps of Georgia's state capitol with Herman Talmadge, he negotiated with Byrnes, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Russell, and all the other prominent leaders, either directly or through Democratic National Chairman Butler. The upshot was that the Southern Democrats were soon firmly united around Stevenson for the nomination, and they were never seriously shaken from that position right up to August 1956. How deeply Stevenson involved himself with his erstwhile Southern enemies cannot be known, but that it was deep enough is sure.

The rise of the new Democratic conservatism is intimately bound up with the career of Adlai Stevenson. In 1952, when Harriman was rejected by the party bosses as too closely identified with labor, the New Deal, and

the ADA, Stevenson was picked as a showcase figure, and that is all he was. Today, Stevenson is the most powerful figure in the Democratic Party, having fought Truman to a finish and relegated him to the position of hind-titular leader. And the rise of Adlai Stevenson has a clear meaning for all who do not wish to deceive themselves.



**S**TEVENSON, and his dominant bloc, like Eisenhower, is out to remake his party into a party of "moderation." In the case of the Republicans, this involves giving up the fruitless battle against the established changes and incorporating them into the New Republicanism. In the case of the Democratic Party, this means abandoning the last pretenses of a New Deal *rational*, of saying farewell to reform. The index of Stevenson's outlook is much better plumbed by what he told the gilded audience of *Fortune* than by reading his electioneering rhetoric. Consider the following comments in his October 1955 article on the topic of business and government:

### Barrel of Fish

**T**HE conventions were conclaves of wealth. At the Republican gathering, a stock ticker was set up in the lobby of the Fairmont Hotel to keep the delegates in touch. Inez Robb, a columnist for Scripps-Howard, wrote from San Francisco: "Since I'm just crazy about (1) men and (2) money, and find a combination of the two irresistible, I am as happy here as a clam at high tide or a cat in a barrel of fish."

The same big thrill was also available in Chicago. Tony Weitzel, columnist for the *Chicago Daily News*, did a bit of checking and came up with the golden intelligence that no fewer than 315 millionaires were on hand for the festivities of America's most plebeian major party, 275 of them being delegates.

*If it is expected that comment on this subject by one sometimes close to government—particularly a Democrat!—must inevitably be antagonistic and critical, and slanted against "Big Business," I promise disappointment. I think of this relationship between business and government as essentially one of cooperation between two institutional forces wholly dependent upon each other . . . it became part of the ritual of New Deal politics to castigate a business system that has always been recognized as the only permanent source of the jobs and consuming power which "the government" was trying to restore. . .*

*"Economic royalists" was an unfair and unfortunate epithet.*

Stevenson's liberalism is of the neo-Wilsonian kind; his "New America" resembles the "New Freedom" in being strong on ear-filling rhetoric and collegiate catch phrases. In power, Wilsonianism proved that it was very little more than the politics of drift.

On the most basic issues facing the country—the cold war, the crisis of our educational and social services, the Negro's battle for his rights, the steady build-up towards economic troubles—Stevenson has no change to offer. America has for ten years been in the grip of a raging witch-hunt, but he does not have a single word to say about that, nor does the Democratic platform. The "New America," like Wilson's New Freedom, seems to have a big place in it for the J. Edgar Hoovers. Even the promises to labor, with which the Democrats have been lavish in past elections, have been watered down to a few weak generalities in the current campaign.

**T**HUS the Democratic Party, is, before our eyes, crossing the divide that separates the Roosevelt era from the Eisenhower era. It is concluding a treaty of peace with the "interests" against which it railed—and occasionally acted—and signing on board the good ship *Moderation* for the next trip.

The voyage is off to a calm start. Labor and the liberals have gotten themselves completely beguiled at the outset by Stevenson's egg-shaped dome and pear-shaped tone. It is doubtful that either group has a clear notion of what is happening to their party. When events begin to wake them up, it is likely that the long-standing coalition which makes up the Democratic Party will be tested by the severest strains it has yet had to bear. Stevenson in office would prove a frightful disappointment that not even his celebrated wit would compensate for.

Labor's jump onto the Stevenson bandwagon has left the impression that the union leaders got just what they wanted at the convention and wielded a lot of influence there. But labor only looked strong because it was going along with the dominant Democratic bloc. Actually, in spite of its 17 million organized members, its lobbyists carry less weight with Congress now than they have since 1936, and even

at the Democratic convention its voice did not compare with that of the Rooseveltian era.

The position of the unions in the Democratic Party has long been that of a top coalition partner without any real control. Roosevelt, while accepting labor's aid, or "supping at labor's table" as John L. Lewis phrased it during the blowup over the Little Steel strike of 1937, was careful to keep the labor movement far from the levers of power. Lewis finally got tired of the uneven bargain.

*A political coalition [he said, in a famous speech at the United Mine Workers Convention in 1940], at least, presupposes a post-election good faith between the coalescent interests. The Democratic Party and its leadership have not preserved this faith. In the last three years, labor has not been given representation in the cabinet, nor in the administrative or policy-making agencies of government. The current administration has not sought nor seriously entertained the advice or views of labor upon the question of national unemployment or lesser questions affecting domestic economy, . . . relations with foreign nations, or the issues of war or peace.*

For all of Lewis's foolishness in turning to Wendell Willkie, there was a lot of sound sense in this view of a coalition, but the union chieftains, under Hillman's leadership, got rid of Lewis and continued the one-sided coalition entirely on Democratic Party terms, without any firm commitment or real role in either the party or the government in exchange for its powerful backing. And the Democratic Party heads, increasingly certain of the labor and low-income vote at this cheap price, gave labor less and less.

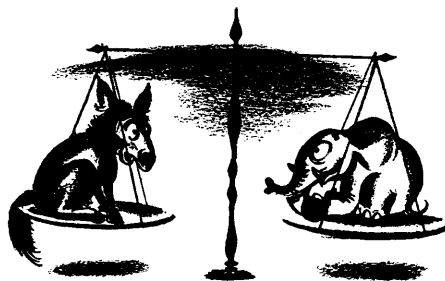
**I**N the past half-decade, however, there has been a change. Reuther

and some other union leaders have attempted to renew the efforts which the CIO made earlier to take control of local party machinery. Where the CIO lost in its 1938 attempts to win control in Ohio and Pennsylvania, Reuther has met with a good deal of success. Eight of 51 Democrats in Michigan's House come directly from organized labor, and in the big industrial centers of the state, labor's representation on party bodies has grown large. Then, aided by a split in Michigan's Republican Party (Ford and GM carried over their car-selling competition into a party grudge fight), the Democrats took over the state. The UAW leadership, as a result, has gained a voice in state party matters.

The growing strength of the independent liberal forces is showing itself in various ways. Over 200 labor delegates were elected to the Democratic Convention, and with the ADA and NAACP supporters, they made up a sizable force. The Negro-Dixiecrat struggle has reached a frightful intensity, and is ripping apart the antipathetic forces within the party. As the implications of Stevensonism emerge more clearly, and particularly if its meaning becomes clarified from the vantage point of high office, the Democratic Party will be the scene of important realignments.

**T**HE Left has been told that it ought to support the Democratic candidates. The Communist Party offers this advice, and, from the other end of the radical spectrum, socialists in Reuther's entourage back the same proposition. The Democratic Party, it is argued, will sooner or later burst asunder and the forces for a new party will come mainly from there. Hence socialists should be with the Democratic Party.

The connection between the two propositions is so feeble as to constitute a *non sequitur*. How the Left can, by wiping out its own independent political identity, increase the pressure on the Democratic Party remains a mystery. The idea that the Democratic Party is a "place to work in" like a union is nothing but foolishness, as the ward clubs and party committees are not "people's organizations" but patronage or electioneering bodies staffed by ward heelers and not by "Democrat-



ic working-class elements." In its present weakened state, the Left could not even become the tail to the labor leaders' kite within the Democratic Party. In practice, what this line has boiled down to every time it has been tried is simply for the radicals to blacken their own name, confuse and miseducate their own following, and throw the left-wing movement back without noticeably adding to its influence or opportunities for work.

Moreover, the Left is in an ideological and organizational crisis; its remaining supporters are prey to demoralization and confusion. If it adds to this the Machiavellian scheme of supporting the nation's foremost cold-war and racist party, it will quickly dissipate its slim following. The Communist Party does not appear to realize it, but its ludicrous efforts to get in there like one of the boys and sagely discuss the

relative merits of Stevenson and Harri-man look dishonest, opportunistic and a bit funny in a pathetic sort of way.

The Democratic Party is due for an internal crisis one of these years, but if the radicals dive into it looking for respectability and excitement, the socialist movement won't even be around when that crisis does bring a realignment in American politics. Right now American radicalism is in a tight fix, and can only save itself from more or less complete destruction by a great effort to map out an honest and independent line and a clear view of the world, to recapture the fervor of socialism and to begin once more to initiate some of the more responsive and idealistic youth of the nation. The Democratic Party maneuver is not only foolish in the extreme, but a terribly damaging blow at that effort, with which it is in basic conflict. Only if the Left

can reorganize and then strengthen its forces, will it be in a position to influence any leftward developments within the Democratic Party as they occur.

**T**WO other courses have been discussed in the Left press. The first is to vote for one of the left-wing sects—Socialist Party, Socialist Labor Party, Socialist Workers Party—which will appear on a few state ballots. The other is not to vote for a Presidential candidate at all.

The first is an answer of individual conscience rather than a solution with any real promise. The sects have nothing to offer as a way of participating in the electoral contest, as they are themselves completely out of it, nor, what is far more important, have they anything to offer for the future of American radicalism, as they are sterile, dried up.

And not voting (some more militantly call it "boycotting the elections," but it would be a boycott that goes unnoticed) isn't very satisfactory either. It is true that the biggest party in America is the Non-Voters Party, which is always bigger than either of the others and often bigger than both put together. It is also a growing party, as sixty years ago far larger percentages of Americans used to vote. But, as there is no real boycott, not very much is registered by a non-vote, although sometimes a socialist has no choice but to do just that.

There is occasionally real merit in backing a local Negro, labor, or genuinely liberal candidate, but obviously this is a solution of very limited scope and can only be practiced in isolated instances.

Most of our readers, we are sure, will not find it possible to vote for either major party, and will of necessity adopt one of the two other tactics mentioned. But it would be wrong to pretend that either is a real solution. The bitter truth is there is no avenue by which socialists can effectively participate in the coming Presidential election, and no trick gimmick changes that.

Whichever answer our readers adopt, we believe all of us have to dedicate ourselves to rebuilding, from the ground up, a socialist movement which can again offer the people genuine alternatives on the electoral scene.

### 1960 Ticket: Young & Rubicam?

**I**NCREASINGLY, the major parties are turning their campaigns over to advertising agencies. The Republicans have retained Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborne, and Young & Rubicam this year, while the Democrats have hired Norman, Craig and Kummel. *Advertising Agency* for August 31 had this injured note:

*One of the strangest comments to have come out of either convention was Adlai Stevenson's renunciation of advertising as a force in campaigning. In his acceptance speech, Stevenson said, "The men who run the Eisenhower administration evidently believe that the minds of Americans can be manipulated by shows, slogans and the arts of advertising. . . . This idea that you can gather votes like box tops—is, I think, the ultimate indignity to the democratic process." Mr. Stevenson perhaps has forgotten the Democratic national committee has retained one of the top advertising agencies of the country to handle its cause with 31 people on the account. . . . Both national committees have retained agencies, and. . . many state committees, both Democratic and Republican, retain agencies to handle campaigns in their states.*

The trend to advertising agencies got rolling in earnest in 1940 when Wendell Willkie, an unknown, was wrapped, packaged, and sold like tinned ham as the Republican candidate in a few short months. Their use is now widespread in

every locality as well as in national races. In California, both parties normally put their campaigns in the hands of one of about a dozen public relations firms. Whitaker & Baxter, the California agency that organized the splendiferous champagne supper for 8,000 at the Republican convention this year, has run more than 75 campaigns in less than 20 years, and has been victorious in almost all. At the bidding of the A.M.A. (and for a whopping \$4.7 million fee) this firm undertook to identify, in the public mind, health insurance with "socialized medicine."

**T**HE advertising-agency rage has taken hold in the South, where the apparently spontaneous idiocies of "Happy" Chandler are carefully mapped by method-in-his-madness boys from Madison Avenue. In Southern campaigns, this has encouraged a growing stress on race-supremacy, as the agencies tend to seize upon those aspects of political policy which bring dramatic results. Frank Graham and Claude Pepper were defeated in 1950 by this theme.

The Nixons and the Knowlands depend upon the advertising agencies but—before the liberals start howling—so do the Meyners and the Stevensons. After 1952, a politician told a Congressional committee: "If present tendencies continue, our Federal elections will increasingly become contests not between candidates but between great advertising firms." The novel called "The Golden Kazoo" by John G. Schneider, published this year, portrays just such a contingency in the 1960 campaign.



Who rules America? Is this a "classless democracy," or are we governed by an elite of power and wealth? An important new book provides telling evidence about the structure of American society.

# Who Runs America?

by Bert Cochran

**T**HE Power Elite\*\* is an important book. It deals with an important subject—the structure of American society and the nature of America's rulers. Its author, C. Wright Mills, is a scholar of note, and his work bears the stamp of immense research, conscientious study of the literature of the field, and an attempt to generalize the relevant material in a scientific fashion. The book is readable, and issued by a reputable publisher.

On every count, this work should have created a great stir and become the subject matter of animated discussion and serious debate.

But nothing of the sort happened. The book was duly advertised, it received the customary number of indifferent reviews (except in the poorly read Left press), and within a matter of weeks was engulfed by the myriad distractions of our existence, and forgotten. The lackadaisical atmosphere of America of 1956, with its intellectual indifference, its blasé stance, its small change *realpolitik*, and its aimless drift, constitutes the best antidote, for the moment, to any social stirring against the status quo, or any challenge to the powers-that-be. The plutocracy, in the past, had to counter the charges of the muckrakers with elaborate rationalizations. At present, it can simply shrug its shoulders and show bored amusement towards its critics—and let it go at that. Why answer when no one cares?

But the picture that C. Wright Mills draws of American

life has implications and consequences so frightening that they cannot and will not be evaded too long. A man may go off on a drinking spree for a spell and push away unpleasant thoughts that would crowd in on him. But sooner or later he has to get up in the gray dawn and face the pitiless world. The American people are similarly situated. Time is running out on the somewhat pathetic Babbitt-like euphoria of the age of Truman and Eisenhower, because this era of good feeling spiked with anxiety, this live-for-today optimism with its overtone of hysteria is based on an economic and social equilibrium that is getting uncertain and will in due course collapse.

To return to Mills and his book. From his examination of important facets of our social system, and the interaction of people and institutions, Mills arrives at this flat conclusion:

*The economy—once a great scatter of small productive units in autonomous balance—has become dominated by two or three hundred giant corporations, administratively and politically interrelated, which together hold the keys to economic decisions.*

*The political order, once a decentralized set of several dozen states with a weak spinal cord, has become a centralized, executive establishment which has taken up into itself many powers previously scattered, and now enters into each and every cranny of the social structure.*

*The military order, once a slim establishment in a context of distrust fed by state militia, has become the largest and most expensive feature of government, although well versed in smiling public relations, now has all the grim and clumsy efficiency of a sprawling bureaucratic domain.*

The leading men in these three domains—the corporation chieftains, the warlords and the political heads—tend to merge to form what Mills calls "the political elite" of America. It is this triangle of power that constitutes the decisive structure of government. And "as the institutional means of power and the means of communications that tie them together have become steadily more efficient, those now in command of them have come into command of instruments of rule quite unsurpassed in the history of mankind."

**M**ANY modern sociologists have concentrated their studies on the small town in an effort to demonstrate the scattered nature of the upper classes and the diversity of interests, and then by a process of simple addition, have tried to generalize the sum totals into the American System. There is this much truth in the assertion that the setup of a small town or individual city is a microcosm of the national structure: "In every town and small city of America an upper set of families stands above the middle classes and towers over the underlying population of clerks and wage workers. The members of this set possess more than do others of whatever there is locally to possess; they hold the keys to local decision; their names and faces are often printed in the local paper; in fact they own the newspaper as well as the radio station; they also own the three important local plants and most



C. WRIGHT MILLS

\**THE POWER ELITE* by C. Wright Mills. Oxford University Press, New York, 1956, \$6.

of the commercial properties along the main street; they direct the banks."

But while the towns may reproduce on a tiny scale the national picture, it is wrong to view them as autonomous bodies. During the past century especially, local society has become tied in with the national economy, and its local lights have become subordinate parts of the national hierarchies. "The little cities look to the big cities," and in these there flourish a recognizable upper social class who belong to the right clubs, who have the right bank balances and connections, whose sons and daughters go to the right type of prep and finishing schools, who finally graduate to assume full membership in the "nationally recognized upper social class."

Since this country has no feudal tradition, and parvenus have continually broken into the ranks of the older rich, "the American upper class is merely an enriched bourgeoisie . . . Money—sheer, naked, vulgar money—has with few exceptions won its possessors entrance anywhere and everywhere into American society." Haven't we been reading however about the redistribution of wealth in recent years, and how taxes are now making it all but impossible to maintain and pass on huge aggregates of wealth? Aren't we all part of a great middle class today? "Such notions," Mills observes dryly, "are not quite accurate . . . The fabulously rich, as well as the mere millionaires, are still very much among us."

*In capitalistic economies, wars have led to many opportunities for the private appropriation of fortune and power. But the complex facts of World War II made previous appropriations seem puny indeed. Between 1940 and 1944, some \$175 billion worth of prime supply contracts—the key to control of the nation's means of production—were given to private corporations. A full two-thirds of this went to the top one hundred corporations—in fact, almost one-third went to ten private corporations. These companies then made money by selling what they had produced to the government. They were granted priorities and allotments for materials and parts; they decided how much of these were to be passed down to sub-contractors, as well as who and how many sub-contractors there should be. They were allowed to expand their own facilities under extremely favorable amortization (20 percent a year) and tax privileges. Instead of the normal twenty or thirty years, they could write off the cost in five. These were also generally the same corporations which operated most of the government-owned facilities, and obtained the most favorable options to "buy" them after the war.*

*It had cost some \$40 billion to build all the manufacturing facilities existing in the United States in 1939. By 1945, an additional \$26 billion worth of high-quality new plant and equipment had been added—two thirds of it paid for directly from government funds. Some \$20 of this \$26 billion worth was useable for producing peacetime products. If to the \$40 billion existing, we add this \$20 billion, we have a \$60 billion productive plant useable in the post-war period. The top 250 corporations owned in 1939 about 65 percent of the facilities then existing, operated during the war 79 per-*

*cent of all new privately owned facilities built with government money, and held 78 percent of all active prime war supply contracts as of September 1944. No wonder that in World War II, little fortunes became big and many new little ones were created.*

The vigorously advertised proposition that wealth is now widely distributed, Mills finds to be "a cultivated illusion." The statistics belie it. "At the most, 0.2 or 0.3 percent of the adult population own the bulk, the pay-off shares of the corporate world." Mills also makes short shrift of the "managerial revolution" theory, according to which the salaried corporation managers have put through a silent revolution, expropriating the real owners of property, and transforming the meaning of corporate ownership. The corporation executives and the very rich, he explains, are not two distinct and clearly segregated groups. They are on the contrary very much an integrated unit in the corporate world of property and privilege.

**C**ORPORATION managers are more than just slightly better-paid salaried help. The top 900 executives averaged in 1950 about \$70,000 a year, the chief officers among them, about \$100,000. But this is generally only a part, and often the smaller part, of their emoluments. The bulk of executives in addition to salary payments receive today bonuses in cash or stock. In 1952, Crawford Greenewalt, President of E.I. du Pont de Nemours received \$153,290 in salary and \$350,000 in bonuses; Harlow Curtice, then one of the four executive vice-presidents of General Motors received \$151,200 in salary and \$370,000 in bonuses; Eugene G. Grace, President of Bethlehem Steel Corporation received \$150,000 as salary and \$306,652 in bonuses. When Charles E. Wilson was approved as Secretary of Defense, he went through the ritual of cleansing himself of "a conflict of interests" by disposal of several million dollars worth of GM stock that he had accumulated over the years. Mills believes that what has occurred in recent years "is the reorganization of the propertied class, along with those of higher salary, into a new corporate world of privilege and prerogative . . . Now the corporate seats of the rich contain all the powers and privileges inherent in the institutions of private property."

The corporate rich own big property and they are able to accumulate and retain high income. But they are the beneficiaries of something else besides: They now enjoy special privileges that are part of the new system of the incorporated economy. "It is not possible to calculate with suitable precision the 'fringe benefits' taken by the riskless entrepreneurs of the big corporations, but it is now certain that they have become quite central to the higher emoluments. It is because of them that the corporate rich may be considered, in a decisive way, to be members of a directly privileged class . . . designed to increase the wealth and the security of the rich in a manner that avoids the payment of taxes, they also strengthen their loyalties to the corporations."

Among the accoutrements that go with the big executive job but are never reported to tax collectors are such items as first-class free medical care, payments of expensive club fees, free services of top-flight lawyers and ac-

countants, private luxury recreation areas such as golf courses, swimming pools, gymnasiums, scholarship funds for children of executives, free use of automobiles, airplanes, yachts, hunting lodges. "You name it and you can find it. And it is increasing: it is free to the executive, and deductible as an ordinary business expense by the corporation." These are the people, then, who own and run the private economic manor, and by their monopoly, exercise the power of life over the rest of us.



**T**HE second division of our power trinity are the generals and the admirals who "have gained and have been given increased power to make and to influence decisions of the greatest consequences." Traditionally, the military have played no independent political role in this country, and military leaders possessed more social standing than social power. It is true that of the 33 men who have been U.S. Presidents, six have been career officers and nine generals. But this was invariably a case of the civilian arm drafting a military hero, synthetic or real, for its own purposes and putting him to its own use rather than representing any enhancement of the military's position in the circle of power.

Military leaders naturally played a key role during the big wars, but once the conflict was over they were relegated back to their own restricted spheres. Not so after the second World War. They have not only retained their position on the top policy-making bodies, but their influence is growing. There is an obvious reason for the rise of the warlords. The United States has emerged as the world's foremost military power with military commitments encircling the globe. Soviet Russia—the declared enemy—is now as much a military neighbor of the United States as Germany is of France, and the new frightful weapons of war make possible the annihilation of our cities and the decimation of our people. Since our masters have decided that safety lies in arming to the teeth and rattling the saber, "the rise of the generals and the admirals into the higher circles of the American elite becomes completely understandable and legitimate . . . ."

*The most dramatic symbol of the scale and shape of the new military edifice is the Pentagon. This concrete and limestone maze contains the organized brain of the American means of violence. The world's largest office building, the United States Capitol would fit neatly into any one of its five segments. Three football fields would reach only the length of one of its five outer walls. Its seventeen and a half miles of corridor, 40,000-phone switchboards, fifteen miles of pneumatic*

*tubing, 2,100 intercoms, connect with one another and with the world, the 31,300 Pentagonians. Prowled by 170 security officers, served by 1,000 men and women, it has four full-time workers doing nothing but replacing light bulbs, and another four watching the master panel which synchronizes its 4,000 clocks. Underneath its river entrance are five handball courts and four bowling alleys. It produces ten tons of non-classified waste paper a day, which is sold for about \$80,000 a year. It produces three nation-wide programs a week in its radio-TV studio. Its communication system permits four-party conversations between people as far apart as Washington, Tokyo, Berlin, and London.*

As the United States moved into the position of a world overlord and its military establishment swelled, the top militarists entered the diplomatic and political circles and often assumed the duties heretofore reserved to civilian agencies of government. The careers of General Mark Clark, General George C. Marshall, Vice Admiral Alan G. Kirk, General Walter Bedell Smith, General Lucius D. Clay, General Douglas MacArthur, General J. Lawton Collins exemplify the new breed of proconsuls who have become wielders of enormous political power and indispensable members of the inner councils of decision especially on foreign policy and international relations.

**I**N the first World War the military entered the higher economic and political circles only for the duration of the emergency. In the past war, however, the merger of the military bureaucracy and the corporate world assumed the character of an enduring partnership. The new trend is for generals and admirals, instead of retiring, to become members of boards of directors of the leading corporations. *Business Week* heralded the new times with the announcement that "in business circles the word has gone out: Get yourself a General. What branch of the government spends the most money? The military. Who, even more than a five-percenter, is an expert on red tape? A general or an admiral. So make him Chairman of the Board."

*The increased personnel traffic that goes on between the military and corporate realms, however, is more important as one clue to a structural fact about the United States than as an expeditious means of handling war contracts. Back of this shift at the top, and behind the increased military budget upon which it rests, there lies the great structural shift of modern American capitalism toward a permanent war economy.*

As befits a growing bureaucratic structure, the military is taking over various phases of American endeavor. By 1954, the government was spending about \$2 billion on research and 85 percent of it was going for military technology. The warlords, loaded with finances, have moved into the field of scientific direction. Both in private industry and in the larger universities, the support of pure science is now dominantly military. Some universities are virtually financial branches of the military establishment. The educational institutions have become trans-

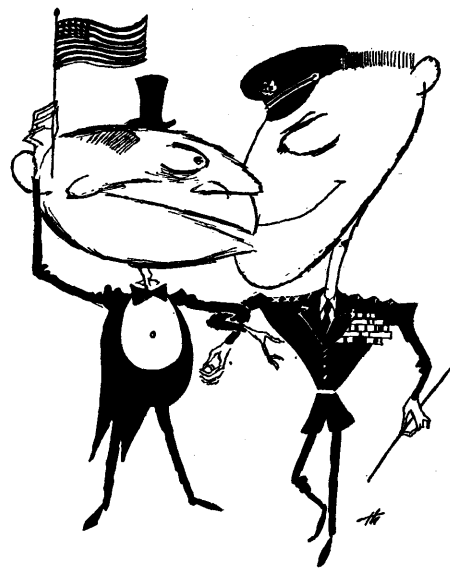
formed under this impact and the pursuit of knowledge has been linked with the training of men for specialized roles in the swelling military bureaucracy. As of 1953, almost 40 percent of the male students of 372 colleges and universities were enrolled in officer-training programs, the liberal arts institutions were devoting about 16 percent of their curriculum to military courses, and military leaders were increasingly coming to serve as college administrators of one sort or another.

The warlords have inaugurated since World War II a large-scale public-relations program to sell themselves and their wares to the American public. To this end, they have spent millions of dollars of public funds and employed thousands of skilled publicists, in and out of uniform. Interested Senators have estimated the costs of this program between \$5 million and \$12 million. But these estimates under-rate its true scope. Because of their strategic position in the American scheme of things, the military heads, during just one twelve-month period, were able to secure some \$30 million worth of favorable motion pictures, which they cooperated in producing, they secured millions of dollars worth of free time on TV, and according to *Variety's* estimate, about \$6 million of free radio time. "The military manipulation of the civilian mind and the military invasion of civilian opinion are now important ways in which the power of the warlords is steadily exerted . . . . What is being promulgated and reinforced is the military metaphysics—the cast of mind that defines international reality as basically military."

**S**TUDYING the third sector of his power trinity, the political directorate, Mills verifies what many students have observed in recent years in Western parliamentary governments—the shift of authority from the legislative to the executive branch. In the United States, the executive branch has not only expanded tremendously, but it increasingly usurps the legislative function by transforming legislative business into matters of purely administrative routine, and by the initiative and control it exercises in preparing legislation and shepherding it through to completion within the legislative bodies.

*These institutional changes in the shape of the political pyramid have made the new political command posts worthy of being struggled for. They have also made for changes in the career of the type of political man who is ascendant. They have meant that it is now more possible for the political career to lead directly to the top, thus by-passing local political life. In the middle of the nineteenth century—between 1865 and 1881—only 19 percent of the men at the top of the government began their political career on the national level; but from 1901 to 1953, about one-third of the political elite began there, and, in the Eisenhower administration, some 42 percent started in politics at the national level—a high for the entire history of the United States.*

We find that a small group of fifty-odd men is now in charge of the executive decisions made in the name of the United States of America. Only three of these are professional party politicians and only two have spent most of their careers as political managers and behind-



the-scene fixers. The rest are political outsiders who come, in the main, from the corporate world of industry and finance. The three top policy-making jobs (secretaries of State, Treasury and Defense) are occupied by a representative of the leading law firm which does international business for Morgan and Rockefeller interests; a Midwest corporation executive who was a director of a complex of thirty corporations; and the former president of one of the largest corporations and the largest producer of military equipment. The origins, careers and associations of these men make them representatives of the corporate rich. "Neither professional party politicians, nor professional bureaucrats are now at the executive centers of decision. Those centers are occupied by the political directorate of the power elite."

**T**HIS analysis, it is obvious, runs counter to the deepest-seated concepts of official sociology as well as popular thought. The old idea that the American political machine operates under a system of checks and balances is today reinforced by the prevailing rhetoric, namely, that the pulling and hauling of dozens and hundreds of different interests produces a sort of automatic democratic equilibrium in which no group dominates and by means of which everyone has his say. We are now supposed to be a middle-class country in which everyone runs things a little bit.

The focus of the balance is presumed to be the Congress. First, as Mills points out, the 96 Senators and 435 Representatives are by no means typical representatives of the American rank and file. They are invariably solid citizens of their communities, and generally members of its upper middle classes. Some are millionaires connected by a hundred threads with the world of wealth. Others, who must scrounge around for the considerable finances that it takes to get elected and live the life of a Congressman, have to make all sorts of commitments to the world of vested interests and privilege. As Robert Bendiner aptly remarked in an article in the June 1955 *Progressive*, "If Federal law really means what it seems to mean concerning the uses of cash in election campaigns, more politicians would wind up in Leavenworth than in Washington."

Then, the differences between the two major parties are

now very narrow and obscure, and more and more of the fundamental issues never come to any point of decision in Congress, as witness the destroyer deal with Great Britain, the commitment of troops to NATO, the Korean war, and the Formosa decision where Congress simply abdicated its Constitutional responsibility and handed over decision whether to make war to the White House. With both parties lumbering semi-feudal structures set up on the local levels to secure the spoils of office, and manipulated by the organized regional interests as watch dogs over their affairs, the politician becomes a man whose main interest is to trade votes for patronage and favors.

Each Senator and Representative is occupied in pushing the vested parochial interests of his locality; in the process, these are compromised and balanced by other parochial interests. The payoff is still a factor in politics, but the political machine is so smoothly constructed by now that corruption in the direct, across-the-counter sense has largely given way to more suave and indirect methods. "It is not necessary for members of local society to pay off the professional politician in order to have their interests secured. For by social selection and by political training, he is of and by and for the key groups in his district and state."

Mills concludes that there obtains a certain amount of checks and balances and a semi-organized stalemate in the political structure, but that it exists only in the middle levels of power, seated in the localities and intermittent pressure groups, and that Congress is today but the focal point of this middle level. But "there is no effective countervailing against the coalition of big businessmen—who, as political outsiders, now occupy the command posts—and the ascendent military men—who with such grave voices now speak so frequently in the higher councils." The professional party politicians may still, at times, be brokers of power and compromisers and negotiators of issues, but they are no longer at the top of the power system.

To sum up, according to this study, the political directorate, the corporate rich and the ascendant military, have come together to form the new ruling power elite, they have relegated the old balances of American society to the middle levels of power, and on that level, the balance is primarily an affair of entrenched parochial forces irresponsibly trading for selfish advantages with other parochial forces. "America is now in considerable part more a formal political democracy than a democratic social structure, and even the formal political mechanics are weak."

**WHERE** does the Great American Public, which in the official reckoning, is supposed to be the source of all legitimate power, fit into this scheme of things? The liberal democratic theory of government rests on the assumption that free public discussion crystallizes a public opinion which the Legislative bodies then enact into law. "This eighteenth century idea of the public of public opinion parallels the economic idea of the market of the free economy. Here is the market composed of freely competing entrepreneurs; there is the public composed of discussion circles of opinion peers. As price is the result of anonymous, equally weighted, bargaining individuals, so

public opinion is the result of each man's having thought things out for himself and contributing his voice to the general chorus . . . . Such are the images of the public of classic democracy which are still used as the working justifications of power in American society. But now we must recognize this description as a set of images out of a fairy tale: they are not adequate even as an approximate model of how the American system of power works."

Mills holds that the American "public" of the political theorists has in practice become transformed into an inchoate mass, as 1) The public has become an abstract collection of individuals who are worked on by the mass media; 2) It is difficult, if not impossible, for the individual to answer back with any effect; 3) The realization of opinion in action is manipulated by authorities who control the channels of action; 4) The mass has no autonomy from these institutions, but is controlled by them.

The power institutions have become large-scale and inaccessibly centralized, and the possibilities of even debating alternate policies has waned as the power institutions debase political issues to administrative routine and transfer decision-making to innumerable bureaus, boards and commissions. Besides, in order to better control the mass, opinion-making has become an accepted technique of attaining and holding power. "Accordingly, in addition to their enlarged and centralized means of administration, exploitation and violence, the modern elite have had placed within their grasp historically unique instruments of psychological management and manipulation, which include universal compulsory education as well as the media of mass communication."

At the end of the road of the mass society is totalitarianism run by the bureaucrat on a motorcycle. Mills doesn't think we're there yet, "but observing metropolitan man in the American mass we can surely see the psychological preparations for it." So, while at the top there has emerged a power elite, "the bottom of this society is fragmented, and even as a passive fact, increasingly powerless."

**H**ERE then is the Mills thesis. As can be seen from even this schematic outline, the author has broken with the shibboleths of the current schools of social science, and digs into the real substance of our society and its operation. This alone would mark the book as a lush oasis in the veritable desert of current American sociology. It is to be hoped that Mills is not just a sport of our college fraternity, but that his work of critical analysis represents a reawakening of the academic world from its long hypnosis of conformity and respectability.

It must be confessed, however, that our outline of Mills' main ideas gives the reader a one-sided slant of the nature of the book. While Mills has broken with the sophisticated apologetics of the Galbraiths and Berles, and has nothing but contempt for the irresponsible chattering of the David Riesmans, he has been deeply affected nonetheless by the retrogressive trends in recent social thought. This comes out in the glaring defect of the book—the attempt to jam his analysis of the American ruling class into the master concept of an elite.

The elite theory of society of Pareto and Mosca was eagerly seized on by the Fascist publicists as justification

for the *Fuehrer* principle of running things. It is likewise very popular among our current crop of sociologists because it enables them to concentrate on psychological subtleties as between rulers and ruled and provides a pseudo-scientific justification for the status quo. There is no point in getting indignant at the depredations of one elite when the best you can do is replace it with another, and possibly, worse elite. But what attracts Mills to the elite theory, and how does he reconcile it with his analysis? His half-hearted attempts to explain his rejection of the Marxist concept of a ruling class only deepen the confusion.

The book is crammed with page upon page of descriptions which literally lead straight to the capitalist ruling class. But at each point, Mills draws up short, and goes into a labored explanation of why, when he is describing a class in action, he doesn't really mean a class, and why, when he pictures the ruling class, he really means a power elite. Elitism is particularly at variance with Mills' presentation as his elite is a product neither of superior attainments nor aristocratic caste, neither the mysticism of blood nor the inevitability of oligarchy, but is a product—and, according to him, a very mediocre product—of impersonal institutions designed to safeguard the existing social system. This absence of a governing theoretical concept forces the author to leave now one proposition, now another, up in the air, with no attempt made to reconcile the data with his clashing terminology. It even does injury to his major thesis. According to Mills, the power elite is composed of three more or less autonomous elites, the military, the corporate, and the political, each arising out of separate sets of institutions. Then, he proceeds to upset his own appercart by demonstrating with all sorts of cogent factual evidence that the corporate rich or their agents have taken over the top political structure, and that the military chieftains have gotten attached to the great corporations and often wind up on their boards of directors.

Mills goes further and insists that the three elites are pretty united in their actions and see the world through the same set of spectacles. But he obdurately refuses to admit that he is describing here—albeit in unnecessarily wordy fashion—different sectors of a ruling class in action. Mills would have saved himself and the reader pages of pointless psychologizing if he didn't feel the compulsion to explain his materials in the obfuscatory terms and positivist sophistications of our college campus elites. (We are all members of one or another elite, nowadays.) Robert S. Lynd, in his review of the Mills book in the *Nation* solves the whole conundrum in a few simple words: "Elites from different institutions act together because the same influential class in society spreads across all institutions and controls them in a common general direction."

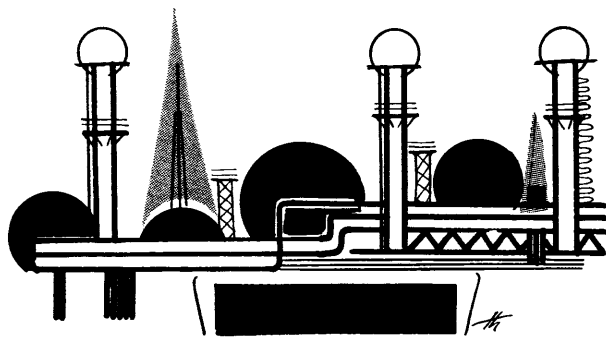
**I**F we compare Mills' book with the great study of America's rulers published in 1937, Ferdinand Lundberg's "America's Sixty Families," we realize, alas, how far back the intellectual community has been thrown in the last two decades. Lundberg may have, under the influence of the American brand of Marxism of the thirties, been guilty of an over-simplified explanation of the New Deal, but his work has a thrust, a passion, a clarity and integrated character compared to which Mills' discursive investiga-

tions often come off but poorly. Lundberg talks about the rulers by name, what they own and control, and how they use their wealth and power to run this and that concrete political, economic and social institution. Mills' chapter on "The Very Rich" by contrast dissolves the multimillionaires into an impersonal abstract gelatinous mass of percentage statistics. Maybe only in this dessicated form can a critique of American society get published these days. It will probably be a while before the old straightforward style comes into vogue again.

On another point: It was Lundberg's contention that a coterie of plutocratic families are the living centers of the oligarchy that dominates the United States, that the corporations are merely the legal instruments behind which the living masters stand. Mills does not agree. He holds that the great corporations are the center of power to which the wealthy individuals are attached. There is apparently some change taking place in the structure of American capitalism in recent years; a number of economists have commented that the banks for one, seem to be less powerful as the decision makers in relation to the giant industrial corporations. Whatever be the truth of the matter, Mills does not fully grapple with Lundberg's proposition. He points out, it is true, that due to the new tax setups and post-New Deal conditions, many of the emoluments of the big corporation executives derive directly from the corporation rather than from individual property holdings. But these "fringe benefits," while tremendous in terms of the average person's notion of wealth, possibly rate as peanuts in the gilded world of the Croesuses. Standing alone, these do not overturn Lundberg's proposition. A comprehensive study on the hierarchy of power in the post-war world of finance and industry remains to be written.

**M**ILLS' book accurately reflects the true mood of probably many circles of intellectuals—in its underlying note of deep pessimism. He sees power enormously centralized in an irresponsible, amoral clique, and he can see no countervailing force to challenge it and deflect it from its course toward a totalitarian society. Mills is undoubtedly correct in placing the present labor movement at the middle rung of power—it is, if anything, a generous rating—but he cannot envisage any dynamic alterations in the picture. In 1948 he wrote that the labor leaders "lead the only organization capable of stopping the main drift toward war and slump"; now, he can only see labor frozen in its present image of a conservative bloc pressuring for concessions within the status quo.

This undertone of pessimism accounts for the book's static quality: This is the way things are now, and this is the way they are going to remain—except maybe get worse. Of course, there is no obligation for Mills to be an optimist. But it is puerile to imagine that in a world where change is the law of life, the American labor movement—whether it finally meets the challenges of our times or not—will remain sunk in its present torpor. Whatever may be the end results of the clashes of the future, it can be put down as a copper-riveted fact that such clashes will take place and will transform, in the process, not only American labor, but the American social scene. If America finally goes down the totalitarian road, it will not be by drift.



by Henry Haase

**O**UR electro-generating capacity has more than doubled since the end of World War II, and now stands close to 115 million kilowatts. The President's Materials Policy Commission estimated in 1951 that we must double our overall energy production again during the 1951-1975 period if a continuing national growth is to be possible.

Of the total energy consumed in the United States—for electric power as well as for all other purposes—42 percent is supplied by oil, 29 percent by coal, and 4 percent by falling water. With 96 percent of our energy needs thus supplied by natural fuels, the tremendous power requirements of the economy consume such fuels at an enormous rate. The U.S. has become a net importer of oil to the extent of over a million barrels a day. Natural gas pipelines extend from border to border, and soon will run from Canada to supply the ever-growing demand. As the search extends farther afield, though the costs of fossil fuels do not necessarily increase, the transportation costs surely do, and so the delivered price to the customer is ultimately higher.

Nor are the reserves of such fuels limitless. While new production fields are constantly being proved, the most expert estimates indicate severe limits. Proven coal reserves may be exhausted within a little more than a century, and possible coal reserves in under two centuries. In the case of oil, a shortage on a world-wide scale may develop before the end of this century, and the reserves of natural gas, although somewhat more generous than those of oil, can also be exhausted in the not-too-remote future by rising consumption.

**T**HUS, despite the *present* abundance and comparative cheapness of such fuels, it is probable that atomic power production will acquire economic importance in the United States very soon. Even today, it is estimated, atomic power reactors can—despite the very high cost of building them—produce electric power for sale at about .8 cent per kilowatt, including transmission costs. That is less than the cost of power produced from conventional fuels in about half of the states of the country. And yet, atomic power has been very slow getting started here, as compared

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*The author is an economist who writes regularly for American Socialist.*

The United States conducted the first big experiments in nuclear physics and was the first nation to build an atom bomb. Yet we have been slower than others to start using atomic energy for power.

## What's Delaying Atomic Power?

with Russia or Britain. Since the United States was the nation which made the earliest discovery of how to unlock the secrets of the atom, this fact calls for some explanation.

The atomic age began in 1939 with the discovery of atomic fission, an event which coincided with the outbreak of World War II. Most of the \$2 billion spent during the war on atomic energy was used in the development and production of the bomb. Scientists, engineers, and those with newly acquired production know-how, were deeply affected by the magnitude of what they had done and the enormity of the use to which it was put. After the war, as a result of repugnance, fatigue, isolation, secrecy, etc., there was a general feeling of letdown. Hundreds of key wartime employees left U.S. atomic technological centers with a sense of relief.

Beginning with the cold war, a new drive in the A-bomb field began. This re-orientation towards military uses was not fully understood at the time; its importance only began to emerge years later. The Atomic Energy Act of 1946 made all atomic development an absolute government monopoly, placing complete authority in the hands of a five-man civilian commission. As administered during the 1946-49 period, the 1946 Act effectively barred creation of a public opinion informed on atomic energy.

After the announcement in September 1949 of the first Russian atomic-weapon test, American atomic bomb research and production was feverishly stimulated to the accompaniment of a spy hysteria. What the scientists had maintained all along, that a monopoly of the A-bomb could not be maintained for more than a half-dozen years, was now proved right, but the attempts to impose secrecy became more intense than ever. By the beginning of 1950, research on thermonuclear weapons—the dread H-bomb—was given priority. At the same time, the program for atomic submarines and aircraft got under way. Ironically, the first investigations in this country into atomic power reactors which could have peaceful application were started in connection with developing power-propulsion plants for U-boats and bombers.

**W**ITH these developments, and with the increase of claims and rumors emanating from the Soviet bloc about the application of atomic energy to peaceful uses,

interest in atomic power plants began to grow. And, as in our economy it causes extreme pain to the lords of industry and finance to contemplate any activity that does not yield a profit, the negotiation of economic and legal terms with big business had to precede any atomic-power pursuits. It is this economic and social fact—not any technical barriers—that has prevented and retarded progress.

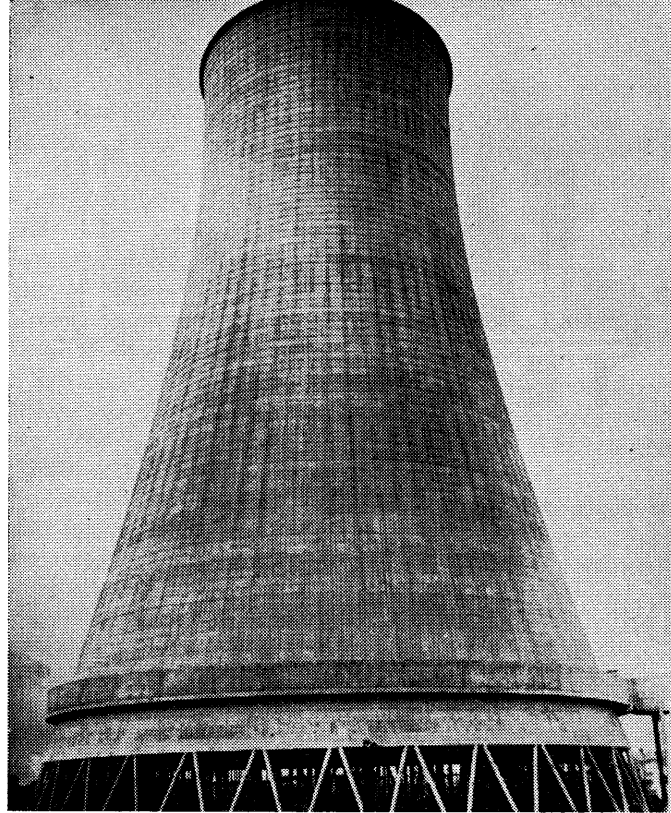
When war production was getting started for World War II, the government's Temporary National Economic Committee, in a monograph on "Economic Power and Political Pressure" issued in November 1940, spoke out a truth which in one paragraph condensed more wisdom than a score of textbooks:

*Speaking bluntly, the government and the public are "over a barrel" when it comes to dealing with business in time of war or other crisis. Business refuses to work, except on terms which it dictates. It controls the natural resources, the liquid assets, the strategic position in the country's economic structure, and its technical equipment and knowledge of processes. The experience of the [first] World War, now apparently being repeated, indicates that business will use this control only if it is "paid properly." In effect, this is blackmail, not too fully disguised.*

When the government contained a strong New Deal wing, there was considerable antipathy over this "blackmail," but in more recent years, and especially under the Cadillac Cabinet, the blackmail is effected by a process of almost complete collusion. During the war the industrialists and financiers who controlled steel, aluminum, synthetic rubber, food processing, plane production, etc., set their own terms and in many cases would not expand production until they had the terms they wanted. Something of the same is going on in atomic energy today.

**I**T is taken for granted that the profitable fruits of atomic energy will be harvested by private hands and not by the people as a whole through government ownership. Few challenge this proposition at the threshold; even the liberals and the unions, who have done much to expose the steal that is under way, profess to be against a "government monopoly." Yet why this should be so is not made clear. The \$12 billion which has been expended to develop atomic energy has all been spent by the government. The research physicists and theoretical scientists came more often from classrooms than from corporations. None of the risks were assumed by private industry, all of them by the government, presumably representing our society as a whole. Yet the entire kit and kaboodle, with its vast potentialities, its exploitation of uranium reserves thought to contain two dozen times more energy than all the coal, oil, gas, and other mineral power sources on or in the earth's crust, is to be taken for the profit of a few.

Nor is it American business as a whole that is involved. A few giant corporations are getting a stranglehold on the infant industry. These favored few have accumulated inside information and experience in atomic affairs through work on Atomic Energy Commission projects at government expense. In the Manhattan Project which developed



The cooling station for Britain's first atomic power station. Both Russia and Britain are ahead of U.S. in the development of atomic power, although both started nuclear studies much later.

the A-bomb, General Leslie R. Groves followed the military pattern and turned to the handful of favored giant corporations. In contrast to the TVA, which built its own dams, the AEC contracted out the engineering, building, and running of its installations to a few companies, giving these access to invaluable secret information and experience.

The chief participating companies are among the biggest of the big. E.I. duPont deNemours built the Hanford plutonium plant. General Electric operates it, as well as the Schenectady Atomic Power Laboratory. Union Carbide, through its subsidiary Carbide and Chemical Corporation, runs the gaseous diffusion and electromagnetic operations at Oak Ridge, as well as the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Westinghouse operates an AEC plant near Pittsburgh. Western Electric has its Sandia Corporation running the laboratory at Albuquerque. *Fortune* magazine (January 1949) noted:

*As operator of the Knolls K-2 and the West Milton pile G.E. is in the first line of benefit from future atomic-power possibilities. It is obtaining immediate experience with a host of auxiliaries, isotopes, new instruments, new plant conceptions, new gadgets of every description. It is able to train and develop men at government expense.*

**I**N May 1951, the AEC decided to permit a group of companies to study the possibility of making electric energy from atomic power, and those eight power and chemical companies are an interlocking group at the very top of the corporate structure.

With this headstart, the giant businesses have the inside track. But they are not satisfied with that alone; their



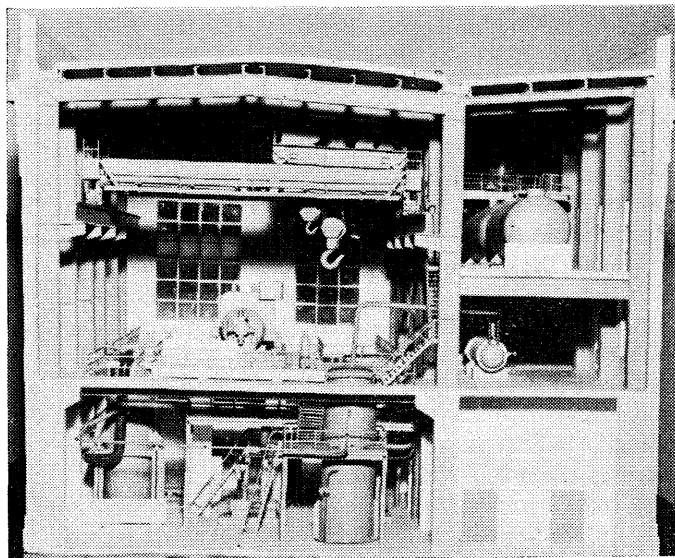
dearest piece of blackmail is the desire to make the industry risk-free, and a guaranteed monopoly. In partial response to private industry, but before this private interest came into clear focus, Congress revised the law, adopting the Atomic Energy Act of 1954. This sweeping revision relaced a relatively simple government monopoly with a complex structure for regulation of private activities. The 1954 Act, as did its predecessor, gives full title to all special nuclear materials to the Federal Government. But private industry may now use such materials, and sell new special nuclear materials produced by it to the Government, at prices set by the AEC. Private investors can own the atomic plants.

The Atomic Energy Act of 1954 requires licensees to assume full liability for any damage resulting from licensed private activity. Insurance against hazards to the public health and safety is bound to become more important. A great deal of concern was recently aroused around the building of an atomic-energy plant to produce electricity on the outskirts of Detroit. Since the risks are thought to be greater than private insurance companies will want to bear, some form of government re-insurance is expected to emerge.

Industry and its legislative cohorts have been recommending a number of measures to take all the financial risk out of the venture and increase profitability. Among these are:

- 1) Accelerated tax amortization, the gimmick used to pour millions into the coffers of the corporations in the war industries by allowing them, when calculating their taxes, to write off assets which will last for scores of years in as little as 5 years.
- 2) Reimbursement of losses due to sale or abandonment of depreciable property in the future.
- 3) Research and development expense write-offs.
- 4) Tax privileges, in the form of reduction or elimination of capital gains taxes on investors, modification of dividend taxes, etc.

As examples of what is being done, the seven atomic-



This model of a Russian atomic-power generator was presented to the UN for its permanent exhibit in September.

power projects now under construction or contemplated are instructive. Research and development on these projects amounting to about \$81 million is all being paid for by the government. In the case of the first project to be in operation, the Duquesne Light Company of Pittsburgh, which is building the plant at Shippingport, Pa., will have its atomic installation entirely paid for by the taxpayers, and for its part will contribute only the generator portion, the least expensive part and the part which can easily be switched to conventional operation should anything go wrong.

**N**O-RISK schemes are all well and good for the corporations, but, not satisfied with that, they want to ensure monopoly prices. Two gimmicks are involved here. One concerns patents. Compulsory licensing of patents can prevent the use of patented processes for creating monopoly control by forcing the patent owners to give out their process for a fair royalty. A fight in Congress succeeded in gaining a "compromise," under which any private patent filed in the first five years must be licensed, but after that the field is free and clear. This means that by 1959 the corporations will be able to hog such processes as they patent all to themselves. The second proposition involved in preventing monopoly control is the building of so-called "yardstick" plants to be operated by the government as a check on prices charged by the corporations. The experience of public utilities industries shows that such yardsticks, while they are often circumvented by collusion between commissions and corporations, do limit the ceiling of prices to some degree.

The Congressional liberals moved to put the government in the atomic power field in the last Congress, but they received a trouncing. The Gore bill proposed that the AEC build six experimental projects at AEC installations. This was passed by the Senate, which however cut the number to three or four. Then the entire bill was killed in the House.

As a result of all this corporate jockeying, the U.S. has been very slow in the atomic-power field. And, so long as the area is dominated by giveaway concepts of private control over a publicly developed industry, progress is bound to be slow until the blackmailers get the terms they want. As of January 1, 1956, plans were well along for the construction of three nuclear-fueled demonstration plants totalling over 400,000 kilowatts capacity, and proposals were actively under negotiation for an additional four totalling 400,000 more kilowatts of electric-generating capacity. The first demonstration plant, at Shippingport, should be completed in 1957. The others will string out under present plans to about 1962.

In sum total, the U.S. will have only a million kilowatts of atomic-electric generating capacity in five to ten years. By contrast, the USSR expects to develop 2 million kilowatts capacity during the next five years, and Britain, the third country to have mastered atomic energy, is planning on the same capacity in the next ten years. If Russia becomes, as now appears certain, the world's leading exponent and beneficiary of the peaceful use of atomic energy, we have our corporations and our private-profit obsession to thank for it.



# The Shame of A Nation

The two articles which follow constitute a full survey of a topic which is rarely discussed with any seriousness in the American press. Granting that the situation of the Indian is a restricted problem in our vast society, it marks our civilization with the brand of Cain, who slew his brother for his own advantage. And it is deadly serious for the Indians themselves, however small their numbers. As a symptom of white supremacy and of capitalist callousness, it is a matter with which all socialists should be concerned.

The first article is by a Northwest anthropologist. Mr. Jaber, who wrote the second article, is a New York historian who has specialized in Indian affairs.

## by A Northwest Anthropologist

*In the beginning, God gave every people a cup of clay, and from this cup they drank their life. . . . Our cup is broken now. It has passed away.*

*A Digger Indian chief.*

**A**FTER nearly two decades of "enlightened" Indian administration the stage is being set for new betrayals. As an Indian recently put it, "The Econnaunuyulgee [people-greedily-grasping-after-land] have returned." The delicately patched Indian cup is about to be broken again.

In August 1953, President Eisenhower signed Public Law 280. The law permits any state government to substitute itself for the federal government in civil and criminal matters involving Indians. The bill, together with others which have been sent to Congress by the Interior Department, in effect, will abolish federal trusteeship over the tribes, dissolve the tribal constitution and charters through which the Indians are entitled to defend their property, end all federal Indian services and nullify the contractual commitments of the federal government to the tribes.

The first groups to lose federal protection under the new legislation include the Menominees of Wisconsin and the Klamath and Western Oregon groups, all of which own rich timber resources. The Coughattas of Alabama and the Unitah and Ouray reservation Indians also may soon be stripped of federal protection.

Most Indian leaders and many Indian-rights organizations feel another land grab is in the making. The new dispensation can ultimately lead to a destruction of the Indian by private interests who are desirous of their lands and the wealth on and beneath them.

**H**OW can the power companies exploit the lands of some three hundred thousand American citizens? By cutting the timber and removing the gas, oil, and other natural resources. The Montana and Dakota reservation land have rich oil deposits. The Southwestern Indians own gas reserves. Uranium has been discovered on the Navaho reservation of New Mexico and Arizona and the Pueblo land in New Mexico as well as the Wind River reservation in Wyoming, and the Spokane reservation, Washington. Lead and zinc deposits are abundant on the Quapaw reservation in Oklahoma while phosphate resources have been located on the Fort Hall reservation in Idaho. During 1955 alone the Indians have received from bonuses, rents, and royalties on oil, gas, and other mining leases about \$29 million. The profits for the corporations developing the sites may double or triple this figure.

The American Indians and their white friends have good reason to be suspicious of "emancipation" moves on the part of the government. History records this tragic story. In 1873 the Indians held 150 million acres which the white men promised he could hold "as long as rivers run and the grass shall grow." In 1887 the Allotment Act was passed which aimed at civilizing the Indian by making him an independent farm owner. By 1933, the Indian had been emancipated from all but 47 million acres of his land. The best land has passed to whites.

American corporations have likewise feasted on the bones of the Indian corpse. Before the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 put the brakes on the gravy train, private interests were stalking Indian wealth. The Salish and Kootenai tribes on the Flathead reservation in Montana owned a magnificent power site which, when properly developed, could give the tribe a supporting income and provide wonderful irrigation for their farm lands. But the Montana Power Company, thirsty for profits, backed legislation in 1925 which would have given them the site. Although the measure was later defeated, it had full support of the Indian Bureau. In 1930 the powerful livestock interests of Southern Oregon gained access to Klamath timber and grazing lands by bribing Indian officials to arrange sales. Even as recently as 1947 the Tongass Act deprived Alaskan primitives of land and timber "if two or more of them had grandparents who were Indians"! The new Indian legislation, backed by the Interior Department and the Indian Bureau, foreshadows a return to such an era of Indian exploitation. The new bills destroy the protection granted the Indian under the 1934 act.

The Indian leadership has little power to resist the new betrayal by a corporation-oriented administration. Although theoretically each tribe has control over such matters as tribal membership, inheritance, tribal taxation, property, domestic relations, and form of tribal government, in practice the Indian is governed by directives issued by the Secretary of the Interior and his agents, the superintendents and district directors. Many important officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a subdivision of the Department of Interior, believe they are representatives of a "superior race" who have omnipotent powers as protectors of the "inferior" Indian wards. Dissenting tribal leaders have little influence over the policy of the Indian Bureau and no control over appointments. The redmen, for all intents and purposes, are prisoners of the Indian Bureau.

**P**OLITICAL activities on the part of the Indians have been discouraged by government officials. Most reservation or "ward" Indians do not vote. Although the Indian minority was given citizenship in 1924, until recently New Mexico, Idaho, Washington, and Arizona disfranchised the Indian. Utah and Colorado also have denied the vote to the Indians. Though active white organizations such as the Association on American Indian Affairs and the Indian Rights Association have lobbied in behalf of the redmen the Indians themselves have no adequate channel for the expression of Indian opinions. They have never expressed themselves as an Indian bloc.

Loss of more land and resources and removal of government trusteeship may prove calamitous to most reservation groups. The "vanishing American" is not vanishing now but increasing, and by the century's end may well reach a million. Unfortunately the present land held by the Indians supports only three-quarters of their numbers. Many must find jobs off the Reservation or go on relief. Even after twenty years of progressive Indian administration, the Indian Bureau has failed to provide adequate educational facilities. Almost 70 percent of the Indian population has completed only elementary school while, in contrast, 80 percent of the white population 14 years or older has finished high school. The 1950 Census showed that over half the Indian population lives on family incomes of \$2,000 or less. Among the "oil rich" Osages of Oklahoma only 115 out of 1,000 families have incomes of \$3,501 and above.

Because Congress and the Indian Bureau have failed to provide adequate health care, education, or aid in development and proper use of Indian resources, the Indian people are totally unprepared for full participation in modern American society.

**A**SSIMILATION of the American Indian to the normal stream of modern industrial society is a historical inevitability. The Indians can and must be trained for work in all the trades and professions, including agriculture and stock-raising. On the other hand, the Indians, as a cultural minority, have in the past and can in the future make beneficial contributions to modern American society. Having failed in its attempts to integrate the Indian into American capitalist society, the United States

government aims at getting out of the Indian business as fast as possible in order to give the Indian "a chance to prove himself on his own." The Indian will have no such chance. Under the lure of ready money in the hands of promoters, the Indians are bound to fall prey to the illusions of quick wealth provided them by the power corporations as, indeed, they are already doing.

The capture of tribal wealth by vested interests is not only an Indian problem but a public problem as well. Our rapidly diminishing natural resources cannot be easily replaced. But the conservation of such resources by the power corporations is constantly undermined by their desire for bigger profits. The white American's cup of life as well as the Indian's may be shattered beyond all repair in the process. As Oliver LaFarge, the writer, has so aptly phrased it: "It is your story as well as theirs, a fall and an upward struggle which belongs to all of us, a conflict in which the Indian pays with his life for our inattention."

## The Red Man's Rights

by William Jaber

**O**RGANIZATIONS dedicated to defend Indian civil rights have, since 1950, expended all of their available time and funds in fighting bad legislation and adverse judicial decisions. Fighting this flow of hostile law has resulted in some negative success; that is, it has held back, to some extent the tide of remorseless laws inimical to the welfare of Indians. By means of Congressional legislation, executive directives, and by judicial review, the Federal government set out, since the war, to destroy what remained of earlier social efforts.

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 was the high-water mark in the Indian's progress toward the exercise of full citizenship, although the Act gave dictatorial powers to the Secretary of Interior, and promoted the concept of wardship. The law was a miniature Point Four program. The tribes were given the right to incorporate for their protection, tribal justice through tribal courts was inaugurated, protection was given to what remained of the Indian's former culture, the sale of his lands was stopped, his reservations and their resources were protected from further depredation. Every effort was made to guide the Indian through the pitfalls of "white" law. Through this and other reforms, Indians had begun to find the means of discharging their obligations to the government, at the same time preserving their identity as a separate cultural group.

In order to understand how the government determined its present policy on Indians, it is necessary to know how two very old myths came to be recognized as law and used to "eliminate" the "Indian Problem." (The government assumes that we have an Indian Problem.)

**T**HE first myth is that of wardship; that the Indian is a ward of the government, not capable of discharging his duties as a citizen. The Indian had existed for many generations on doles and handouts designed to placate

him for the loss of his former homelands, and to keep him alive until he was fully proselytized and stripped of his former "primitive" culture and absorbed into the general population. Thus, being a ward of the government is a long-standing idea, buttressed by the fact that the government is trustee of Indian tribal funds, royalties and other funds.

But the Indian is a full citizen of the United States, and was given his citizenship by Federal legislation in 1924; and the Indian has, besides his citizenship rights, other rights, resulting from his previous peculiar status under Federal Law, and denoted as Indian Rights. His Indian Rights have been divided into Aboriginal Rights (now under attack in Federal courts) and Treaty Rights.

The other myth, denied as government policy but adopted by the bureaucrat in contact with the Indian, is the common one of racial and cultural superiority. It is an attitude assumed when in contact especially with those people who choose to fight for some vestige of former folkways and tribal society. It can be observed directly in officials who forward the claim of benevolent, paternal government which knows what is best for the Indian.

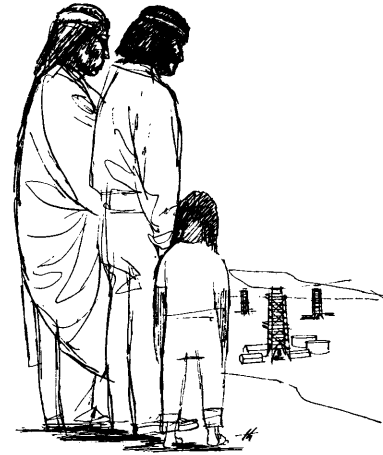
The concept of "wardship" and ideas of racial superiority started the drive for enforced assimilation, which though advocated in the past has become, since 1945, the deliberate and determined government policy for the first time in our history. Until 1934 the Bureau of Indian Affairs had never employed one single policy, good or bad, but, instead, utilized various ideas and prejudices. For two hundred years the government's various Indian agencies have been political spoils and melting-pots for aimless bureaucrats. In view of this, it is all the more surprising that there should now be such singleness of purpose in prosecuting the pernicious program of enforced assimilation.

This policy was officially launched when Dillon Myer took office as administrator of the Indian Bureau. Myer is the man who headed the government's Japanese Relocation Program during the war, which set up concentration camps for Japanese-Americans who lived along our West Coast. In view of the new policy, one can see the appropriateness of placing such a man at the head of the Indian Bureau.

The first attacks were directed toward the tribes as organizations and, particularly, at tribal ownership of land. To destroy tribal authority, prestige, and control of land was the admitted design. This was done in order to undermine the Indian's ancient concept of land-use, the keystone of his culture, and to acquire control of the reservation and other Indian-held resources.

**WE** ought to mention here that the Eastern Indian, in particular, was communistic in pre-Columbus years. He had no obsession with petty private-property claims. His concept of land-use was based upon his tangible relationship to his environment. That which he found undivided in nature could not be permanently divisible among men. Such was land, air and water. For example, his collective use of water is amusingly illustrated by the name, Lake Chaubunagungamaug, Massachusetts, translated as: "You fish on your side, I'll fish on my side, and nobody

fishes in the middle!" The very idea of private ownership of land, air and water was alien to most Indian cultures, hence, had no history of practice. Therefore, when sudden proscription falls upon the Indian, without benefit of education or training, and without means of adaptation, the only result is the wholesale destruction of the economic as well as spiritual means of survival.



Some accept the efficacy of enforced assimilation, but, actually, one must deny, reject or ignore the most basic of human rights—equality. Equality does not mean sameness. Every person in a democratic society is presumed to have a certain amount of freedom to be different. If an immigrant prefers to retain certain cultural elements of his former native land or country of birth, his right to do so has never, in this country, been a matter of government opposition. His religion, even though it may be in the minority, has never been subjected to governmental suppression, except in the case of Mormons and Indians, neither of whom were immigrants, *per se*. We do not mean that all elements of a given alien culture are accepted, but the greater number which entered the country have been retained or modified, but seldom rejected. Likewise, the Indians' right to belong to a tribe, partake of his culture, adhere to his own religion is a right of *choice*, not of compulsion, and to abandon his tribe and tribal society is a right of choice, not of compulsion.

The Indian knows that assimilation will come to pass, for he is even now extracting from white society those attributes and commodities which he deems beneficial to his life, but he must have free choice to accept or reject! He must enjoy this choice by virtue of his American citizenship. The movement to exterminate by absorption is a tyranny that has left many rootless. Unable to live in the dignity and respect of his own people, nor accepted into white society, the Indian is a prey to prejudice, competition, debasement, and poverty. He lacks adequate training through education, and stands somewhere between two civilizations, bereft of both religion and land, and spiritually crippled by three hundred years of subjugation.

**R**APID City, South Dakota, is a bustling city where one may view assimilation first-hand, with its economic ghettos of assimilated Indians. In an area such as this, if an Indian cannot present himself as a museum piece,

a historical freak in full regalia of costumes which are long since relegated to memory and nostalgia, he cannot lay claim to the dignity of a human being or the sympathy of the whites.

The destruction of Indian identity as a group has been further abetted by government proscription of occupation. There is the hunter of the Great Plains, who had always been accustomed to moving about through large tracts of land, pursuing the oldest occupation in history. He was suddenly and violently deprived of that land, herded onto a reservation, given a plow and told to become a farmer. As one Indian put it, "I have always thought of the earth as my mother, which it is, and would you hand me a steel blade with which to gash the breast of my mother?" Such a statement reveals a deep, abiding love for the land in its natural state. Even those who were farmers relegated that work to the women. The impact was the same on the Indian as it would be to us if the Federal government were to suddenly enact a law requiring all women to become wage-earners and all men to become housewives.

The parceling out of land in individual allotments, a government policy since 1888, has been stepped up recently. For the Indian to become an individual landholder, an owner of private property, means the death-knell to the idea of tribal ownership. Tribal properties have been broken up, as prescribed by law. Any objection results in the abolition of the tribal constitution, and the immediate elimination of government trusteeship of tribal funds!

Aboriginal rights, recognized by Federal law, are based on the premise that the original inhabitants of the lands in this country have been banished and had their properties expropriated by violent and illegal means. The United States has reversed its position as of March 1956, upon which date the Justice Department directly attacked the principle of Aboriginal rights. However removed this attack may seem to be from the issue of tribal group existence, it is nevertheless the opening gun to destroy the Indian tribe as a functioning social and political group.

Under the New Deal's Reorganization Act, the government has been forced to pay some claims for damages suffered by the Indians in the past. These funds have been put to work by the Indian to strengthen his cultural unity and improve his reservation and farm lands. If the government wins the present issue, it will be almost impossible for the Indian to claim damages or compensation for loss of treaty-protected lands. These claims are quite extensive, for the United States entered into 370 treaties with Indian tribes between 1778 and 1870. The government broke every single one of these treaties, but one, that which was broken by the Minnesota Sioux in 1862.

**S**TRIKING at Aboriginal rights is a blow against tribal finance. In addition, the United States and several states have extended their taxing powers over reservations. In the decision of *Jones vs Taunah*, Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, it is maintained that royalties from trust allotments are subject to taxation. New York State has ruled

that all Indians, regardless of residence, are subject to income tax.

The onslaught continues in the field of local government. Public Law 280 of the 83rd Congress transferred civil and criminal jurisdiction from many reservations to the states in which they are located. It authorized any other state to take the same action. Thus, local self-government is also under attack. The court decision of *Iron Crow vs Oglala Sioux* directly attacks the reservation law-and-order system. These are only a few of the important issues that are being resolved to the disadvantage of the Indian.

There are, for example, bills passed by Congress since 1952 which abolish tribal constitutions, abrogate Federal treaties, break up tribal properties, and eliminate government trusteeship of funds. Other laws have been passed to destroy the corporate status of the tribe, inaugurated under the New Deal. The government intends to expropriate Indian funds to finance the activities of the Indian Bureau.

The United States has, in fact, sought in every way to conceal the obvious fact that the Indian is a full citizen of the United States and is entitled to the same rights as any other American. This has enabled selfish interests to bend the processes of local, state, and Federal government to the purpose of confiscating land and resources of Indians heretofore under strict protection of the law. It is the duty of every citizen, when he has full knowledge that the rights of others are endangered, to register his disapproval and to work to defeat attempts to destroy basic human rights. If we allow the Indian to be extinguished as a group, we will have aided in the most vicious crime that history can record, the crime of genocide—for whether he is exterminated by absorption or by slow death as a result of his failure to assimilate, the fact remains that his extinction will have been brought about by organized illegal methods, against his will, under the aegis of our government.

Ira Hayes, Pima Indian, one of the men who helped raise the flag at Surabachi, and appearing in the immortal photo by Joe Rosenthal, was found dead, in the gutter, in the company of the bottle, degraded, unable to cope with the barriers raised against his people. He is symbolic of the problem facing his people. The Indian lacks opportunity for full employment, because of prejudice, and his own lack of training. His poverty can most always be attributed to badly neglected lands which were poor even when he was forced to move to them.

The Indian has proven, however, that, given the opportunity, as among the Mesqualero Apache, he can produce enough for himself and a surplus for sale. The Hopi and Navajo have demonstrated that, with intelligent government supervision and aid, he can build as successfully as the white farmer with the same supervision and aid.

The white man has an especial responsibility to the Indian whose lands he conquered and whose culture he destroyed. We should have the same respect for Chief Joseph, Logan, Cornstalk, Tecumseh, as we hold for all heroes of a lost cause, and Hollywood's interpretation to the contrary notwithstanding all were greater as human beings and as leaders than either Custer or Crockett.

# New Approaches To Socialist Organization

by Midwest Teacher

**A**LTHOUGH there is now taking place a "thaw" in America's radical movement, it is still very far from understanding what kind of political organization is best suited for the social environment in which it functions. It is for this reason that socialists—in particular, the independents—are again raising elementary or basic questions about how to approach the mass of people in the building of a new socialist movement. Or as Paul Baran put some of the questions in an article that appeared in the July-August issue of *Monthly Review*:

*Can socialism be attained by . . . securing the approval of the majority of the people. . . from a process of systematic persuasion and enlightenment, or can socialism become a reality only by being imposed upon society by a more or less sizable minority hoping to be eventually borne out by popular support?*

Such questions in substance amount to the general problem of the relationship between a small minority that intellectually grasps the need for socialism and the larger mass that is moved more by everyday appetites. This is the problem faced by every socialist movement that has not learned how to sustain itself and grow in the vacillating currents of society. American socialists are seriously toying with this problem because many on the Left today have come to believe that the existing organized socialist groups are dead and a new start is necessary. In thinking about a new start, it is inevitable that the question of a new political organization be raised. Our movement, if it can be called that, is experiencing what John Foster Dulles might categorize as "an agonizing reappraisal."

These reappraising elements on the independent Left are rightly hesitant to plunge immediately into the organization of a new party. Such a "plunge to organize"—in view of the objective circumstances, the mood of the American people, and the available resources on the Left—is liable to lead to another fossilized sect. Furthermore, there has not been an adequate and clear statement beyond some vague allusions about a "new Marxist party" on how the new party would necessarily differ from some of the old ones which have ossified. Since it is not the desire of the new Left to follow the footsteps of the dead, we must have a clear vision of what kind of party ought to be built and what kind of perspective it ought to have. On these matters Nikolai Lenin and Eugene V. Debs both had something very important to say. They both raised

the problem in the manner that I already suggested, that is, how does a minority that intellectually grasps the need for socialism work with and relate itself to the vast majority that are guided by everyday needs. But the answer which both gave to this problem was radically different due to the differences in social environment in which each functioned. These answers we must clearly understand.

Although much lip-service is given by leftists about the need to adapt to American ways, American needs, American traditions, etc., not much is done to really overhaul their basic thinking on the vital matters. The Communist Party at regular intervals *abstractly* stresses the need to adapt to American realities, but each "adaptation" is still in the Leninist tradition, or at least, so it is thought. The Socialist Workers Party breastbeats about the same tradition, but from a somewhat different angle. Both convey the impression that history has granted them charters to lead the working class into the land of socialism. Lenin's vast number of pamphlets supply a sufficient number of statements to feed the dogmatic righteousness of any number of religious-sounding sects who tend to read Lenin as Fundamentalists read the Bible.

**I** MAKE no claim to know the correct application of Leninism to a country like our own, since I hold to the belief that the *unique* contribution of Lenin as it has been one-sidedly viewed by many American leftists cannot be applied effectively here in the U.S. My problem, therefore, is not to recommend how to transplant Lenin's ideas into American soil, but rather, to state (1) what I think is his unique position on the vital matter of party organization and its relationship to the class, (2) to suggest why Lenin's position is not workable in the United States, and (3) to show how Debs resolved the same problem that Lenin raised but in a different way.

Lenin's revolutionary position originated in an illiterate, industrially underdeveloped, semi-barbaric country which was ruled by a feudal autocracy. The bulk of the revolutionary work was *clandestine* and conspiratorally conceived. The repressive police and spy activities of the Czar made underground work an imperative mode of operation. For these reasons Lenin had to find *original* answers to two general problems which were more or less unique to Russia. They were (1) obstacles to group thinking due to the inadequate means of communication, and (2) difficulties in coordinating and controlling practical activities. Lenin believed that the Russian environment called forth the need for a well-disciplined ("we need an iron discipline. . ." were Lenin's words) political organization of full-time *professional* revolutionaries who would surrender themselves completely to the functioning of the party apparatus. This tremendous stress on perfection in organization and the need for absolute devotion to the party were reactions to what Lenin considered a terrible weakness in Russia.

One of the most widespread and most painful aspects of our Russian public life is a disdainful "if not directly hostile" attitude toward conformity to Party rules. (Put Pravdi, October 17, 1913.)

. . . Organizational activity was never a strong point with the Russians in general, nor with the Bolsheviks in particular. (Speech at the Eighth Party Congress, March 18, 1919.)

Lenin went so far as to even suggest that the lack of organization was a national characteristic. "As to organizational skill, the Russian is no good. This is our weakest spot." (Speech at a Moscow Gubernia Party Conference, Nov. 20, 1920.)

SUCH full-time professional functionaries as Lenin conceived were drawn from the revolutionary intelligentsia and the cream of the working class. The former were for the most part leaders and directors of the latter, although within the party there were not to be formal distinctions between intellectuals and workers. Furthermore, control of the political organization was concentrated in



the hands of a highly centralized body of leaders from which smaller groups that operated in larger mass organizations could be effectively led. As a matter of fact, Lenin believed that the durability of the movement rested primarily upon leaders:

. . . without the "dozen" of tried and talented leaders (and talented men are not born by the hundreds) . . . no class in modern society is capable of conducting a determined struggle. . . I assert . . . that no movement can be durable without a stable organization of leaders to maintain continuity. ("What Is to be Done?")

This distinct form of centralization also facilitated quick and efficient changes in tactics and gave to the party central direction.

The party as a whole was an elite group consciously keeping itself from integrating with the larger and more amorphous organizations, but yet influencing these mass organizations by organizing nuclei groups within them:

. . . it is absurd and dangerous to confuse these mass organizations with organizations of revolutionists, to erase the line of demarcation between them . . . [Our]

organization must of necessity be not extensive and as secret as possible. ("What Is to be Done?")

In other words, Lenin insisted that the party be conceived narrowly, that strict lines be drawn between it and the working class. It was precisely on this point that Lenin argued against Martov at the Second Congress of the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats.

We insisted that membership of the Party must be given a narrow definition. . . so as to get rid of the chaos in the matter of organization. . . Martov was in favor of widening the Party and spoke of a broad class movement which demanded a broad—a diffuse organization, etc. (An unpublished paper.)

This point was so fundamental to Lenin that he was willing to split the Social Democratic Party rather than compromise the wording of two conflicting draft clauses over this problem of what constituted membership in the Party. To outsiders the conflict appeared as a mere quibble over words. I doubt whether an expert semanticist could have detected the nuance of variance between the draft clauses.

Another major but related idea running through Lenin's mind at this time is found in the oft-quoted passage:

. . . Social Democratic consciousness among workers . . . could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own efforts, is able to develop only trade-union consciousness. . . ("What Is to be Done?")

The adherence to this latter notion of "socialism from without" combined with the belief that the party had to be a tightly woven group of professional revolutionists are the ideas which crown one as a Leninist. No doubt, adaptations of Lenin's ideas are possible in different countries. But in broad outline, whatever be the adaption, a Leninist believes that there should be a separation of the party from class control, and therefore, techniques of coercion—i.e., purging, splitism, and separatism, to maintain party discipline and purity of purpose—are elevated to the level of sound principles, since the will to state power depends not so much on the general enlightenment of the working class as a whole as upon the correct strategy, tactics, and maneuverability of a cohesively organized group in a rapidly disintegrating society.<sup>1</sup>

WHAT proved workable in Czarist Russia not only proved unworkable in the U.S., but the persistent attempt to apply Lenin's ideas over the past 35 years has kept America's socialist movement from even constructing a small foundation from which it could sustain itself in periods of prosperity and reaction and grow in periods of tension and unemployment.<sup>2</sup> Lenin's ideas as transplanted in the U.S. led to fragmentation, opportunism, sectarianism, and probably a few more isms, but above all, they led to the neglect of sensible socialist education. However, it is not my purpose here to trace the many deformities of the American Left that have been committed under the banner of Lenin, although this is the job that ought to be

done ultimately. Let it suffice to say that what has worked in one environment has led to its opposite in another.

The second general point slated for discussion is why Lenin's ideas are not workable in the U.S. The essential reasons lie in the character of American society. There are four major social and political facts that must be squarely faced by anyone interested in bringing the case of socialism to the American people. They are: (1) the high percentage of literacy in the working class; (2) universal suffrage and a stable parliamentary form of government; (3) a long history of an organized labor movement led by workers and for workers; and (4) a tradition whereby organizational relationships and cohesion within the organizations are primarily welded and held together by way of voluntary allegiance and support of its members and supporting publics.

At first this last point might appear as a sophomore's attempt to apply something learned in a beginning sociology course, and therefore not really relevant to the problem of a political party. But a political party is an organization among people who are collectively seeking (or maintaining) power so as to be (or remain) in a position to make decisions in behalf of the state. Persons within the party are related and held together on certain principles. These principles of relationship, if not based upon the realities of the social environment, will not serve as adequate rules to sustain the party, to aid in its growth, and to influence the populace.

**L**ENIN'S concept of a party *above* the class—thus outside the control of the class—is not congruous with the social and political facts of American life. Furthermore such a concept is repugnant to the mentality of an educated society where the working class has a high degree of literacy. Such a concept of a party in essence says to the average working man: You are too stupid to lead yourselves, elect your own leaders, discuss and decide your own policies; therefore, let us, an elite party (vanguard is the word) do it *for* you. (I wonder what the workers who started the "do it yourself" movement would say to that attitude). Where the bulk of the workers are illiterate, Lenin's party concept (and the attitude which goes with it) is justifiable. You don't appeal to the mind and intelligence of a class when the class has no intelligence, but only instinct and feeling.<sup>3</sup> But for a class which has intelligence, which has a long tradition of participating in organizational life, which has experience in making decisions and voting on issues, there must be a systematic appeal to the workers as a whole that socialism is their ideology and that the organization which expounds that ideology belongs to them. The American workers will not be led surreptitiously to the promised land; they will lead themselves when they are convinced of socialist ideas and become fully conscious of their class position and the power inherent in that position.

**T**HIS leads into my third major point, that is: What did Debs have to say on this question of party organization and its relation to the class? I have already intimated the answer in my arguments against attempting to apply



Leninism in the U.S. I shall now proceed a bit further with some elaboration and documentation.

The Debsian concept of a party was actually opposite to that of Lenin.

Whereas Lenin argued that the party be *for* and *above* the class, Debs argued:

*The workers can be emancipated only by their own collective will, the power inherent in themselves as a class, and this collective will and conquering power can only be the result of education, enlightenment, and self-imposed discipline. ("Sound Socialist Tactics," 1912.)*

In other words, Debs not only conceived of a party that was *for* the class, but one which was *of* and *by* and *integrated* with the class.

Whereas Lenin's concept of party relied heavily upon intellectual leadership, Debs believed that:

*. . . the Socialist movement is essentially a working class movement . . . and as a rule party officials and representatives, and candidates for public office, should be chosen from the ranks of the workers. The intellectuals in office should be the exception, as they are in the rank and file. (Ibid.)*

Debs went on to say that the intellectuals could play a very important role for the working class and the party in other capacities.

Whereas Lenin's concept of party endorsed a clandestine attitude, Debs argued against any tactics which involved "stealth, secrecy, intrigue."

*The work of the Socialist movement must all be done in broad open light of day. Nothing can be done by stealth that can be of any advantage to this country . . . If our locals and the members who compose them need the protection of secrecy, they are lacking in the essential revolutionary fiber which can be developed only in the play of the elements that surround them . . . They [the workers] got to learn to distinguish between their friends and their enemies and between what is wise and what is otherwise and until the rank and file are so educated and enlightened their weakness will sooner or later deliver them as the prey of their enemies. (Ibid.)*



Whereas Lenin tended to envision leaders as fixtures in his concept of party, Debs had great fear of

*... officialism and bureaucracy. I am a thorough believer in the rank and file, and in ruling from the bottom up instead of being ruled from the top down. The natural tendency of officials is to become bosses. They come to imagine that they are indispensable and unconsciously shape their acts to keep themselves in office. (Ibid.)*

Debs has frequently been dismissed as not being a theoretician, yet, on the most crucial problem that any socialist movement must face—that is, the party structure and its relation to the class—Debs had keener insight and better understanding than all the left-wing theoreticians who came after him.

I am not prepared to argue that every detail of the Debsian perspective is applicable to mid-twentieth-century America. But if the future party-makers and organizers on the new independent Left want clues in regard to resolving some fundamental questions and problems raised in this article, I believe that they would do well to look—not to Lenin and attempt to camouflage his principles in order to make them “appear” American—but to the speeches and writings of Eugene V. Debs.

1. It is not my intention here to convey the impression that splits are only characteristic of the Leninist-type party and that they do not occur in other types of party structures. Nor do I mean to suggest that all splits are necessarily bad. However, it is essential to appreciate the special role which the “philosophy of splitism” had in Lenin’s thinking and why in an environment like our own, it has had mainly negative effects. A much closer examination of this point is needed, and I make no pretense at treating it adequately in this article.

2. Of course, the objective circumstances are the main reasons for socialism’s lack of growth in the U.S. I am only concerned in this article with the subjective variables—whatever be their importance in the evaluation of why the American Left has failed.

3. Lenin was quite emphatic on this question of how workers develop class consciousness. Contrary to what many leftists in this country believe, class consciousness in Lenin’s view did not come from working hard and long hours in the factory, but from well-spent studious leisure. “It goes without saying that among the broad masses of the working people there are many . . . who are not enlightened Socialists, cannot be such because they have to slave in factories and have had neither time nor opportunity to become Socialists.” (Speech at a trade union conference, June 27, 1918.)

It can be inferred from this hypothesis that in a country (like our own) where the working class as a whole has probably more leisure than any working class in the world, socialist education and enlightenment are possible for the whole class and should be the first and foremost task.

to Leninist organizational principles. We believe that the critics are unquestionably correct when they conclude that a successful socialist movement in America will have to be constructed on considerably different lines than Lenin’s organization.

The reasoning by which this correct conclusion is reached does not always strike us as being soundly based. Some have ascribed Lenin’s organizational philosophy as originating in Russia’s low educational and literary level. Actually, the Bolshevik party up to 1917 was composed of intellectuals who were probably better educated politically than 95 percent of the American people, and small groups of advanced workers who were unusually intelligent, alert, and in most cases, self-educated and well informed. So far as we can see, Czarist terrorism under which the party had to operate was the main determinant in shaping Lenin’s ideas on this question. It is interesting to note that the Austrian Socialists, holding a different political conception than Lenin’s, originating from the hostile Social Democratic tradition, and living in one of the most cultured countries of Europe, adopted in 1934-36, when they were forced underground by the Dolfuss fascist dictatorship, a form of organization very similar to that advocated by Lenin in “What Is To Be Done?”

Moreover, in the current revulsion against Communist bureaucratism and chicanery, Lenin’s organizational concepts have been tacitly identified with the caricatured monstrosity of an organization that is the American Communist Party. This muddles things. The makeup of this organization probably has less relation to Lenin than the present Socialist Party has to Debs. What the American Communist Party did was to transplant a foreign organization with its specialized lingo, quarrels, methods of work and slogans into a climate where it could not flourish, and then to make doubly sure of failure, debased and caricatured it in the process so that even a professional botanist could not recognize the species.

**W**HAT then is the correct organization setup for a new American socialist movement? Many on the Left pretty much agree that it should be democratic, not bureaucratic; that it should be controlled by its membership, not a few top officials—much less officials in other countries; that it should conform to American procedures so that the party can participate effectively in election campaigns and get its ideas across in the established centers of discussion. All these propositions are indubitably correct, but are they not too nebulous to resolve the problem? Lord Macaulay once wrote: “Every man who has seen the world knows that nothing is so useless as a general maxim.”

The above excellent precepts do not tell us how much or how little power shall be lodged in the national officers, how much or how little autonomy shall be granted the state and local organizations, the degree of centralization or diffusion of authority, whether the aim is to achieve a high degree of discipline or to build a loose, easy-going type of organization, etc. etc. Another thing that has to be cleared up before we can delve further into organizational specifics is this: Shall the new movement be politically homogeneous and insist on strict ad-

## The Future Party

by The Editors

**T**HE debacle of the American Communist movement has produced an understandable reaction in Left circles

herence to its full program, or shall the new party permit a wide latitude of opinions in the manner of the pre-World War I Socialist Party? How do you go about determining questions of this kind?

All organization forms and concepts derive from people's political purposes. A patronage machine needs a different type of organization than a crusading body of idealists, a party that wants to become a contender in election campaigns will require a different vehicle than did John Brown when he organized his raid on Harper's Ferry. In other words, the organization form of the future socialist party will have to conform to the political aims and tactics of the movement.

In our opinion, some of these questions can be answered today only in a general way, more to indicate a concept than to draw up blueprints. Some of these matters, however, cannot be resolved at the present time at all, as the answers cannot be squeezed out of logical syllogisms, but can be devised only when concrete groups of people stand ready to launch a new party. In other words, it will have to be on the actual experience in the next few years, on the political makeup of the human forces involved, and on the national political situation, as it appears at that time, that concrete organizational matters can be settled.

**B**UT this is the music of the next five or more years, and in politics we have been taught the most important question always is: What to do next? The organization of a new party of socialism is not the next order of business because the human resources are not presently available for that kind of an enterprise. What is, or, what should be on the current agenda, in our opinion, is the organization of a broadly-based socialist education society which can command sufficient support to become the new polar star of attraction of American radicalism, can put a stop to the humiliating process of disintegration of the Left, and get the socialist challenge back into the public arena, from which it has been absent so long.

## Some Questions About Depression

Dear Mr. Cochran,

**I** HOPE you can spare the time to comment on several questions I have. The questions are in regard to a talk you delivered in Detroit some time back on "The Next Ten Years." [See *American Socialist*, June 1955.]

One of your main contentions was that a depression of some sort must occur here. I accept, with reservations, that arms production as a buffer to the economy perhaps cannot continue indefinitely to serve its function, due to *political* considerations. The chief reservation is that I can conceive, if the need arises, of taking all our bombs and destroying all our tanks and building anew *ad infinitum*. Whether the populace would go for this is another matter, but is there any *economic* reason why an ever-increasing arms production cannot keep the economy functioning?

Secondly, the suggestion of vast government spending on non-military projects such as roads, schools, hospitals, libraries, and recreation centers arises. Again I ask is there any *economic* reason why this cannot maintain the system?

But my chief puzzlement is this: You contended that a program like the one above would come into conflict with interests in the private domain and that strong resistance would arise against the government entering into endeavors reserved for the profit-seeking sector. This is not at all clear to me. To build schools, for example, the government need not go into the construction business. Why should builders be threatened by receiving vast government contracts for public building? Why should they care whether they build schools or mansions as long as the remuneration is great enough (and why can't it be)? Where is the conflict?

Thirdly, if there is no threat or conflict, why does Congress consistently oppose highway and school programs? Whom do the lobbyists represent? With the facts at my command, the only conclusion I can come to is that *by tradition* these representatives of private interests feel in their bones that any government operation smacks of socialism. I am not happy with this conclusion since I assume that U.S. businessmen will find spokesmen for those measures which can keep the economy going. Am I overlooking something and is this opposition to public works expenditures really based on the best interests of private capital, or is private capital (and/or its spokesmen) simply ignorant of the necessary course? If the latter, I believe we must assume that they will become aware of the necessity. To prognosticate on the assumption of continuing stupidity can be quite disillusioning.

**L**ASTLY, what is the key problem in avoiding a crisis? To me it appears to be the problem of finding a market for all marketable goods. Certainly, government contracts for arms or other non-marketable goods increases the absorptive power of the market without increasing marketable goods. Is it not true that this government spending must continually increase only if saleable-goods production increases? So, in tight times, why *must* the industries increase their output? The argument of profits increasing only by increased volume of production is not impressive since the industries receive lavish government contracts. It cannot be in the interest of capital to glut the market.

But is the key problem of avoiding a crisis the need for government spending to take up the gap of *unused* productive capacity? What dire consequences can arise from maintaining a good portion of the productive capacity in disuse? And again, what is the economic pulse that motivates industry to expand and yet increase this gap, thereby necessitating increasing government intercession?

Since the present directions of socialist activity must depend on our predictions for the near future, I think it is most important to clearly analyze the economy's health prospects.

What sets off the *American Socialist* from some other Left publications is *thought*, and a general absence of half-cocked statements. Likewise, I am not inclined to

take so far-reaching a position as that of an "inevitable" depression unless I clearly understand it and believe it.

Sincerely,  
Larry Hochman, Chicago

## A Reply

**A** TYPICAL cyclical economic crisis involving deflation, unemployment, etc. can theoretically be avoided with a constantly stepped-up arms program. But in that case the traditional economic crisis would simply be transmuted into a crisis of another kind characterized by runaway inflation, skyrocketing taxes, and a catastrophic drop in living standards.

The basic tendency of capitalism is to frown on all government expenditures which do not aid in yielding profits to the private interests. The tax increases needed to finance such spending cut in on corporate profits. Hence, education, public construction (except for military purposes), social and health services, etc. are habitually neglected. It is entirely possible that with pressure from the labor and liberal public these may be expanded especially to avoid or cushion an economic downturn. But a public works program limited to this sphere is necessarily too restricted to break a downward plunge of the economy.

If public works are to be inaugurated on a scale necessary to suck up the unemployment that occurs in a major economic crisis, the government would have to go into the economic business on a far more ambitious scale. A military program operates through the established business structure, and there is no problem of disposing the products on the market. Once you leave the military

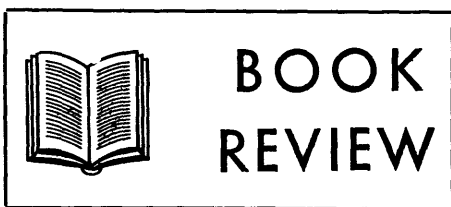
sphere and the restricted possibilities in such work projects as hospitals-schools-roads, only two openings remain for the government. It can either set up its own plants, or take over idle plants, and hire workers to produce regulation goods and services in competition with private industry. Or, it can set up a program of "leaf-raking" projects, of marginal activities that do not compete very seriously with the privately run economy.

The capitalists will obviously move heaven and earth to avoid the first eventuality. They are even hostile to the WPA type of activity, as necessarily a government machine gets established that directs a big economic program outside of the channels of the vested capitalist operation. From their point of view, this represents a potential threat to their monopolistic hold and necessitates an unwelcome rise in taxes and the public debt. Capitalists had to tolerate the WPA for a while under Roosevelt, but they were constantly hacking away at it, keeping it within narrow limits, and finally secured its abolition just as soon as they gathered the requisite political strength.

Why should the capitalists glut the market with commodities they cannot sell? Simply because capitalism is planless, because competition forces the pace of development of new plants and facilities faster than it enlarges the consumer market. If capitalism were able to regulate itself by an all-national plan geared to the market, it would no longer be private, competitive capitalism.

"What dire consequences can arise from maintaining a good portion of the productive capacity in disuse?" Unemployment for millions of workers, and bankruptcy for millions of farmers and small business men. A large part of the productive capacity "in disuse" is a depression, as new investment drops to very low levels, values fall off, and all business activity thereupon declines.

B.C.



### *The Theoretical System Of John Strachey*

CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM, by  
John Strachey. Random House, New  
York, 1956, \$5.

**MR.** Strachey intends this book as "the first volume of a projected series of studies on the principles of democratic socialism." The aim, as one would expect from Mr. Strachey's current standpoint as a theoretical exponent of British Laborism, is to overhaul Marxism to British Parliamentary specifications. In "Contemporary Capitalism," Marxist economics gets his

first attention, but the rest of his viewpoint is foreshadowed.

In outline, the viewpoint is as follows: Marx's labor theory of value was faulty. It failed to take account of rising productivity of labor, by which the real income of the worker may be raised as his output per hour increases. It also was mistaken in placing the wages of labor at the subsistence level. Due to rising productivity, wages have risen above subsistence.

Marx's theory of "increasing misery" was also mistaken. Instead, the conditions of the working population have improved. It is not, Mr. Strachey says, that Marx was mistaken in diagnosing the *tendencies* of the system. These tendencies are present, but they have been offset by other factors which Marx did not take sufficiently into account. Foremost among these is the mechanism of modern democracy. The rulers have been forced to grant certain rights which they have not been able to rescind. In the democratic arena, the competition of parties for votes forces them to try to outbid one another in appeals for mass support. The process set up in this way has given the working population a leverage within the system, which has enabled them

to counteract the tendencies which Marx diagnosed.

**BY** this leverage, Mr. Strachey continues, the workers have been able to increase their wages in accordance with the rise in productivity. It is true that this has left them in the same unequal condition relative to the capitalist owners. However, in the most recent years ("since 1939"), they have even managed to gain a bit in their relative position, cutting down slightly on the inequities. At the same time, the means of social control over the capitalists has been increased by the same method. In the end, this process can lead to the gradual eradication of capitalism after it has been transformed, slowly, into something entirely different from what it used to be.

Mr. Strachey admits that this logical construction appears to apply only in a few of the most advanced capitalist countries: England, the U.S., the Scandinavian countries. He is further quick to point out that democracy still has only a very precarious foothold, and that the Right would like to turn on it and destroy it. He readily grants that his pattern is no guar-

anted evolution, and may be upset by many forces. These admissions are in part dictated by Mr. Strachey's refreshing candor; in part they also appear to be the polemical method common to those who hope to forestall objections by stating them before they are stated by opponents. But, for all of his hedging, Mr. Strachey is clearly taken with his theory, and one would judge that he believes it to be the true line of coming social development, understate it as he may.

Mr. Strachey starts his argument by objecting that Marx did not take into account in his labor theory of value the rising productivity of labor. This is a poor beginning, as in fact Marx's is the *only* system of economic thought which not only takes account of rising productivity but is actually built upon it as an essential keystone. It is a strange and telling fact of economic history that none of the prominent orthodox economists taught in our schools, neither Jevons, nor Marshall, nor Keynes, comprehended the importance of productivity, despite the fact that they all worked in an age in which the productivity of labor was being developed at a far faster pace than Marx's day. All of their systems were static and mechanical models of an economy frozen at a certain level of productivity; Marx's alone was designed to show the tendencies which would develop in the capitalist system as it increased the fruitfulness of the labor process.

**B**UT, Strachey goes on, Marx did not allow for the fact that, in some countries, labor would get far more than subsistence wages as the productivity of labor rose. This is a misplaced polemic. Marx may have failed to foresee the increase in the standard of living under capitalism, but the way he defines wages as a subsistence payment, the concept retains its validity. Although socially acceptable standards of life have risen, the pay which even the aristocrats of labor take home in any country remains only enough to maintain that standard, and has not become enough to alter the distribution of ownership in the means of production. To put it more simply, the worker remains a worker, his pay being enough to perform that function.

More tellingly, the history of the last hundred years shows an ever-increasing portion of mankind being pushed down to the level of wage earners who have neither ownership nor control over the means of production. While workers may sometimes—even often—get less than enough pay to maintain a socially acceptable living standard, they do not get more, since, apart from a very few individual cases, they do not get enough to free them from the necessity of selling their labor power the following month. From the standpoint of economic science, from the standpoint of the class structure of society, and from the standpoint of the framing of economic tendencies within the system, that is what is decisive. In that all-important sense it is just as true today that the worker

gets an average level of pay only sufficient to maintain and reproduce his labor power—i.e., subsistence wages—as it was the day Marx wrote it, all rises in living standards to the contrary notwithstanding.

However, Strachey argues, in recent years discontent with the system has been alleviated due to the fact that misery has been lessened and the control by society



JOHN STRACHEY

as a whole over the economic system has been increased because of the pressure of the working class. Here we confront an argument of greater weight than Strachey's unimpressive theoretical strictures.

**T**HAT Marx did not foresee the long and involved working out of the relations and battles between the classes is certainly true. He could not have, as clairvoyance was not among the qualities he either pretended to or possessed. He actually expected the relations of the classes to be cut off very shortly by an economic deadlock and a socialist revolution, or a transformation in a more pacific form in some countries, as he once or twice postulated. In sketching the broad lines of economic and social development, he could not foresee the tortured complexities ahead.

But one should be fair to Marx: If he did not see the heights of living standards to which capitalism could rise before it moved off the stage of history, neither did he, in his wildest flights, see the depths to which it could fall, in two world wars, Hitlerite fascism and genocide, and the H-bomb. The object here is not to balance those respects in which things have become worse than Marx expected against the matters in which it became, for a time, better, although the opponents of Marx might give the comparison a little thought, to their profit. The point is that in working out the balance sheet of a complex and all-embracing world view, it is not very helpful to hold its author to every

comma. We're all smarter than Marx that way, as we live a century later. The need is to assess the system in its essential terms.

Marx did comprehend that the capitalist system could be modified in its workings by social action. That was going on even in his day, although on a smaller scale than today. It is instructive to look back at the section in Marx's "Capital" called "the Factory Acts." He starts that section with these words:

*Factory legislation, the first methodical and purposive reaction of society upon the uncontrolled and spontaneous development of its process of production, is, as we have seen, a no less inevitable product of large-scale industry than are cotton yarn, self-actors, and the electric telegraph.*

In his section on the working day, he describes the efforts of the labor movement to gain a limit to its duration, and describes further the victories along that road. In his section on wages, he describes the efforts of the unions to gain for labor an increasing amount of the products of their labor as productivity rises. In various polemics with Lassalle and others who took a doctrinaire view, he defends the possibility of labor improving its conditions by active struggle.

But, having said all this, there is no doubt that Marx did not expect capitalism to last long enough and thrive sufficiently that our present average standards of life could be achieved, particularly in the U.S. and England. In that respect, his calculation was abbreviated and simplified.

**W**E are passing through a period of transition between capitalism and socialism far more complex and protracted than Marx envisioned. The "purposive reaction of society upon the uncontrolled and spontaneous development of its process of production" which Marx saw in infancy in his own day has grown considerably in our time. In that sense, it can be said that the incursion of socialism upon the old capitalist structure has taken sizable steps, for the gains of the labor movement in compelling capitalism to submit to regulation are the premonitory symptoms of a full socialist society.

Strachey's argument is that these developments have modified the *social dynamics* which Marx projected. It is true, Strachey writes, that the capitalist structure is giving way to socialism, but not in the way that Marx foresaw. The workers, by pragmatic experimentation, have found another road. They are using the gradual accumulations of authority which they are able to gain within the system to encroach upon the strength of the capitalists; the latter, increasingly losing their potency, will one day be forced to surrender to society as a whole. Moreover, the workers are not forced to the wall by economic troubles and therefore have no appetite for more dramatic struggles to end the battle decisively. They have compelled the capitalists to regulate the system to the point where crises and depressions need

not take place, and this has deprived labor of its revolutionary zeal, at least in a couple of the most advanced countries. The upshot, necessarily, will be the gradualistic, almost imperceptible step-by-step transformation of capitalism into socialism.

We cannot, in this review, attempt to reproduce the argumentation that we have put forward at some length in these pages against the economic suppositions upon which this structure rests. (We refer our readers in particular to "Can They Really Cure Depression?" May 1954, and "Myths About the New Capitalism," September 1955.) But there is one aspect of the matter which deserves a little reflection. That is the paucity of evidence upon which people are ready to destroy and erect systems of thought. What is more often involved than genuine theoretical structures is moods and emotions that are subject to change.

MR. Strachey's book, for a work of economics, is strangely barren of factual

material, repetitious, and reducible to a very brief argumentation. The entire income shift he postulates to show a gain in labor's relative position is really restricted to the past ten years, and then, for Britain, he admits that the shift has been slight, and that it has been reversed—or at least stopped—by the Conservative Party since its return to power in 1951. All of the evidence he adduces to show that the means of social evolution have changed from what they always were to something brand new is contained in the few years since the end of World War II.

Not that we can settle the matter in this way—the argument will only be settled by the unrolling of the history of the next few decades—but it is striking to observe how rapidly the ephemeral theories and moods of one day pass away when events show they were based only upon a momentary conjuncture. It is also striking to note how self-indulgent the theorists are in forgetting their constructions from decade to decade, an indulgence they will

not grant to Marxists.

Strachey's entire body of reasoning is a point-for-point duplication of the argument of Edward Bernstein, the German Social Democrat who at the turn of the century revised Marx in exactly the same way. His system was categorically exploded by the first World War, revived again in the twenties and exploded again in the Great Depression, only to be revived again after a few years of prosperity following the second World War. Meanwhile, despite the phoenix-like life of the theory, the world has undergone a series of crises, deadlocks, political and social struggles, and world holocausts the like of which Marx's generation never knew.

The question then is: Can a few short years which have thus far been most exceptional to the long run of development wipe out the accumulated history and experience of four hundred years of capitalism, and of centuries of class conflict prior to that? Strachey tries to take two points in the present and project from them

## Vincent Hallinan Speaks Out for Left Unity

Vincent Hallinan, Progressive Party candidate for President in 1952, has called for as large a socialist vote "as can be mustered" in a statement appearing in the *West Coast Daily People's World*. Excerpts follow.

\* \* \*

THE liberal and left-wing forces in the United States have completed the circle commenced in 1952 when the "Lesser of Two Evils" led them from the rock of principle to the morass of expediency. In the field of foreign policy, they now agree that Eisenhower is the lesser of the two evils. In the domestic field they can cast Stevenson in that role only by summoning up the ghost of FDR. As a matter of fact, the domestic policies of the two parties are practically indistinguishable.

Their platforms repeat the promises of other years without apology for prior betrayals. Neither attempts to mask its cynicism with regard to the issue of civil rights. Both, however, have reversed their historic role with regard to tariffs—the Democrats becoming the party of protectionism, and the Republicans of comparative free trade. The Democrats promise to repeal the Taft-Hartley Act, which could not have been passed without the vigorous aid of Democratic Congressmen over Truman's politically motivated veto. Both pretend that they may endanger the interests of the great oil companies by supporting Israel against the Arabs.

The present situation exemplifies as well as any previous period has done the observation made by a French observer some 60 or 70 years ago, that these two parties are exactly alike, resembling each other as two bottles from the same mold—both empty!

As regards the activities of left-wing and liberal elements in the country, at least the most vocal among them appear to be tying themselves to the Democratic Party chariot. By a process of energetic self-hypnosis, they conceive this to be the party of possible progress. The argument is that the greater part of the working people are "in" the Democratic Party. By this they mean that the Democratic Party is able to induce more workers to vote for its candidates than the Republican Party can coax into voting for its.

It is thought that by some infiltrative process, the liberal forces can "push" the Democratic Party in the right direction. They, therefore, allow themselves to be exploited, selling cookies, collecting rags, and ringing doorbells for the organiza-

tion which initiated and brought to its fiercest expression the current witch-hunt, which started and maintained the ruinous and dishonorable war in Korea and which rests upon two broad pillars of reaction—the Southern white supremacists and the politico-ecclesiastic machines in the Northern cities.

Liberals and progressives who have drifted back into the Democratic Party have as much chance of directing its policies as one who is swallowed by a whale has of altering its course. The conflict between socialism and capitalism will ultimately sharpen to the point where it is recognized that there is no middle ground. It's about time that the left-wing people in the United States came to the realization that the contest is between public ownership and private ownership of those things which are necessary to the well-being and comfort of all. While it is necessary to strike blows for other causes, it is folly to lose sight of the main issue and to lose it by default.

The great necessity in America is for a united front of left-wing forces which will unite to educate, inform and lead the American people toward a socialist solution of the dilemmas which confront us. Once this is gained, the other problems, practically all of which have an economic base, will resolve themselves.

EVERY opportunity, then, should be taken advantage of to give support and encouragement to such forces, regardless of their divisive differences. It is a mistake not to vote, and it is worse than a mistake to vote for either the Republican or the Democratic Party candidates. A positive advantage can be gained by aiding those who sacrifice their effort and time to carry the banners of the Left. It is high time that political organizations on that side of the fence stopped carping at each other and sought common bases within the field which all are defending. Their mutual recriminations, based principally upon names and slogans which have lost their meaning, should be relegated to the Museum of Political Factionalism.

I am personally urging that as high a vote as can be mustered be given to Mr. Farrell Dobbs, the candidate of the Socialist Workers Party.

I believe that the groundwork should now be laid for a united front of this and other left-wing forces in an attempt to capture some offices in 1958 and to launch a national ticket in 1960.

a line of social development, but the two points are too close together to faithfully indicate the curve of the future. The working class has known brief periods of advance within capitalism, but it has also undergone lengthy periods of bitter struggle to maintain its position. Mr. Strachey's theory draws from the history of England and America of the past ten years too ambitious a conclusion. In the process, he neglects too much history and too much sound theory, and in so doing comes up with a gradualistic view which is likely to be upset within the next decade.

H.B.

## Still the Underdog

*THE NEGRO POTENTIAL*, by Eli Ginzberg. Columbia University Press, New York, 1956, \$3.

THIS little book is a product of the Conservation of Human Resources Project at Columbia University. In happy contrast to much of what has been published about the American Negro in recent times, it refrains from glowing rhapsodies about alleged express-train improvements, and soberly highlights the frightfully underprivileged position of the Negro people. One of the better products of a university study project, it is long on facts and short on jargon. While too many pages are spent in stating the obvious generalities in rather flat language, these form a small proportion of the whole, and the book is readable in a single sitting. This may be considered scabbing on the University and Foundation Grant Worker's Union, in that it states in 140 pages what is normally stretched out to 740, but it is a boon to the reader.

The biggest single improvement in the Negro condition is encompassed in a single comparison between the proportion of Negroes who lived in the North and in the South today and a half century ago. Ninety out of every one hundred Negroes were Southerners in 1900, while in 1950, only 68 out of each hundred live in the Southern States. Most of those 90 who used to live in the South lived in rural areas, while today half of Southern Negroes live in the cities. Thus, where in 1900, 74 out of every hundred Negroes were rural residents of the South, in 1950 only 35 out of every hundred, or less than half the proportion, lived in the rural areas of our South.

The great importance of this fact is understood if we reflect that the rural South today, so far as the Negro is concerned, is just about what it was at the start of the century. The terrorism is almost as bad, the poverty almost as great (the average income of a Negro Southern rural family was \$742 a year in 1954), the educational facilities not much improved. By escaping from his concentration in the rural South the Negro secured major improvements. The opportunities for Negroes haven't opened up too greatly in the North, nor in

the Southern cities to which the Negro has fled. But by making the big cityward migration, North and South, the Negro has reduced his disability to the level of discrimination existing in the metropolitan centers, and that is an improvement over the semi-barbaric savagery practised against him in his old home area.

IN the North, the economic position of the Negro improved slightly between 1940 and 1950. The overwhelming concentration in the field of service workers (household and other, embracing the most menial jobs) was considerably reduced. The Negroes got a better break as factory operatives, and as clerical and sales workers. But the terrible disparity between white and Negro remains, as shown by the fact that the median money income for Negro families in 1954 was only slightly better than half that of white families.

The round of life for the Negro is thus established from his youngest days: more poverty, more disease, more overcrowding, more broken families, poorer neighborhoods, far less education, less job training, poorer-paid jobs, hotter, dirtier and more menial jobs, a breaking of the spirit for a larger number by this round of deprivations, and, finally, the start of a new Negro family under all of these terrific handicaps.

In the South, 85 percent of Negro men had not completed high school in 1950, and even in the North, 69 percent were lacking a high-school diploma. In the colleges, the picture is unbelievable: Where ten percent of white men had a college diploma in 1950 in the nation, less than three percent of Negro men had that advantage. The study records:

*If the education of Southern Negro males were brought up to the level of Southern white males, the actual number of high school graduates in the region would be tripled, from about 11,000 to about 32,000. If the education of Northern Negroes were brought up to that of whites in the North, the number of Negro high school graduates in the North would be nearly doubled, from almost 14,000 to almost 25,000. Thus, if the differences between the races with respect to high school graduation were eliminated within each region, there would be 32,000 high school graduates in addition to the 25,000 who actually graduated. If the educational disadvantages of the South were also eliminated—that is, if all Negroes were brought up to the level of Northern whites—then the total number of Negro graduates would be increased by another 11,000, to nearly 68,000.*

Discrimination, inside and outside the South, is certainly costing the nation dearly. Consider that there were fewer than 500 Negro engineers in the entire South in 1950, where, had the Negroes been given equal opportunity in years gone by, there would have been tens of thousands. The engineer-technician problem that the gov-

ernment has been doing a lot of crying about recently would look a lot different.

ONE of the most interesting chapters in the book is that on the Negro soldier. Evidence concerning the education, training, and capacities of Negroes as they served in three wars (World War I, World II, and Korea) is presented, and the clear marks of the brutal treatment received by the Negro youth as a civilian are apparent when he was recruited as a soldier. Mr. Ginzberg weighs the story of the Negro's performance as a fighting man carefully, and attributes the resulting complaints on the part of white officers partly to their prejudices and partly to the poorer training, education, and opportunities possessed by the Negro youth during all the years prior to his induction. Negroes scored poorly on mental tests, but Negroes from Northern cities where they had better educational opportunities scored better than whites from Southern regions where the educational system was poor, illustrating once again that the difference is not in native mental equipment (where anthropologists and sociologists have not found any difference between racial groups) but in education, training, home and neighborhood background, job experience, etc.

During World War II, the Negro in the Army or Navy was discriminated against, segregated into menial units, and placed under white officers. (When the war started, the total number of Negro officers out of a Negro population of some 15 million was one West Pointer and 500 Negro reserve officers. At the war's end, there was one Negro officer for approximately every hundred Negro enlisted men, where the ratio for the army as a whole was one to eight.) He was robbed of every human dignity, and placed into quartermaster, engineer, and transportation units (within which the cream of the jobs were grabbed off by whites) where he had all the heavy labor and few of the opportunities. In the light of this situation, it is no surprise that the Negro displayed little enthusiasm for the war, hung back from responsibility even more than the white soldier, learned how to play dumb in Good Soldier Schweik fashion, and displayed a truculent attitude towards the entire setup. The wonder is only that there was not more trouble than actually occurred.

During the Korean war, forced to the wall by the conduct of the operation in the plain sight of all Asia and stung by repeated taunts from all around the globe, Army units were desegregated under General Ridgway, and the results in the brief period of warfare showed the willingness of the Negro GI to pull along with the white where he got anything like an even break.

In his concluding sections, Dr. Ginzberg emphasizes the difficulties that lie ahead, and wisely points out that these will be immensely multiplied—and that the Negro may even lose some of his gains—in case of a severe depression.

A. S.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Conclusions on Spain

Eléna de la Souchère's reminiscence of the Spanish Civil War in the September issue, while rich in detail, is rather deficient in political ideas. Perhaps she means to invite her readers to draw from the facts their own conclusions. The Spanish tragedy, indeed, was not an experience from which nothing is to be learned; its hero was the Spanish working class which bought with its blood and offers us some priceless truths. The two most important of these truths, in my view, are these:

1) In Spain the premises of a socialist revolution were present in 1936—just as they have been present in a score of other under-developed countries at various moments during the past forty years. Those Socialists and Communists, it follows, who insisted that Spain was not "ripe" for socialism and that the aim of the anti-Franco forces should have been restricted to preserving a democratic capitalist regime, were out of touch with the social realities of modern Spain. The viable alternative to Franco in 1936 was a government of the working-class organizations which could have achieved the land reform, begun the socialization of the economy and granted freedom to Spanish Morocco. A Spanish government with such a revolutionary policy would have stood a good chance to undermine the morale of the Franco army which was composed largely of landless peasant conscripts and Moors.

2) It is a good thing to have anti-fascist unity, and in a civil war it is certainly desirable to have the anti-fascists military forces under a unified command. But it is a life-and-death matter who presides over a unification if the people who are getting united represent classes with antithetical interests. During World War II General Mihailovich insisted that all Yugoslav anti-Hitler forces should be subordinated to his command while Chiang, at the other end of the world, demanded the incorporation of the Communist armies into the Kuomintang military machine. Now if Tito and Mao, like most leaders of the Spanish working class, had made a fetish of anti-Fascist unity, the Balkans and much of Asia today might be under the heel of bigger Francos. Fortunately Tito and Mao were strong enough to ignore the ultimatums and smart enough not to be taken in by the demagoguery of their capitalist semi-allies.

In retrospect, then, the Spanish anarchists and the POUM—whatever their failings—were instinctively right in opposing incorporation of their independent workers' militias into the capitalist-republican army of General Miaja. And the Spanish Socialists and Communists—whatever their hero-

ism on the battlefields—were wrong to sanction the suppression, in the name of unity, of the POUM and the anarchist workers of Barcelona in May 1937.

D. H. Minneapolis

## Basic Position

The article by Bert Cochran, "Socialism: The Word and the Deed," is one of the best socialist articles to appear anywhere in a long time. It should be a basic position adhered to by the whole American Left. If the Communist Party, as one group on the Left, does not stand on it . . . I would advise it to follow George Benjamin's advice [in the *Nation*] and dissolve. To take up the shallow position that the USSR already has a socialist society is to degenerate into a sect . . . and such will be a stumbling block for socialism, not a force for it.

If the Communist Party refuses to change its ways and take up the banner of moral leadership of world democratic thought . . . socialists should . . . avoid a sterile, sectarian, Soviet-worshipping C. P. like the plague.

Harry Braverman's article, "The New America," was another excellent one, and I have advised New Century Publishers to do themselves a favor and reprint it in *Political Affairs* or *Mainstream*, or at least

in pamphlet form, for the widest circulation among progressives. I hold the same opinion of Bert Cochran's above-mentioned article.

G. L. Westfield, Mass.

Your magazine is excellent—urge that you try to get more spokesmen of the Communist Party to put in occasional articles. People want to know what they have to say about aspects of political life and their position on questions of today—in fact, we are interested in all socialist viewpoints.

V. J. Albany, Calif.

My own ideas are very much socialist though at present I am trying to help a group that seeks a change chiefly away from the militaristic and monopolistic status quo of both Republican and Democratic parties.

However, the times call for more than a new party—in fact, I believe we need a total reversal of power, monetary, social, and political, from rule by the top to rule from the people directly. . . . We need you socialists, Progressives, and all labor and social-minded reformers. United we should beat the Republicans, Democrats, and their well-heeled backers.

As time marches on, the people must march also, lest they be left behind in decline. That is what is happening today in the U.S.A., and if we fail to see it and refuse to change, decay will follow. Unless our leaders decide to blast us all asunder rather than relinquish their stranglehold.

Hope that all interested in changes will offer their ideas so we can pick out the best to aim for.

Mrs. A. W. B. Massachusetts

## Convicted on Perjured Evidence

NO one in this country would want to see a man spend five years in the penitentiary on perjured evidence.

That is why we believe your readers will be particularly interested in learning that on October 15, the Supreme Court will hold its first hearing on a conviction which arose out of the non-Communist affidavit of the Taft-Hartley Law.

The defendant in the instance, Clinton Jencks, former organizer for the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, was convicted by the testimony of Harvey Matusow. Since that Texas trial in 1954 two important developments have taken place. Matusow admitted that his evidence regarding Jencks as a Communist was wholesale fabrication, and the Ninth Circuit Court in San Francisco has reversed the conviction of another union leader on the very same grounds which the Supreme Court has agreed to review for Clint Jencks.

What are the legal issues involved?  
1) Whether or not a court must order

the FBI reports produced which pertain to an informer's testimony against a defendant. This is to guard against false evidence. 2) Whether or not a court must admonish a jury to regard the testimony of informers with particular caution. 3) Whether or not a judge can substitute the Webster Dictionary definition of "membership" and "affiliation" rather than establish legal definition when he makes his charge to the jury.

Because this hearing considers so many "firsts" regarding the civil rights of Americans, we ask that you print this letter in the hope that those who read it will remember that a reversal for Jencks, holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross and a man close to the hearts of thousands of us for his work in this area—that such a reversal can go far to end the use of notorious informers to obtain convictions through hysteria, rather than the presentation of fact.

Juan Chacon, President,  
Local 890, IUUM&SW

Box 98, Bayard, New Mexico

# Thaw in the American Left

THE political winds have been blowing some favorable signs in recent weeks. All indications are that a gradual thaw of the formerly frozen fastnesses of the American Left is getting under way. When the AMERICAN SOCIALIST, almost three years ago, lifted its voice for a unification of radical forces in our country, we met with considerable interest, but few people felt it was possible or necessary. Nowadays, the call for a new independent socialist movement can be heard from many quarters. Vincent Hallinan, 1952 presidential candidate of the Progressive Party, is the latest to issue a strong statement on this subject. (See excerpts in this issue.)

The fact is that there are now several thousand socialist-minded people searching for answers to problems they formerly thought were settled. Shocks and jolts have loosened up the rigidity. Reaching this considerably enlarged potential group of readers and supporters is not automatic. It is something that takes a little doing. We naturally do everything we can through advertising, mail solicitation, and the like. Our readers have been very cooperative in providing us with mailing lists for this latter purpose.

But there's nothing like the personal touch in helping to translate the favorable atmosphere on the Left into an enlarged reading public. We urge

our supporters to get up a list of friends interested in the building of a new American Left, visit them, discuss with them, and sell them a subscription to the AMERICAN SOCIALIST. You will thereby aid the developing sentiment for a regroupment, and lend necessary support for this publication, which is endeavoring to help pave the way.

## NEW YORK READERS

### ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

The important changes of opinion among many sections of the American Left in recent months cause us to believe that a give-and-take discussion of prospects will be of interest to our readers. Interested persons are therefore invited to attend such a round table on "What can be done to get an effective socialist movement?," where they will be able to exchange ideas. Harry Braverman will lead the discussion.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 8 PM  
Adelphi Hall  
74 Fifth Ave.  
(near 14 St.)

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