

The New
INTERNATIONAL

The Eisenhower Recession

by T. N. Vance

The Decline of French Socialism

by A. Giacometti

The Economic Roots of Reformism

by Tony Cliff

***Is There A
Political Novel?***

by Michael Harrington

***Fromm Views the
Sane Society***

by Jules Sorel

***An Exchange of Views:
American Communism***

**THEODORE DRAPER
and
MAX SHACHTMAN**

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Notes of the Quarter:

The Eisenhower Recession

The Causes and Depth of the Economic Decline

I

WHAT KIND OF RECESSION? It is now clear that the Eisenhower recession is no mild, inventory adjustment. In six months, from August 1957 to February 1958, the Federal Reserve Index of industrial production has declined from 145 to 130—a decrease of more than 10 per cent. Unemployment in February is officially placed at 5,173,000—an increase of about two million in six months, placing official unemployment at the highest post-World War II level, exceeding by an appreciable amount the 4,700,000 reached in 1949-1950, prior to the outbreak of the Korean war. Steel production is at 52.4 per cent of capacity, against 93.5 per cent a year ago. Weekly steel production is currently at 1,415,000 tons—almost a million tons a week less than a year ago. Motor vehicle production is running at 101,226 units a week, compared with 161,865 vehicles in the comparable week of 1957. Oil production and freight car loadings are off substantially. In fact, all durables show a 10 per cent decline from February, 1957 to February, 1958, with consumer durables down 20 per cent. Business failures are way up, and the pressures for the Federal government to “do something” are increasing daily from virtually every class and every segment of society.

It appears likely that March figures will show further declines. Aside from *Fortune* magazine and certain other Republican spokesmen for the big bourgeoisie, most analysts and commentators are ready to concede that this is the most serious postwar recession (in fact, before public relations became the chief science of government, this would have been called a depression) and that there will be no immediate upturn. Writes a *New York Times* financial columnist in the issue of March 23rd: “As the week ended, it was clear that the recession was still in progress, though slowing perhaps. While some of the key economic indicators are still sharply depressed from year-ago levels, their recent rates of decline have slackened. This has led to the belief in some quarters that a ‘bottoming-out’ of the downtrend might be imminent. But little hope is held for any marked upturn before the fourth quarter of this year or early 1959.” (Italics mine—T. N. V.)

To be sure, this is *not* 1929-1933, but it is also *not* 1948-1949 nor 1953-1954. One should not forget that the recession of 1948-1949 was undoubtedly cut short by the timely (from an economic point of view) arrival of the Korean war. And the recession of 1953-1954 was probably held to minimum duration by the passage of the

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"tax swindle" Revenue Act of 1954 providing, among other things, for accelerated depreciation. It is also an open secret that major forces within the Eisenhower administration preferred to ignore the signs that the economy was softening and attempted, through strict credit controls and high interest rates, to induce a "little" depression.

The big bourgeoisie, whose captive Eisenhower is, has simply been pursuing the class struggle in its own interests. As we said in our article in the Summer, 1957 issue of *The New International* (p. 178): "The big bourgeoisie demand a halt to inflation, or rather they use the concern of the working classes to prevent inflation as a device for getting the government to raise interest rates and to place a squeeze on small and medium-size business." It goes without saying that among the calculations of big capital is the expectation that a working class with 5,000,000 or so unemployed will be more docile and its unions more "amenable to common sense" when negotiations for new contracts take place.

Like a breath of clean fresh air, the Eisenhower recession has suddenly swept away all the nonsense about capitalism having achieved "permanent prosperity." It is clear that the Eisenhower recession is a major cyclical downturn in the epoch of the Permanent War Economy. Its severity is not to be compared with the Great Depression of the 1930's, but only because capitalism has entered a new stage, which we have named the Permanent War Economy. As we forecast at the conclusion of our previously-quoted article in the Summer, 1957 issue of *The New International*: "The impossibility of continuing to expand in all three departments of production will lead to a deteriorating eco-

nomie situation and in the relatively near future to the beginnings of a first-rate political crisis." The deteriorating economic situation is at hand, and the political crisis is about to unfold.

II

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE WAR OUTLAYS RATIO? In the epoch of the Permanent War Economy stage of capitalism, a prime mover becomes the ratio of war outlays to total production, as we have explained on numerous occasions in these pages. In our article in the Summer, 1957 issue, we presented up-to-date calculations, from which we extract merely the ratio of war outlays to total production from its peak in 1952 through 1956:

Ratio of War Outlays to Total Production

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Ratio</i> |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1952 | 16.9% |
| 1953 | 16.8 |
| 1954 | 14.5 |
| 1955 | 13.0 |
| 1956 | 12.7 |

We estimate that this crucial ratio remained the same in 1957 as in 1956; namely, 12.7 per cent. How, then, could there have been such a sharp decline taking place during the latter part of 1957? A year, of course, is a rather long period of time and such a unit of measure tends to blunt the cyclical fluctuations. These can best be seen by examining quarterly movements within the economy, as is also the case for the over-all picture of the economy.

Gross national product, for example, for the year 1957 (see the February, 1958 issue of the *Survey of Current Business*) is estimated at \$434.4 billion, almost a five per cent increase in cur-

rent prices over the \$414.7 billion figure of 1956. To be sure, practically all the increase represents the inflation in prices, but the fact is that for the year as a whole 1957 set a production peak. 1958, of course, will be another story. Yet, if one examines the quarterly movements, the steady upward trend reached its peak in the third quarter, with G.N.P. at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$440 billion, declining in the fourth quarter to a level of \$432.6 billion. We can thus pinpoint, so far as gross national product is concerned, the third quarter of 1957 as the start of the Eisenhower recession. And August appears to be the month in which most meaningful indexes turned downwards.

If we examine the ratio of war outlays to total production in 1957 by quarters, we obtain the following picture (using estimates of the Department of Commerce, in accordance with methods set forth in the Summer, 1957 and March-April, 1953 issues of *The New International*):

1957 Quarterly Ratios of War Outlays to Total Production

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| I Quarter | 12.9% |
| II Quarter | 13.0 |
| III Quarter | 12.5 |
| IV Quarter | 12.5 |

Thus, a decline of about four per cent took place in the war outlays ratio between the second and third quarters of 1957. The decline was based on the planned reduction in war outlays by the Eisenhower administration, under the influence of the budget-cutting drive spearheaded by big business organizations and representatives. This, of course, occurred at a time when total output was still increasing and helped to bring about the end of the boom and the beginning of the recession. A war outlays

ratio of 12.5 per cent brings us back almost to the pre-Korean level and materially weakens one of the major sustaining props under the economy.

As was to be expected, the Kremlin came to the rescue of sorely beleaguered American capitalism with the Sputnik and the manner in which it was launched. Immediately, the budget-cutting drive ceased and an increase in "defense" expenditures was sanctioned by all classes in American society. The difficulty is that the Federal bureaucracy is a ponderous machine and it takes time for it to move. It will still be several months before the planned increase in war outlays will be realized in the form of increased production and employment.

Meanwhile, the clamor for immediate action steadily increases. A tremendous debate has arisen between the advocates of increased public expenditures (in which camp are most of the leading Democrats) and the supporters of an immediate tax cut (in which camp are a number of Republican leaders). Many Republicans, of course, still favor doing nothing; and the Administration has stated that it will wait another month before deciding whether special government intervention measures are required.

In this connection, it is interesting to note the position of Professor Arthur F. Burns, formerly Eisenhower's chief economic advisor. He stated in a speech delivered in Chicago on March 22, and reported in *The New York Times* of March 23, 1958: "If, on the other hand, we delay more than a very few weeks, in the hope that economic recovery will come on its own by midyear, we shall be taking the risk of having to resort later to drastic medicine." Burns, it should be noted, is on record as favoring an immediate and permanent "broadly based" \$5 billion tax cut.

While a tax cut does not possess the "multiplier" effects of an increase in the war outlays ratio, it can have some hypodermic effect, depending on the nature and size of the tax cut. Neither approach, by itself, carries any promise of arresting the decline in capital accumulation—and it is this, more than any other factor, that bothers the more knowledgeable defenders of the bourgeoisie when they glibly predict that the recession will be of short duration.

III

WHY THE DECLINE IN CAPITAL ACCUMULATION? The figures on capital formation or accumulation always leave much to be desired. Nevertheless, the present trends are unmistakably clear and disputed by no one. Capital accumulation turned downward in 1957 and will continue downward throughout 1958.

If we take the figures on gross private domestic investment in constant (1947) dollars of the Department of Commerce, we get the following totals:

Gross Private Domestic Investment
(In Billions of 1947 Dollars)

| Year | Billions of Dollars |
|------|---------------------|
| 1953 | 38.5 |
| 1954 | 37.9 |
| 1955 | 46.6 |
| 1956 | 47.6 |
| 1957 | 44.4 |

Here, the effects of the accelerated depreciation provisions of the Revenue Act of 1954 are apparent in 1955 and 1956. Yet, a decline of almost seven per cent set in in 1957, and all forecasts for 1958 reveal the expectation of further and sharper declines.

If we confine ourselves to plant and equipment expenditures, the most decisive portion of capital accumulation, we find a dramatic rise from \$26 billion in 1954 to over \$37 billion in

1957. Yet, here, too, the quarterly analysis of 1957 figures shows a decline from a third quarter seasonally adjusted annual total of \$37.75 billion to a fourth quarter level of \$37.47, with a sharp decline expected to be shown once the first quarter of 1958 figures become available.

The economic crisis is revealed, above all, in the sudden decisions of capitalists to forego planned investments in plant expansion or decisions of big corporations to reduce sharply expenditures for new plant and equipment. It is as if all of a sudden the capitalist class, or at least large segments of it, has reached the conclusion that present capacity is more than ample to take care of existing demand. In this respect, *the Eisenhower recession is typical of a classical capitalist depression, albeit it takes place in a different epoch and with the economy operating at very high levels.*

The fact is, however, that this is a durable goods crisis. In virtually every such industry, idle capacity under capitalist conditions of production exists. In some cases, such as the railroads, the industry is permanently sick and an intelligent bourgeois class would take the lead in favoring nationalization. The American bourgeoisie, however, especially its Republican wing, is so immersed in the fetishism of private capital that it will drive some of its leading elements to suicide rather than permit its state to socialize the losses of an important, basic industry.

Having accelerated depreciation allowances over the last three years, thereby borrowing from future capital accumulation, the bourgeoisie is in a quandary. Another "gimmick" of this nature is not in the cards, although watch for certain advocates of a tax cut to stress the "necessity to

provide a stimulus for investment, for those who make jobs." And with capital accumulation in a state of obvious decline, the only real remedy that the bourgeoisie has is to increase government expenditures, which again brings them face to face with the fetishism of private capital that dominates especially the more Republican sections of the bourgeoisie. Hence, the indecision of the Eisenhower administration, and its plaintive hope that by postponing a decision as to a tax cut or sizable increase in government expenditures, or both, the economy will suddenly right itself, thereby avoiding the necessity of a decision.

IV

WHAT ABOUT THE BUILT-IN STABILIZERS? The answer is that despite much room for further improvement, above all the need to increase the amount of unemployment insurance and its duration, as well as other aspects of government - supported purchasing power, the built-in stabilizers have worked. An interesting and essentially correct article on this subject appears in the "Review of the Week" section of *The New York Times* of March 23, 1958 by economics reporter Edwin L. Dale, Jr. Comparing the postwar slumps with that of 1929, aside from the fact that the decline in production was greater and more severe in 1929, Dale properly points out that the major difference has been that personal income, due to the built-in stabilizers, has declined much less. He puts it this way:

In 1929-30, personal income fell off about 8 per cent in the first seven months of the slump. This meant a sharp and severe drop in purchasing power.

Since that time there have been added unemployment compensation, other social security payments affecting mainly the aged, and farm price supports. These "in-

come cushions," otherwise known as built-in stabilizers, have worked beautifully in the postwar slumps.

Compared with the 8 per cent decline in personal income in 1929-30, the decline in 1948-49's first seven months was 3.1 per cent, while in 1953-54 it was 1.9 per cent and 1.3 per cent in 1957-58. This means that purchasing power in each postwar slump has fallen far less than production and considerably less than employment.

Of course, without the development of the Permanent War Economy, these built-in stabilizers would be helpless to stem the tide of recession. By themselves, unemployment insurance and other purchasing power supplements would be relatively powerless and, as in the case of Germany under the Weimar Republic, would simply be swept away by a desperate and impoverished middle class driven to the support of fascism.

That Dale is not so sure of the outlook can be seen from the conclusion of his article:

This postwar experience is an illustration of why the present situation is such a difficult one. True, the gods have once again provided a lucky break—the post-Sputnik increase in defense spending.

But there is real doubt that this will be enough. Hence the widespread belief that this recession is providing much the most severe test of whether modern American governments can and will take the right actions to cure successfully a serious slump. (Italics mine—T. N. V.)

V

WHOSE ANTI-RECESSION PROGRAM AND FOR WHOM? The significant fact is that the Eisenhower administration, despite its being the creation of the fetishists of private capital, has already taken governmental action to try to stem the tide of recession. The government has lowered the rate of interest, through its control of the money markets, and attempted to ease credit. It

is clear that these actions by themselves will not suffice. Certain foreign economic measures, as well as certain military expenditures, are presented as necessary to stimulate economic recovery, a tactic that riles the more orthodox Republicans. Gestures are being made in the direction of trying to persuade the states to extend the period of unemployment insurance benefits. All this is a far cry from the last Republican administration under Hoover. Naturally, the Democrats do not suffer nearly to the same degree from the fetishism of private capital, and hence (especially as an opposition political party) they are developing all kinds of proposals for large-scale public expenditures.

Since the most optimistic economic forecast merely hopes for a leveling off at the bottom during the second quarter and perhaps a slight upturn by the end of 1958, and since 1958 is an election year, it is quite apparent that there will be some type of tax cut in 1958, possibly a temporary one along the lines of the Committee for Economic Development proposal. Naturally, any flat percentage tax cut will be of greater benefit to the upper income groups than to the lower.

As always, when major economic policy questions become matters of practical politics, the class struggle has an ugly habit of intruding itself, to the despair of the "classless patriots." A tax cut can have an immediate effect, but the question of "for whom?" is most relevant. Instead of the trade-union movement making pious representations to Eisenhower, it is time that labor developed a hard-hitting political-economic program, divorced from both the Democrats and Republicans. Among the planks that such a program ought to include are the following:

A. Developing the responsibility of

society for the existence of unemployment and the support of the unemployed by raising benefits to a minimum of one-half of the previous wage and increasing the duration of unemployment insurance benefits from the present maximum of 26 weeks to 52 weeks. A program of this type should be financed by a capital levy (five per cent would be more than adequate) on all aggregates of private capital in excess of one million dollars.

B. Nationalizing those industries whose output is essential to the public welfare and which can no longer be operated profitably under private capital. The starting point should be the railroads, with an immediate perspective of including all interstate transportation.

C. A large-scale public works program, starting at \$5 billion for the first year, to help build such necessary institutions as schools, hospitals, roads, etc.

D. Take the profit out of war industry by limiting profits to a maximum return of six per cent on invested capital. Nationalize those industries whose output is 100 per cent for military purposes.

E. Reducing Federal personal income taxes by increasing the dependency credit from \$600 per dependent to \$900, thereby eliminating the lower income groups from the burden of Federal income taxation, and making the existing burden more equitable than at present.

There are other measures that trade unionists and socialists could advocate. The important point, however, is that the pressure of the unemployed and the rank and file on the trade-union leadership is bound to increase. As these economic pressures develop, and the longer the Eisenhower recession lasts, the more powerful will these pressures become, the sooner will it

become apparent to broad sections of the American working class that only through class political action can even the most elementary of economic demands be satisfied. The forthcoming political crisis will usher in a period of

regroupment of political forces among all classes. Now is the time for labor to lay the foundations of independent political action!

T. N. Vance
March, 1958

The Decline of French Socialism

Balance Sheet of the French Socialist Party

The material presented by our contributor, A. Giacometti, is of highly informative interest to everyone concerned with the development of the socialist movement in France. However, we cannot share the final conclusion he reaches from the description of the political and ideological decay of the French Socialist party. The profound discontentment, and even disgust, of many French socialists, left-wing socialists in particular, with the leadership and course of the French Socialist party is perfectly understandable, for both leadership and policy are a disgrace to the name of socialism. The refusal of these socialists to remain in or to enter the French party, while equally understandable, is in our view an error by which they have involuntarily contributed to the disastrous state of socialism in France.

For at least twenty years, principled socialists of all kinds have turned their backs upon the S.F.I.O., basically because of the same conditions as those described by our contributor, and have sought to set up organizations independent of and hostile to not only the Communist party but also to the S.F.I.O. In no country have so many such attempts been made as in France. All of them failed to establish or maintain a significant socialist movement. We are anything but convinced that current attempts will fare better. On the contrary, it appears to us that the indispensable work of reshaping and reconstructing French socialism can only be retarded by sincere socialists continuing this abstention from living and working in the S.F.I.O., with all the known difficulties—an abstention which has helped, not hindered, the consequent overwhelming predominance in it of the present leadership and the present course. It is most important to draw up the kind of balance-sheet that comrade Giacometti draws up of the S.F.I.O. But it is not less important to cast up a balance sheet of the numerous efforts so vainly made in the past two decades to build a socialist movement outside the S.F.I.O. and in irreconcilable conflict with it.

—The Editor.

To describe and analyze the French Left today is a difficult task. Where to begin? The concept itself has become elusive and ambiguous. It is not, as many have said, that the terms of "Left" and "Right" have become meaningless. For us who continue to view the working class as a sociological fact, as a community of action with specific interests, tasks, historical aims and perspectives, the

terms have never lost their clarity. To us, the "Left" is the broad, historical movement of the working class, the movement which represents its interests, seeks to fulfill its tasks and purposes. To spell it out: the "Left" is the movement which seeks to establish a society based on the common ownership and democratic control of production. In all countries there are organizations which, each in their

own way, represent this historical movement: socialist parties, labor parties, revolutionary nationalist movements, trade-unions.

But if we turn to France today, we are faced with the fact that no such movement exists, at least not in organized form. There are, to be sure, the traditional institutions of the working class: two large parties, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.); three important trade-unions: C.G.T., C.F.T.C. and F.O. What these institutions have in common is their lack of real content. Of the parties, it can be said today that they do not even represent the historical movement of the working class implicitly and in spite of themselves. The trade-unions only represent a minority of the working class, and not necessarily its most active and conscious part. The bulk of the workers is unorganized, and the real life of the working class takes place outside of their scope.

The two major mass movements in recent years—the strikes of 1953 and 1955—were initiated spontaneously, outside the trade-unions, and they were carried forward to a large extent by the unorganized. Figures of actual union membership are difficult to obtain, but it seems doubtful that the number of paid-up members for the three major federations exceeds 1.8 millions (1 million for the C.G.T., 500,000 for the C.F.T.C. and 300,000 for F.O.) * According to a well-informed union official, the total number of union members at the Renault auto works does not exceed 2,000—out of a total labor force of 40,000.

(* There are about 10 million potential union members in France: 1.2 million agricultural workers, 6.5 industrial workers and 2 million office workers. There are also about 400,000 teachers, but their case is different: almost all belong to unions, most of which are federated in an independent organization, the Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale. Their unions are outstanding for their militancy, their high degree of internal democracy and their high standards of organization.

Union elections also give an indication: in the union elections at Renault of May 1947, abstentions ran up to 41.5%; at Citroën, the average percentage of abstentions is 50%.¹

In the political elections, the disaffection of the working class is even more evident. According to an analysis of the 1951 elections by the French Institute for Public Opinion Research (I.F.O.P.) 1.9 million workers voted for the C.P. (38% of the total C.P. vote), 576,000 voted for the S.F.I.O. (21% of the total S.F.I.O. vote) and 450,000 voted for the christian-democratic M.R.P. (19% of the M.R.P. vote) while approximately 5 million did not vote at all.²

This withdrawal of the French working class from its organizations often astonishes the foreign observer. It is easily forgotten that in each country the working class movement of necessity shares many features of the society and culture as a whole. The institutions of the French labor movement are no exception: they have their own share of the unreality of all official French institutions.

If it were necessary to characterize the French economy in a sentence, one would have to refer to the contradictions between its modern industrial equipment and a completely antiquated system of distribution, leading to the artificial restriction of demand and to general stagnation. On the political level, the same conflict exists between all elements that seek a modern solution (of whatever type) to the problems of production and the fossilized institutions of a State that seems to exist for the exclusive protection of the most backward and narrow local privileges. Since 1944, successive waves of social revolution, European integration, Mendesist reform have spent themselves against this rock of "Malthusian" conserva-

tive institutions. The devices by which contradictions of this nature are smoothed over or solved in well-functioning bourgeois democracies (parties, elections, votes in Parliament) have proved completely inadequate. The country is ruled by an omnipotent and irresponsible bureaucratic apparatus, while the people elects an irresponsible Parliament, which spawns one impotent government after another. The mechanism of official political life has not broken down but functions in a void; the mass of the people has withdrawn its interest from it and seeks to express itself by other means.

Both Communist and Socialist parties have become deeply involved in this shadow life of official politics: they are indeed among its main supports, and share many of its features. They are included, with reason, in the disaffection and mistrust the people, and particularly the working class, feels towards "politics" in general.

Some will object that these parties, after all, exist. It is true: there are party organizations, a party opinion, a party press. Voters continue to cast their ballots for the party tickets. But if one looks at the role these organizations play, at their real function in society, it becomes clear that they are important only by virtue of their inert bulk, in a purely negative way. From the point of view of the historical working-class movement, they are nothing more than obstacles. Since this has not always been the case, and since large numbers of workers and socialists still do not see it that way, it is necessary to explain. In what way are they obstacles? How and when did this come about? Who do these parties represent and what do they want? When these questions are answered, the perspectives of the real labor

movement in France will become clearer too.

SINCE THE END OF the war, the history of the French Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.) has been one of steady and rapid decline. In this respect, French social-democracy represents an almost unique instance in Europe. From the organizational point of view, all social-democratic parties have progressed or held their own; from the political point of view, they have shown, for the most part, a greater vitality than was generally expected at the close of the war. In France, the contrary has taken place.

This decline of the S.F.I.O. is equally striking on all levels: in terms of numerical strength of organized structure, of social composition, of age composition, of political, cultural and theoretical vitality. The statistical facts of the decline have been assembled by scholars such as Raymond Fusilier, Pierre Rimbart, Maurice Duverger and others, who have devoted well known studies to this problem. It is useful to summarize these data here, as they save a lot of explaining. First of all the decline in membership is perhaps the most striking fact:³

| | | |
|------------|---------|-----------|
| 1938 | 275,526 | |
| 1939 | 180,219 | |
| 1945 | 338,625 | |
| 1946 | 353,742 | |
| 1947 | 322,881 | |
| 1948 | 222,781 | |
| 1949 | 150,627 | |
| 1950 | 135,809 | |
| 1951 | 115,025 | |
| 1952 | 108,437 | |
| 1953 | 105,760 | |
| 1954 | 107,670 | } approx. |
| 1957 | 96,000 | |

A glance at these figures shows that since 1945 the S.F.I.O. has lost over two thirds of its membership. After having been the strongest ever in its history in 1945, it is now at the lowest ebb since 1927. Moreover, the depar-

ture of the old members is coupled with a failure to recruit new ones. In his essay on the S.F.I.O., Maurice Duverger remarked:⁴

... in the years 1925-1928, when the party's strength was about equal to its strength today, many new members joined it every year (between 20,000 and 50,000 each year). People left, but others came to take their place. When the total number dropped, as in 1932-34, it meant that the number of the former was greater than that of the latter, but the recruitment remained significant: about 19,000 new members joined in 1933, almost 15,000 in 1934. Today this turn-over no longer exists. The sources of recruitment have practically dried up. Old members leave, nobody takes their place: only 708 new members in 1948, for a total number of approximately 285,000! In 1950, the party claimed 5,000 new members, but the rounded and vague figure leaves room for every kind of doubt. Since 1951 the party leadership no longer dares to publish figures, which is symptomatic.

The nature of this decline is different from that of previous crises. Since the founding of the unified party in 1905, four significant drops in membership occurred. All these drops are short in time (none lasts longer than three years) and can be attributed to specific causes: World War I and its consequences, the split which gave birth to the Communist Party, the departure of the "neo-socialist" right wing in 1933, the expulsion of the left wing—the future P.S.O.P.—in 1938.

The present drop in membership is a continuous process of almost ten years, if one excepts the short-lived recovery of 1954-56. It is not the result of one or several splits, as before the war, but of a general decline, although small groups have left the party in 1948 and in late 1956. Very few of the former members left to join or to form other organizations: there is no amputation, only a wasting-away. Splits assume political vitality, energy, fighting; a wasting-away may mean

many things, but excludes all of the above.

It could be pointed out that the drop in membership is not a phenomenon confined to the S.F.I.O., but one which has affected all French parties since 1945. The Communist Party, for instance, has dropped from 1 million members at the end of the war to 430,000 members today, while the circulation of *L'Humanité* has shrunk from 601,000 copies in 1945-46 to 173,000 copies in 1954. The general process of de-politicalization does not account, however, for the extent of the drop. Moreover, the popular vote of the S.F.I.O. has also shrunk considerably during the same period:⁵

| Date | Number of votes | Percentage |
|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1945 | 4,561,411 | 23.2 |
| 1946 (June) | 4,187,818 | 21.6 |
| 1946 (Nov.) | 3,431,954 | 17.9 |
| 1951 | 2,661,686 | 13.9 |

In 1932 and 1936 the S.F.I.O. represented approximately 20 per cent of the voters; thus, even if one discounts the effects of the general turn to the Left at the end of the war, the decline remains substantial.

The party's Paris daily, *Le Populaire*, dropped from a circulation of 278,000 copies in 1945-46 to the level of a miserable one-sheet bulletin today, with a circulation of 27,000 copies in 1954 of which only 35 per cent were actually sold. It has declined further since.

Why this unprecedented drop in membership and influence? There are general political reasons which we mentioned above: the withdrawal of the French people from political life. But the specific reasons weigh more heavily in the balance. In the immediate post-war years, where the French working-class and, for that matter, most other people, were looking for radical solutions, a party that took the

main responsibility for prosecuting the war in Indo-China, repressing the nationalist movements in Algeria and Madagascar, freezing the wages, stabilizing the political regime and turning the country into a pawn of U. S. foreign policy could not help but disappoint its working-class and left wing supporters. In fact, the consequences of a conservative policy at that particular time turned out to be more serious than a passing disappointment: it was during these years that the party shifted its social base and changed its political nature. It was not until the government of Guy Mollet that the full impact of these changes were revealed.

It is true that between 1954 and 1956 the downward trend was slightly reversed. For one thing, the party was getting close to rock-bottom and those oppositionists that remained in spite of their disagreement with the leadership represented a selection of case-hardened people, determined to stay in the party even under very difficult circumstances. On the other hand, the party had undergone a long "opposition cure." Its role in the Indo-Chinese war and Jules Moch's activities as a Minister of the Interior were far enough removed in time to be forgotten by many. The statements of the party leaders seemed to show a genuine desire for reform, and their strong support of "Mendesism" led many people to view the S.F.I.O. once again as a party of reform with potentialities for growth and, perhaps, radical developments. Although the party did not grow nearly as much as the "Mendesist" wing of the Radical Party, it also benefited from the general trend towards liberalism and reform.

In the elections of January 1956, which brought the "Republican Front" coalition into power, the S.F.I.O. polled 3,171,985 votes, an in-

crease of roughly 500,000, representing 15 per cent of the total vote. It is interesting to note that in these elections the number of abstentionists also decreased from 19.8 per cent to 17.2 per cent.⁶

Within three months, however, the party plunged once more downward, this time to hitherto unfathomed depths. By its policy in Algeria and in the Middle East, and by its brutal suppression of the opposition within the party, the party leadership created a situation where, for the first time since 1947, compact groups were leaving the party, the "Action Socialiste" group, led by Andrée Viénot of the Ardennes Federation, being the most important. The loss of party members resumed and increased with every new sanction against militants of the opposition: the expulsion of Weitz, the sanctions against Pivert, Philip and others, the dissolution of the student organization, etc. In July 1957, Maurice Duverger estimated the party membership at 96,000; it has doubtlessly gone down since.⁷

In terms of popular vote, on the other hand, the party has held its own since 1951: this is shown by the various local elections which have taken place since 1956, and it has remained so even after Suez. An analysis of these votes shows the reason: the party of Mollet and Lacoste has won the support of right-wing voters, who have come to view it as a solid bastion for their ideas and interests.

This brings us to the center of the problem: more important than the numerical decline itself, is the change that has occurred in the party during this decline. Its recent political evolution cannot be understood without reference to the changes in social composition, geographical distribution, age composition and organizational set-up within the S.F.I.O. The partial recov-

ery of 1954-56 then appears as the result of a misunderstanding that was rapidly and decisively cleared up during the government of Guy Mollet.

The most recent data on the party's social composition go back to 1955. They concern the party membership as a whole (based on a sample of 15,000 members), the cadres (i.e., the

| <i>Social group</i> | <i>Members</i> | <i>Cadres</i> | <i>Election cand.</i> | <i>Voters</i> | <i>General pop. %</i> |
|------------------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Workers (industrial) | 24.3 | 11.4 | 7 | 21 | 19 |
| Workers (agricultural) | * | 11.4 | 7 | 6 | 3 |
| Civil servants | 24.9 | 37.4 | — | 13 | 5 |
| Office workers | 8.8 | 13.5 | — | 6 | 6 |
| Pensioned and ret. | 12.8 | 7.7 | — | 10 | 6 |
| Farmers | 7.4 | 6.8 | 12 | 8 | 16 |
| Shopkeepers, artis. | 12.3 | 10.6 | 19 | 10 | 15 |
| Professionals | 2.6 | 10.1 | 19 | 10 | 15 |
| No profession | 6.9 | 2.5 | — | 26 | 30 |
| Prop. of women | 12.1 | 5.6 | — | 41 | — |

*Included under "farmers"

Among the party membership, 58 per cent are wage-earners, and 30-35 per cent are probably workers: the figures for "civil-servants" includes probably one third or more workers in the public services (railways, city transport, electric power and gas), who have a special statute, and the figure for "farmers" includes a small number of agricultural workers. Nevertheless, the specific weight of the working class in the party is small. If one combines the results of political elections and of union elections, it appears that the S.F.I.O. has no working class following in any of the basic industries nor, as we shall see, in the main industrial concentrations: very little in mining, next to nothing in the metal industries, in steel, in maritime transport, in the building trades. The workers of the S.F.I.O. are mostly scattered in small enterprises, and work for the most part in secondary industries: leather, ceramics, textile.

On the other hand, the "new middle class" (civil servants and office work-

members of the Executive Committees of the Departmental Federations, the members of the parliamentary groups and the members of the Directing Committee) and the voters. In the following table, the figures concerning the election candidates refer to the 1951 elections. "No profession" means mostly housewives.⁸

ers) represents about 25 per cent of the membership; the "old middle class" (shopkeepers, artisans, professional) about 20 per cent. These categories are relevant because under the present circumstances the political behavior of most civil servants and office workers is determined not so much by the fact that they live by selling their labor power as by their bourgeois aspirations. There are notable exceptions: the bank clerks in Paris, for instance, and the post-office workers, but in general the "white collar" groups have remained conservative.

The change in the social composition of the S.F.I.O. parallels a geographical shift of the basis of its support from North-East to South-West and from the industrial to rural regions. This is the phenomenon that Duverger called the "radicalization" of the S.F.I.O., that is, the tendency of the party to adopt the features of the Radical Party and to replace the latter on the political spectrum.

Before 1919, the S.F.I.O. was mostly

a northern party, based on the industrial regions of Paris and of North Eastern France (steel and mining). After the split leading to the founding of the Communist Party, the movement towards the South begins. By 1928 and 1932 the S.F.I.O. began to replace the increasingly conservative Radical Party in its traditional strongholds in the South-West and in the West. In 1946, the S.F.I.O. weakens in the North, East and Center regions, and again gains in the South. Duverger concludes: ". . . except for the mining departments of the North, the S.F.I.O. has become more a southern than a northern party: it occupies the position of the old "republican left" of pre-1900 days, which had no specif-

| | |
|---|-----|
| From communities under 2,000 inhabitants | 42% |
| From communities between 2,000 and 5,000 | 11% |
| From communities between 5,000 and 20,000 | 22% |
| From communities between 20,000 and 100,000 | 15% |
| From communities over 100,000 inhabit. | 10% |

This does not mean, however, that the party has succeeded in gaining significant support among the farmers, like the C.P. has been able to do: as we have seen, only 8% of the S.F.I.O. voters are farmers. The S.F.I.O. tends to become less a rural party than a party of the small provincial towns.¹⁰

The political consequences of this shift have not been either immediate or direct. The two large federations of the North, with a working class majority, have been so far among the most steady supporters of the Mollet apparatus, while several southern federations have voted for minority resolutions. The geographical shift has reflected more directly on the psychological climate within the party, and on its organizational habits. Like all parties in the Marxist tradition, the S.F.I.O. was originally organized as

ic socialist characteristic. It thus inherits the Radical traditions." ⁹

Today, the two "industrial" departments of the North and Pas-de-Calais represent about a quarter of the party's membership. The second largest group is the Paris region (Seine and Seine-et-Oise) representing about a tenth. The Marseille region (Bouches-du-Rhone) represents another tenth. The rest of the membership (over half) is distributed in the provincial federations, most of which are Southern.

The shift from North-East to South-West also involves a shift from the industrial to the rural regions: in the elections of 1951, the votes of the S.F.I.O. were composed as follows:

a centralized and disciplined mass party, based on an active membership of hundreds of thousands, welded together by a system of sections and federations. This structure is now being increasingly replaced by another type of organization, characteristic of bourgeois parties: the party comes alive only at election time, and is held together between elections by a committee or bureau of party functionaries. The membership hardly participates in the life of the party, nor is the party relevant to the lives of the members. Often the local committees claim a membership that exists on paper only and whose dues are paid by generous donators. These paper members then become some of the most reliable supporters of administrative majorities at party congresses.

In other places, the local party section becomes a club where old-timers

meet to cultivate memories of the Popular Front or Liberation period. It is easy to see how difficult it would be to spoil the atmosphere of the club by suggesting action on the issues of the day.

These organizational habits and practices bring the S.F.I.O. close to Saragat's Italian Social-Democratic Party, which is in every respect more backward than its French counterpart and perhaps represents the image of the latter's future.

The evolution from mass party to electoral machine is also shown in the "membership ratio," i.e. the proportion of party members to voters. In left wing mass parties, the ratio ought to be high: the higher the ratio, the more intense the participation of the ranks in the party's life, the stronger the roots of the party in the population. For the social-democratic labor parties of Britain and Austria

| | <i>S.F.I.O.</i> | <i>C.P.</i> | <i>Average in tot. pop.</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Under 35 years | 30 | 42 | 34 |
| From 50-60 years | 22 | 19 | 20 |
| Over 65 years | 15 | 4 | 14 |

These proportions grow worse as one gets closer to the top leadership. Although the S.F.I.O. is not strictly speaking a party of old people (the average age of the members and voters is higher in the right-wing parties, and the proportion of pensioned and retired voters is highest in the Radical Party) it is a party on the older side of middle age, with an insignificant proportion of youth and, more important, with an inability to recruit among the youth. Among its top leaders and parliamentarians, it has its generous share of the ancient French politicians "who never resign and rarely die."

The high proportion of older people in the age-structure of the party has had a double effect: first it

the ratio is about 40%; in Sweden and Denmark it is about 35%; in Norway 25% and in Switzerland over 20%. In France, the "membership ratio" of the S.F.I.O. exceeded 10% only once, in 1936, but hardly ever dropped below 7%. In 1946, it was 9%. In 1955, however, it had dropped to 4%.¹¹ Today it is even lower, since the party membership has decreased much faster than the popular vote.

Finally, the party has grown old. The sampling of 1955 indicated the following proportions for each age group: (in percent):¹²

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| Under 25 years | 2.6 |
| From 25-30 years | 7.4 |
| From 30-40 years | 20.6 |
| From 40-50 years | 32.3 |
| Over 50 years | 37.1 |

Another sampling of 1952, by the French Institute for Public Opinion Research, among the party's electorate, confirmed these results:¹³

determines the psychological atmosphere: slow reactions to new situations, a world made up of pious recollections, of small, rigidly observed routine habits. Secondly, it reinforces the conservative tendencies of apparatus rule: advancement is slow and based on seniority alone. Creative intelligence, drive, outstanding abilities are not an asset but a handicap in this kind of organization.

From another point of view, the social composition has also contributed to strengthening these tendencies: the high proportion of civil servants has undoubtedly favored the bureaucratization of the party and the rule of the General Secretariat. The habits of discipline, of obedience to authority, the acceptance of administrative hier-

archy and dependence are always present in a large group of civil servants and office workers, and assert themselves with particular force in a conservative social climate.

avored by the heterogeneity of the party's class composition: in the absence of a dynamic policy, the apparatus is the principal force which keeps together the contradictory interests that have sought shelter in the party.

One of the most important consequences of this situation has been the disappearance of the party ideology: the apparatus shuns theory, as it necessarily involves critical thinking. For ten years now, any interest for theory has been confined to the isolated minorities on the Left, mostly composed of individuals who have learnt to think in other organizations before joining the party. In actual practice, the ideology has been replaced at best with liberal empiricism (as in the case of the "center" faction led by Deferre) or with a vague feeling of solidarity with the "little man," at worst with the kind of party patriotism in which the organization has become an end in itself. The effect achieved is not unlike that of Stalinism in the C.P.: the party can do no wrong, the leaders of the party must not be criticized lest the criticism be used against the party by its enemies, etc. This is what André Philip refers to when he says that the party "seems to have lost the very notion of truth" and that an action "is held to be good or evil not on its own merits but according to the party affiliation of the men responsible for it."¹⁴

The reaction of Mollet to the capture of the Moroccan plane carrying the leaders of the F.L.N. is typical in this respect: anger when he received the news, then acceptance and en-

dorsement in order to cover up for Lacoste. The responsibility of the left minority in this situation should not be hidden: during the electoral campaign in Paris in January 1957, the left-winger Mireille Osmin defended the official party policy in spite of her well-known opposition to the party leadership, contributing only to the discredit of the opposition and to the confusion of party members and sympathizers.

One may summarize the preceding points by quoting Duverger's description of the present state of the party:¹⁵

Without doctrine or program, the party confines itself to the defense of immediate interests, supporting in a day-by-day fashion the demands of the interest groups under its protection* without relating them to each other or to the general situation, without even analyzing their chances of success. It agrees to wage-raises, but without undertaking the fiscal and social reforms that would enable it to limit profits; it agrees to lower the prices of food-stuffs but without ceasing to support useless agricultural products; it is all in favor of economic expansion, but without touching marginal enterprises: all these are themes which the S.F.I.O. holds in common with all other French parties, each stressing one or the other aspect, according to the weight of the different interest groups within the party. The Radicalized S.F.I.O. is becoming increasingly assimilated to French conservatism: a conservatism of little people, nicer than the other kind from a sentimental point of view, actually much worse since it involves the acceptance by the victims of their condition as victims. The verbal reference to socialism only exists for the sake of a good conscience: in this country of ours, the conservatives insist on seeming revolutionary to others and, most of all, to themselves.

WE HAVE SEEN IN THE preceding sections of this survey the ways in which the sociological degeneration of the

(*) André Philip defines this policy as "practical conservatism, thinly disguised by a general ideology of the defence of the "little man" against the "big man."

S.F.I.O. has determined the shift towards an inferior kind of bourgeois politics. It is necessary at this point to turn to the other aspect of this process, and to assess the part that policy has played in the degeneration of the party. This, in turn, raises other questions: to what extent can a change in policy by the party leadership or by sections of the party modify or reverse the present process of decline? What are the forces that make policy in the S.F.I.O. of today, and what forces could be expected to change it?

It should be clear that as complex a process as the complete sociological and political transformation of a mass party cannot simply be explained by a "mistaken" policy of its leadership, nor can it be said that the adoption of a "correct" policy by this leadership would annul that process. One could also express the wish that the left wing of the party should adopt a militant yet realistic policy which might, even under the present circumstances, neutralize the right wing and change the party all over again. But such wishes remain empty speculations when the forces don't exist that could create such a policy and act upon it.

It is probably true that the presence in the party of a strong and homogenous Left in 1944-45 would have determined an entirely different evolution. The sociological base for an independent and militant labor party does exist in France: the social-democratic workers of the Northern and Eastern departments, a large part of the Communist workers, the Catholic workers of the West. As late as January 1956 the leader of the C.F.T.U. in Nantes pointed out to the S.F.I.O. that its electoral victory in that region was due to the votes of the Catholic workers, and urged the party—ironically—to follow a more militant course

in order to cement this alliance.¹⁶ By that time, however, the S.F.I.O. was no longer in a position to turn itself into the basis for a political regroupment of the working class. In 1945, when hundreds of thousands of young men and women from the Resistance movement felt attracted to socialist solutions, the operation could have been successful had it been carried out by the Left—the only section of the party capable of implementing such a perspective. But in 1945 the Left was neither strong nor homogenous, not even to the extent of keeping itself together. The historical reasons for this cannot be discussed within the framework of this article; * suffice it to say that a conquest of the party by the Left had become a pious wish by 1948. **

Above all other things, the recent history of the S.F.I.O. teaches the lesson that good intentions, and even policies that are good in themselves, are inevitably defeated when working at cross-purposes with the fundamental trends of an institution. The failure to face this fact accounts for the quiet and thorough defeat of the S.F.I.O.'s left wing.

Institutions have their own logic; the political history of the S.F.I.O. since the end of the war has been the history of men who, by the logic of that particular institution, have been compelled to transgress every principle of socialism, or have been forced out of positions of influence. It is important to remember that the present leadership of the party came to

(*) They have been explained in two valuable studies by Saul Berg in *The New International*, February and March 1947.

(**) In March 1949, the former National Secretary of the S.F.I.O. Youth wrote: "The few attempts of some cadre elements, mostly former left oppositionists, to modify the structure of the party and to give a political education to its members remained without results. The failure of the socialist factory groups illustrate very well the lack of real basis for the efforts of certain militants who intend to organize the working-class with a party that has neither the social composition nor the policy necessary for such work." (17)

power in 1947 as a left-wing caucus (with Mollet as General Secretary and Dechézelles as Assistant Secretary) and that it came to power by defeating a right-wing led by Daniel Mayer, who today opposes Mollet's policy—from the left! Within one year, the party had returned to the bourgeois politics which the left wing had fought: war in Indo-China, "Third Force" coalitions, support of U.S. foreign policy and opposition to the economic demands of the working class. Then, as today, the party has acted as a machine to produce conservative politicians.

As in the case of Stalinism, the institution has not only transformed the men, but also the meaning of words and ideas: "party discipline" now means blind obedience to the Secretariat, "anti-clericalism" is a pretext for fighting the Catholic Left, "internationalism" has become a pretext for opposing the right of the Algerian people to self-determination.

What, then, is the relation of "policy" to "circumstance," and who is responsible for the decay of the S.F.I.O.? The leaders of French social-democracy are neither more inept nor more dishonest than those of other social-democratic parties. . . . What differs is their situation: the reformist, social-democratic policy of the classical type inevitably leads to the complete denial of socialism, whenever the minority position, with the majority of the working class following a more radical course.

In a way, one understands the bitterness of Lejeune and Lacoste against Bevan and the British Labor Party. What bad luck to be a social-democratic leader in France! Had Lacoste lived in Britain, he might have been able to keep his self-respect, and nobody can tell what Bevan might have done as a Governor General of Algeria.

Let us follow this process through the internal political history of the S.F.I.O., the history of its tendencies.

We have seen that the history of the rise of the Mollet apparatus begins with the victory of the left wing caucus in 1947. The caucus included, besides a "pseudo-left" majority, a real Left, the "Action Socialiste Révolutionnaire" (A.S.R.), which split in 1948, while other genuine left tendencies, led by Marceau Pivert and Lucien Weitz, remained within the party. A Stalinoid minority also split in 1948 to form the P.S.U., a small satellite of the C. P. Outside of these relatively well-defined groups, the picture of the tendencies in the party has been rather confused since 1948. Distinctions have sometimes been made between the "Guesdist" or orthodox-Marxist tradition, based on the federations of the North, and the "Jauresist" tradition of the South and the South-West. These distinctions are relevant only in so far as they help to explain the rise of the Mollet machine, based on the administratively-minded and disciplined "Guesdist" federations.

All other attempts to differentiate between tendencies and traditions within the right wing have failed, since every issue has cut across these traditions in different ways. It is true, as Duverger remarks, that the fight on the issue of E.D.C. brought out, among the supporters of E.D.C., the federalist and internationalist ("Proudhonist") aspects of the S.F.I.O. (one thinks of André Philip), while the opposition relied on the party's anti-militarist and anti-clerical traditions. On the other hand, it is also true that the main support of the pro-E.D.C. faction, the Mollet apparatus, is precisely the least "Proudhonist" element in the whole party, while some of the opponents of E.D.C., the Pivert tendency, for example, would be much

more entitled to claim this tradition. Other opponents of E.D.C., such as Lejeune, were motivated by purely conservative, chauvinist reasons. Then, on the Algerian question, the factional line-up changed completely: all present factions in the party include roughly equal proportions of former supporters and opponents of E.D.C.

In fact, on this issue as on most others, the composition of the tendencies was determined by very different and often contradictory reasons. Often reasons of clique solidarity and of personal allegiance weighed more than political considerations. The only consistent trend, which asserts itself more and more throughout the different inner-party struggles, is a strengthening of the Right.

At the Toulouse Congress, in July 1957, the party was divided in three currents: the official current, representing a majority of 65.1% with 2,547 votes out of 3,912; a center current, led by Defferre, with 779 votes representing 19.9%; a left-wing minority with 498 votes and 12.7%. These groups were defined according to their position on the Algerian question: the majority endorsed the government's policy of repression, the center advocated a limited autonomy for Algeria within the framework of a "French federation," and the Left advocated negotiations on the basis of the "recognition of the national calling of Algeria."

At first sight, the strength of the Left seems appreciable, especially when it is pointed out that it mustered only 9.7% of the vote at the Lille Congress, in 1956. A closer look at its political composition and platform reveal that, in fact, it is the product of a continuous retreat.

The representative organization of the minority is the "Comité Socialiste d'Etude et d'Action pour la Paix en

Algérie." Among its members and supporters, it includes representatives of former minorities that have shrunk into insignificance and of new minorities which have peeled off, layer by layer, from the center of the S.F.I.O.: first of all, sympathizers of the New Left who have remained in the S.F.I.O.—such as Maurice Laval, managing editor of *France-Observateur*; secondly, the left socialists around Marceau Pivert; thirdly, the left social-democrats such as Oreste Rosenfeld, who wish to return to a militant reformist party of the pre-1934 Austrian or "Kautskyist" type; fourthly, former revolutionary Marxists, such as Pierre Rimbert, Jean Rous, André Ferrat, etc., who occupy more or less the same position; fifthly, the "honest reformist" types, who have only recently begun to differentiate themselves from the party leadership under the impact of the Algerian war and of the general fiasco of the Mollet government: Daniel Mayer, André Philip, Edouard Depreux, Camille Titeux, Robert Verrier, etc.

In 1945, a coalition of this type would have represented a huge majority in the party; today, it represents not quite 13%. This is one important fact.

The other is the political retreat involved in this weakening. All the tendencies that have united in this new left wing caucus have been compelled to bury their differences after having been beaten back by almost purely administrative means. After ten years of struggle, they are now joining in a common platform based on the defense of socialism in a most general way—against the party leadership itself. Yet none of the former right-wingers, like Philip, Depreux or Mayer have moved to the Left: they are now the Left because they have stayed where they were while the par-

ty has moved to the Right.

In the course of this process, the real left wing—the independent, revolutionary socialists—has all but disappeared as an independent, tendency. At the end of the war, divided and confused as they were, the revolutionary socialists still represented a certain force, especially in the Paris region. Even after the departure of the A.S.R., the left-wingers of the Pivert and Watz tendencies remained in control of the Federation of the Seine. As late as 1954 their following was estimated at 6,000 members in the party as a whole¹⁸. Today this tendency has all melted down to about 500 members. As to the Federation of the Seine, it has been taken over by the Mollet apparatus, largely because of the pressure it was able to exert on the government officials and party functionaries which make up a high proportion of the Federation's membership.

The real political content of the tendencies of the Toulouse Congress could therefore be defined as follows: 65.1% for petty-bourgeois conservatism; 19.9% for empirical liberalism and 12.7% for social-democratic reformism.

But the shift of the party to the Right has not only reduced the socialist wing of the party to a minority, it has also created a new kind of right wing. At the Toulouse Congress there appeared, for the first time since 1933, an anti-socialist tendency, represented by Lacoste and Lejeune, but supported by Mollet and his machine. Lejeune's speech, in particular "was outstanding for its crude vulgarity, and touched upon the favorite themes of fascism."¹⁹—to such an extent that it has struck the imagination of all political writers and became a symbol of the new course of the S.F.I.O.

In *Le Monde*, Duverger wondered if we are not witnessing here the birth of a new political type: poujado-socialisme. He was answered by the fascist Pierre Dominique:

In two words, just as Tito broke with an international communism which denied the national values of small countries, Mussolini broke with an international socialism which denied Italy. What is defeated here is the spirit of Blum, the spirit without a fatherland. . . . M. Robert Lacoste and M. Max Lejeune are exactly in the same ideological position as Déat, Marquet and Montagnon in 1933 and as Mussolini in 1915. The only difference is that since then things have progressed and they are now in a majority instead of representing a minority about to be expelled. . . .²⁰

Who can say that he is wrong?

This measuring-rod enables us to gauge the extent to which the S.F.I.O. has become a party of the middle-class, prostrate before bourgeois politics and bourgeois ideology. In the present conditions of crisis, and in the absence of any progressive alternative either within the party or outside of it, this middle-class has turned even more conservative than certain sections of the bourgeoisie itself, and has thrown up leaders in its own image: colorless mediocrities, second-hand bourgeois, time-servers who could never hope to make a career in the world of business, finance or government as they are now making at the expense of the labor movement.

Duverger observes:

The chauvinism and the "realism" of certain socialist leaders responds to the wishes of their following: they dream of utilizing the poujadist aspirations within the party itself. . . . The peculiar evolution of the S.F.I.O. parallels a general evolution of French public opinion. To a certain extent, the new tendencies of the Socialist Party reflect the profound tendencies of the whole country. This Poujade, this Lejeune, how they look like ourselves, alas! Even a part of the work-

ing class of this country is going through a crisis of chauvinism and even of racism. . . . For seventeen years this country has suffered from a defeat in victory, a humiliation compounded by other humiliations; it reacts like all other peoples have under similar circumstances.²¹

What are the chances for a socialist revival of the S.F.I.O.? All oppositionists—André Philip, Marceau Pivert, Edouard Depreux, Henri Lévy-Bruhl and others—appeal to left socialists and young people to join the party in spite of everything, for the same reasons as in 1947: do not build sects, build a left wing within a large existing organization, turn the S.F.I.O. into the center of a new labor movement! This would hold true if the vast majority of the workers were not outside the party, and if the right wing would show signs of weakness rather than increasing strength. Today, the conditions for the growth of a significant left wing, let alone for the recovery of the party, exist neither politically nor sociologically—not *this* left wing in *this* party.

Should the working-class take once more the initiative, as in 1953 and 1955, the leadership of the S.F.I.O. would probably adapt and show signs of a left-ward turn. Such a turn, however, would represent nothing more than a small-time maneuver to confuse

the inner-party opposition, and would remain without consequence to the labor movement. The working-class will seek other forms to express its action. For a long time now, all significant events in the life of the French working-class have taken place outside of the S.F.I.O.; there is no indication that this is going to change.

A. GIACOMETTI

Footnotes

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2. Jean-Daniel Reynaud and Alain Touraine, "La représentation politique du monde ouvrier" in "Partis politiques et classes sociales en France," Colin, Paris, 1955.
3. Raymond Fusillier, "La situation actuelle du Parti socialiste français," *L'Observateur*, June 18, 1953 and Maurice Duverger, "S.F.I.O.: mort our transfiguration," *Les Temps Modernes*, Nr. 112-113, 1955.
4. Duverger, *ibid.* p. 1865
5. Fusillier, *ibid.*
6. *Le Monde*, January 5, 1956.
7. Duverger, "Démagogie des bureaucrates," *Le Monde*, July 12, 1957.
8. Pierre Rimbart, "Le Parti socialiste S.F.I.O." in "Partis politiques et classes sociales en France"; *Sondages*, review of the I.F.O.P., Nr. 3, 1952; Maurice Duverger, *op. cit.*, *Les Temps Modernes*, p. 1869.
9. Duverger, *op. cit.*, *Les Temps Modernes*, p. 1868.
10. *Sondages*, 1952, Nr. 3.
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Is There a Political Novel?

The Artistic Limits of the Political Novel Today

Has there ever been a novel in which a character is as politically motivated as Koestler's Rubashov in *Darkness at Noon* and, at the same time, is a round, complicated person like James' Princess Casimassima? Has there, in short, ever been a really successful political novel?

If we want to answer these questions seriously, our first task is to embrace a certain vagueness. The novel is hard enough to define in itself—and when all is said and done we should be glad to settle for E. M. Forster's masterful imprecision: a novel tells a story. Given this shaky beginning, things get even trickier when we speak of a "political" novel. Since the term does not indicate a general style, like naturalism or impressionism, since it is a definition in terms of subject matter, we seem to be faced by a miserable critical alternative. On the one hand, we can define the political novel so broadly that it encompasses almost the whole history of the novel and thus becomes vague and useless. Or else, we can specify our definition more carefully and run the risk of inventing a sterile and artificial construction.

In his recent, provocative study of *Politics and the Novel*, Irving Howe attempted to cut this Gordian knot. To one reviewer, his definition seemed arbitrary and whimsical, but one suspects that this was because he was unaware of the intricacies involved. Howe wrote, "By a political novel I mean a novel in which political ideas play a dominant role or in which the political milieu is the dominant setting—though again a qualification is necessary, since the word 'dominant' is more than a little questionable. Perhaps it would be better to say: a novel

in which we take to be dominant political ideas or the political milieu . . ."

Let this stand as a working definition. It simplifies, it is highly subjective, and it is probably as well as we will ever be able to do. But once having accepted it, let me state a perspective somewhat bleaker than Howe's: the successful political novel will either be a *roman a clef*, the charade of a sociological analysis, or else the politics will be swallowed up by the apolitical. The first alternative, the method of *Darkness at Noon*, 1984, *The Iron Heel*, may produce works of a limited, though undeniable, genius. The second may result in a masterpiece, as in the case of *Man's Fate*, but the technique is the subordination of the political to some other dominant motive—that is, the book practically ceases to be a political novel.

Why is this true? In part the answer is historical, it is found in the development of the novel, in particular it is the consequence of its complex relation to the fate of bourgeois society. And in part, the answer is formal, it involves the intrinsic difficulty of integrating politics into the felt narrative, of marrying Rubashov to the Princess Casamassima.

ALL OF THIS IS A way of saying that politics has bypassed the novel as a *really significant subject matter*.

The rise of the novel was contemporaneous with the bourgeois revolution. In the political order, feudalism was swept away, production was rationalized, the incredible complexity of modern life became a fact. In the aesthetic order, the novel was, in part, a reaction to this fact. As Lukacs put it in his study of the historical novel, "The

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changed relationship between the psychology of men and the economic and moral circumstances of their life had become so complex that a broad representation of these circumstances, an extensive formulization of these interrelationships, became necessary if men were to be shown as the concrete children of their time."

Thus it was that the novel was a revolutionary art form. For it shattered most of the old conventions, it sent literature probing into every corner of human life. In Fielding, for example, there is an exultant, liberating rush of art toward experience, one which burst through the classical canon of the separation of styles. In *Johnathan Wild* Fielding wrote, ". . . in all, we shall find that there is a nearer connection between high and low life than is generally imagined, and that a highwayman is entitled to more favor with the great than he usually meets with." And in France, Balzac was becoming "the secretary of French society," and probing that incredibly thick and populous world of *La Comedie Humaine*.

These novels were soaked in society—for that matter, Lionel Trilling has defined the very essence of the novel in social terms. In Balzac, for instance, there is the careful delineation of the various classes and strata, of the *ancien regime*, the Napoleonic bureaucracy, the restorationists' impotence, even of the French underworld, for he shared Fielding's notion that the life of the criminal illuminated that of the bourgeois. And yet, the best of Balzac's work was not political in the terms of Howe's definition. When a novel of his is dominated by the political structure and setting (*Les Employes*), it is a failure; when his romantic spirit dominates, and the political observation becomes the subordinate stuff of his vision (*Le Cousin Pons*, *Pere*

Goriot, etc.) he produces masterpieces.

Balzac is, of course, an almost perfect case, and therefore an extreme one. But much of the same can be said of Walter Scott's historicism and the many novels which it inspired. At its beginning, the novel was almost pervasively social, but not political in the sense of concentrating upon the superstructure of society, the political milieu. The reason for this is not too difficult to see. At this point, during the period of the rise of the bourgeoisie, there was as yet no global critique of society. The nearest thing to such a vantage point was the ideology of reaction, and that is why a Balzac, with his prejudice for feudalism, was able to create the most finely structured image of the new world to be found in his time.

Thus, the novel began with a social realism (usually mixed with romanticism), with a rush into the complexity and depth of the new bourgeois society. Yet, this did not produce a "political" novel in Howe's sense of the term. (The nearest thing to it was Stendahl.) But, and this is the paradox, the world-view of the rising novel, that of realism, is almost a precondition for the political novel—the only real chance which such a type of literature had for existence was in this period. For then, reality was seen as solid, palpable, as *there*, and in such a world politics is a meaningful subject. Later, when politics became more pervasive, when the ideological critique of society was everywhere available to the artist, this world had disappeared, and this is partly why the most brilliant and insightful analyses of society were to be anti-political. An impressionist political novel, a surrealist political novel, these are almost unthinkable categories, because there is an irreconcilable contradiction between style and content, form and matter. Thus it

was that the two halves necessary to the synthesis of a political novel—a realistic *weltanschauung* in which politics is meaningful, and a political ideology—were sundered by history.

And here, one must dispute Howe's formulation. He writes, "The ideal social novel had been written by Jane Austen, a great artist who enjoyed the luxury of being able to take society for granted: it was *there*, and it seemed steady beneath her glass, Napoleon or no Napoleon. But soon it would not be steady beneath anyone's glass, and the novelists' attention had necessarily to shift from the gradation within society to the fate of society itself. It is at this point, roughly speaking, that the kind of book I have called the political novel comes to be written—the kind in which the *idea* of society, as distinct from the mere unquestioned workings of society, has penetrated the consciousness of the characters in all of its profoundly problematic aspects. . . ."

My quarrel is with a confusion of society and politics in this statement. Quite early in the development of the novel, indeed, in the time of Jane Austen, the problematic idea of society was present in the novel. Balzac is proof enough. But it was not a *political* idea, and that is the significant dividing line. To develop the question as Howe does is to miss the historical perspective and to tend toward seeing the political novel in its formal aspect, an element which is certainly important but only partially revealing of the actual process. (Incidentally, this criticism is made within a framework of feeling that Howe's book represents a thoughtful, even brilliant, approach to a difficult subject.)

But turn now and look at the second half of the historical situation: the fact that the main direction of the novel became more and more es-

tranged from politics at the precise moment that ideological movements made the political novel a real possibility, that the formal development of the novel was at odds with a political subject matter.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the French novel was already moving far away from its beginnings. The liberating, tumultuous force of realism was dividing in two directions. One, via Flaubert, was toward the coldness of realism, and eventually away from society itself toward that magnificent aesthetic accomplishment of our time, the art of the interior self. The other road, that of Zola, was reducing the all-embracing vitality (and romanticism) of realism to a more mechanistic view which ended up in the dead end of the "slice of life." Both movements were a reflection of the loss of elan in bourgeois society, the new threat from the rising socialist movement. That they were simultaneously anti-bourgeois in content, and soaked in the spirit of the bourgeois world, is only one of the paradoxes that result from the intricate relationship of art to society.

Franz Mehring wrote somewhat prophetically of this situation before the First World War (that his method was somewhat mechanistic does not destroy the validity of his conclusion). He saw that naturalism was only "half-way," that it was simply representing, but that it had not achieved a really critical standpoint. And he felt that unless it did gain a new vantage, that it would go over to the side of decadence. His disjunction, it turns out, was sound—and the fact is that naturalism was unable to rise above itself. The truly great works of the novelistic imagination in the twentieth century have thus been produced by those bourgeois anti-bourgeois who were the magnificent, creative victims of deca-

dence. And the high road of the novel has not been toward a new synthesis of the old naturalism and the new politics, but rather along the way of the disintegration of society. The characteristics of the best novels *entre deux guerres* are as Erich Auerbach recorded them: "multipersonal representation of consciousness, time strata, disintegration of the continuity of exterior events, shifting of the narrative viewpoint. . . ." In such a tendency, there was little that was conducive to the development of a political novel.

This is not to say that the novel had escaped politics. That is impossible. Rather, the political criticism was not expressed politically, for it was not merely society which the crisis of the superstructure called into question: it was all of reality. As Phillip Rahv put it in his *Image and Idea*, ". . . (the) artists are no longer content merely to question particular habits or situations or even institutions; it is reality itself which they bring into question." Thus, on the one hand, naturalism had become so constricted that it could not rise above its narrow view of the world and achieve a political novel; and the anti-naturalistic trend, the method of greatness in our time, had gone *beyond* politics.

Two apparent exceptions should be noted. The first is that magnificent flowering of the second half of the nineteenth century, the Russian novel. Here there was a greater concern with politics. This higher consciousness was partially a function of the same situation which so politicalized the Russian working class: the pervasiveness of Czarist backwardness and autocracy. And yet, Dostoyevsky at his most political, say in *The Possessed*, has also gone beyond politics, that is, the political question is viewed, not primarily in terms of power or social class, but as it relates to the individual

pathos, above all, to the problem of religion. That, among other things, is why his most political novel, *The Possessed*, is inferior to *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. In the masterpieces, there is no real pretense at political analysis, and the other element is clearly dominant.

The other exception concerns a series of contemporary novelists, most of them veterans of the revolutionary movement: Malraux, Silone, Camus, Sperber, etc. But here again, I would argue that their books either are an unflashed political analysis (Orwell's *1984*), or else that they are concerned with issues more ultimate than politics (Camus' *Plague*, Malraux's *Man's Fate*). The real synthesis, the hypothetical image of the political novel with which I began—the marriage of Rubashov and the Princess Casamassima—is not achieved in the work of these writers.

But finally, there is the one real exception, the work of genius which forces us to cast all of this in terms of general tendency and historical fact rather than as a literary law: Conrad's *Nostromo*. In this book, there is the feel of social life (almost Balzacian in its force), political vision, even political prophecy. Perhaps nowhere else in the art of our time is there such an image of capitalism and imperialism. It is F. R. Leavis' inability really to recognize how central the politics of *Nostromo* are that leaves his estimation of it somewhat up in the air. And at the same time, there is a wealth of deep characterization, a world of individual human beings.

And yet—even here, in this magnificent exception, the process we are describing is visible. For in *Nostromo*, and particularly in the person of its hero, there is always present that deeper theme of alienation and loneliness. This novel is richer than *Lord*

Jim or *Victory*, but there is a real continuity, a focus upon the problem of the anguish of failure; the modern, slightly blurred hero seen at his supreme moment. Still, *Nostromo* is a synthesis and this makes it one of the finest works of the political novel—or, in a sense, the *only* achieved political novel.

Thus, history played a trick on the political novel. When the realistic view of the world was present, which is essential to the incorporation of political ideology into the novelistic imagination, the ideology was not. When the ideology had emerged, the novel, in its main tendency, had moved away from the solid, objective concern with the external world. Both events are complexly related to the rise and decline of bourgeois society, but their brunt is unmistakable: they made the political novel, as a serious art form, an exceptional case, they exiled it from the mainstream.

BUT THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT of the novel does not account for the lack of political novels all on its own. We also must take note of an important formal consideration, one which casts a great deal of light on some of the attempts to write political novels in our time.

In the last volume of *Remembrance of Things Past*, *The Past Recaptured*, Marcel Proust wrote, "True art has nothing to do with proclamations—it completes itself in silence." And, a little later, "A work which contains theories is like an object upon which one leaves the price tag." There is both truth and paradox in these comments. The paradox resides in the fact that Proust's polemic against ideas in the novel occurs in a section, some seventy pages long, devoted to critical theory. But the truth is that there is at least a tension between the novel-

ist's task of portraying the felt human world and any attempt on his part to engage in ideological discussion. Indeed, this section of Proust's own book, valuable as it is in itself, is unquestionably a flaw, not so much because it is an abstract discussion, but because it is much too long, that it is not organic with the rest of the book.

If, then, we abstract from the overly formalist bias of impressionism which Proust brings to his subject, we can recognize, not a contradiction, but a tension, between the fictional purpose and the discursive idea. In the novel itself, this tension has expressed itself in two forms. On the one hand, there are the books in the tradition of the *roman a clef*; on the other hand, there is the tendency of the perception of reality itself to overpower ideology in the novel, to shatter any real possibility of a synthesis.

It would be wrong to dismiss the first type of political novel out of hand. But we certainly have to admit that it is characterized by a certain thinness, that it never reaches the reality profound. Evelyn Waugh's political satires (say, *Black Mischief*), Orwell's *1984*, London's *Iron Heel* and Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* represent the wide range of possibility for this genre. And yet all of them have this in common, that their characters tend to be "flat," that they are defined, not so much by a complex of human and social inter-relationships, but by their function of acting out a political theory. We do not feel that Rubashov is motivated by his unique and distinctive personality, but rather he acts according to Koestler's analytic conception of the old Bolsheviks during the Moscow Trials.

Lukacs was greatly concerned with this problem of the typical, and made a sharp distinction between two approaches to it. He wrote, "Thus, the

type, according to Marx and Engels, is not the abstract type of classical tragedy, nor the figure in Schiller's idealistic generalizations, and even less that which Zola and the post-Zola literary theory have made of it, the Average. The type is rather characterized as that striking personality in whose dynamic unity true literature reflects life, comprehending in its contradictory unity the most important social, moral and spiritual contradictions of a period, bringing them together in a vital unity." If we accept this distinction (as I do), then it is obvious that the authors of the novels we have just been discussing fail to create "types." And even in their politicalization of character they are thereby cut off from a genuine and moving profundity.

This is not to say that these books are valueless. Well done, as in the case of *1984*, they can be deeply moving. But they cut themselves off from a certain human complexity, they lose a feeling of depth and inter-relationship which has been the particular genius of the great novel.

On the other hand, there are "political novels" which are filled with the intricacies of personality, in which the characters move, not according to an analysis or as the charade of an ideology, but as unique personalities. And here, we can see the formal problem of the political novel in all its acuteness. For when this is attempted, the almost inevitable result is that the book actually subordinates the politics to other values and motivations—the novel becomes less political.

The classic case of this process is Andre Malraux's *Man's Fate*. Some time ago, William Empson wrote of it, "... the heroes are communists, but they are frankly out of touch with the proletariat; it is from this that they get their pathos and dignity and the

book its freedom from propaganda." I would go much further than Empson: for the ultimate values, the motivational spring of *Man's Fate* is not political at all. The Chinese Revolution is the setting in which Malraux approaches the theme which has been central to his writing from the very first: death. And the real point of the book is not the inter-relationships which arise in the course of a revolutionary attempt to emancipate man from exploitation, but the drama of the aristocratic hero's fight to transcend his own mortality. (In his later art criticism, the painter was to function in the same way as the political of his novels: Malraux's Goya is Kyo from *Man's Fate* in another guise.)

Why does this happen? In part the answer is historical, along the lines which we have already discussed. Malraux (and Silone and Camus) are the children of bourgeois culture even in their hatred of the bourgeoisie. They have the consciousness of modern man, and this is their general vantage point. And rather than being unique and separate authors, the representatives of a distinguishable genre, they are contemporary novelists who deal with the modern concern *in terms of* politics, in a political setting, and not *as* politics.

But there is also a formal consideration (though it is, of course, related to the historical). Politics is not "ultimate." It is, however intricately, a reflection of more basic realities of human existence. This means that under the most favorable historical circumstances there will be a tendency to go "beyond" politics. And in an age such as ours, when it is precisely the basic realities (indeed, the very reality of reality) which has been brought into question through an unprecedented and total crisis of society, it is almost inevitable that the most political of

novelists will go beyond politics. In short, the formal difficulty, the one which Proust discussed, has been made all the more effective by the specific cultural conjunction of our time.

Under the very best of circumstances, then, there would be many difficulties in writing a masterly political novel. In our time, the actual situation has led to a bifurcation of the political novel into its two parts, and has inhibited a genuine synthesis. On the one hand, we have provocative, stimulating books (all the more personal because of their journalistic immediacy) which are political but by that fact miss the fullness and complexity of life which is characteristic of the novel at its best. And on the other hand, we have novels written by politicals, even with political settings, but there the politics tends to be stagecraft and not the real substance of the book.

IT IS WRONG TO THINK that there is any simple and single literary category, the "bourgeois novel." Such terms are the invention of a sterile, mechanistic determinism. And yet, we cannot utter a really complex judgment about the novel unless we understand its relation to the rhythm of bourgeois culture.

In part, what we are dealing with here is the persistence and pervasiveness of bourgeois culture, *precisely* at the moment of its decline. It was one of Trotsky's more flashing insights to note, in *Literature and Revolution*, that the most characteristic cultural expressions of a society occur at the moment of its decline, during the imminence of its downfall. The political novel is, quite literally, impossible today in the sense of a real synthesis. So is the social novel. For that matter, one can cogently argue that

the novel itself, as an art form, is nearing dead-end.

For the object is gone, culturally speaking. The tactile, palpable external world which was at the center of centuries of Western art is no longer there. And the process in literature for over a century has been toward subjectivity. In the doing, we have received magnificent works of the imagination, the various, eclectic, exciting and probing gift of decadence. We cannot deny Mann's insight: our sickness has been creative. It goes without saying that the price is too high, monstrously so, that our beauty, warped and deformed but beauty nevertheless, is the consequence of a social agony and that a human being must prefer an insipid peace to a hundred Guernicas. Yet the major point that I wish to make here is not political or moral, but critical.

As long as our present cultural situation lasts—and in all of its permutations it will continue as long as our social situation does—we are cut off from a whole series of literary creations. Among them is the political novel. But that is not so serious, for that is a subclass of a subclass. The disturbing question is the one posed and answered by Orwell in his essay "Inside the Whale." Are we now in a plight where we can say, as Orwell did, that there is the "impossibility of any major literature until the world has shaken itself in shape?" Is the situation of the political novel, its dead end, the symptom of a much deeper malaise which infects all our literature? I would not be as aggressively pessimistic as Orwell—nor so optimistic as to rule out the possible truth of his grim insight.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Djilas' Indictment of Stalinism

An Article-Review of Milovan Djilas' "The New Class"

The most remarkable thing about Milovan Djilas' book is that it was written in isolation under conditions of repression, harassment and imprisonment. Although it is obvious that he read voluminously in preparation of the work, his ideas emerging from extensive empirical observations and suggestive study, he was, unfortunately, unable to discuss or exchange his views in a community of co-thinkers or critics. Writing in a Titoist jail, he was unable to expand, elucidate or qualify his theory of Stalinist society as a new social order and the Stalinist ruling class as a new class. Many of his ideas stand subject to several interpretations and meanings, others are unclear, still others are wrong in their historical statement.

Though *The New Class* is certainly more than a political tract as some critics have labeled the book, it is not by any means a substantial theoretical work. Many of the observations are merely assertions stated in declarative sentences without discussion or proof; others, though important in themselves, are merely hints of important political and social questions that need study, elaboration and conclusion. For it is unquestionably true that Stalinist society, which Djilas calls throughout his book "Contemporary Communism" to indicate that he is not identifying it with the original theory of communism or socialism, has introduced a whole series of new social problems.

It would be wrong to base one's criticism of Djilas on this score. Much of what he says has a verisimilitude of truth though not yet subject to verification on the basis of objective analy-

sis. Or else, not enough thought has been given to such ideas as, for example, the modern trend to world unification, to merit an intelligent discussion.

The book is, above all, a valuable indictment of the post-Revolution Communist movement, just as Djilas is himself the living indictment of Stalinism and its new society, whether of the Russian type or its Yugoslavian variety. Writing the manuscript in jail and then smuggling it out so that it could be published in the United States required an enormous personal courage and dedication to what he calls "the idea of democratic socialism."

Reactions to the book have naturally varied, though the praise in non-socialist circles has been uniform. The non-socialist critics, for the most part, have endorsed the criticism of Stalinist society as a reaffirmation of their own old opposition to socialism, failing to perceive the essence of Djilas' book, namely, that we are dealing not with socialism or communism, but with a new class phenomenon which has to be treated on its own grounds. The *New York Times* review called *The New Class* one of the "most compelling and perhaps most important sociological documents of our time." But then went on to miss the whole point of the book. The *Herald Tribune* called it a book of "vast significance that could shake the Communist world." No doubt it could have such vast significance if it was read in the "Communist world." The probability is that it won't be. However, we are certain that the vast significance it would then have would be considerably different from what the *Herald*

Tribune envisages. Here again, it is a case of not understanding, let alone seeing, what Djilas is really talking about.

Although his book is not very clear on a number of questions, such as his attitude toward Marxism (there are contradictory statements in the book, great praise mixed with some kind of criticism for what Marx could not or did not foresee in his time), and the degree of responsibility of Lenin for Stalinist development, Djilas still writes as a socialist. There is no indication that he has made his peace with capitalism. Quite the contrary. And if he remains a socialist, just what does the jubilation in the bourgeois world signify? Not much except that in Djilas' description of the various phases of Stalinist society they feel some kind of moral uplift and strengthening of their weak faith in the capitalist structure.

THE APPEARANCE OF DJILAS' BOOK is of particular moment to our movement. His theory of the new class and the new society is, in substance and description, akin to our own. Large sections of it, its quintessential parts, read like a paraphrase of our theory of Bureaucratic Collectivism. This is naturally a source of satisfaction to us. It is also a commentary on the reception which our theory of Russian society has had in this country for the past fifteen years since it was first formulated and made public. Our theory of Russian society, elucidated long before the expansion of world Stalinism, recognized that we were dealing with a new social phenomenon never before seen in the world. We described it as a new class society. The ruling class, we said, was the collective bureaucracy which "owned" the state and through its ownership of the state became the collective owner of all property; that

the working class was a subjugated, class of a new type under hitherto unforeseen social relations and that, in sum, Russian society was a modern slave state.

Djilas arrived at his theory of the new class largely on the basis of practical experience and comparison to socialist theory. It was an empirical road he traveled to reach the conclusions of *The New Class*. In contrast, without the experience of living under the new system, we reached the concept of the new society theoretically and through polemical struggle with Trotsky. We were thus among the very first to destroy the myth of the inherent progressive nature of nationalized property in our rejection of the theory of the "degenerated workers' state."

The parallel in Djilas' writing today to our own of fifteen years ago is striking. If he is unfamiliar with our theory and writings the similarity is all the more remarkable. Several key ideas of his theory to demonstrate this. For example:

It is the bureaucracy which formally uses, administers, and controls both nationalized and socialized property as well as the entire life of society. The role of the bureaucracy in society, i.e., monopolistic administration and control of national income and national goods, consigns it to a special privileged position. Social relations resemble State capitalism. The more so, because the carrying out of industrialization is effected not with the help of the capitalists but with the help of the State machine. In fact, this privileged class performs that function, using the State machine as a cover and as an instrument.

Ownership is nothing other than the right of profit and control. If one defines class benefits by this right, the Communist States have seen, in the final analysis, the origin of a new form of ownership or of a new ruling and exploiting class.

When Djilas says that these social relations resemble State capitalism, he

does not mean that the new ruling class and the new society are State capitalist.

He adds:

The new class is anti-capitalistic and, consequently, logically dependent upon the working strata. The new class is supported by the proletarian struggle and the traditional faith of the proletariat in a socialist, Communist society where there is no brutal exploitation.

Here one can see the key to what is new in this society to distinguish it from the old. But there is much more to it.

This new class, the bureaucracy, or more accurately, the political bureaucracy, has all the characteristics of earlier ones as well as some new characteristics of its own. Its origin had its special characteristics also, even though in essence it was similar to the beginnings of other classes.

What of the composition of this class? Djilas writes:

Because this new class had not been formed as a part of the economic and social life before it came to power, it could only be created in an organization of a special type, distinguished by a special discipline based on identical philosophic and ideological views of its members.

The roots of this new class must be sought inside the once revolutionary party and as Trotsky pointed out, in the pre-revolutionary professional revolutionary turned bureaucrat. Djilas correctly says:

This is not to say that the new party and the new class are identical. The party, however, is the core of that class, and its base. It is very difficult, perhaps impossible, to define the limits of the new class and to identify its members. The new class may be said to be made up of those who have special privileges and economic preference because of the administrative monopoly they hold.

"Not every member of the party," says Djilas, is a member of the new

class, any more than every artisan or member of the city party was a bourgeois."

What happens in this society is that while revolutionary institutions of an earlier epoch exist in a formal sense and retain the old revolutionary names, they are no longer the social organizations they once were. Trade unions exist, but no longer as the economic organizations of the working class. They have become state institutions for the purposes of maintaining the proletariat in its state of economic servitude and to prevent any and every type of class protest or struggle. Soviets exist, but they are completely populated by the bureaucracy itself. Cooperatives exist, too, but they do not function as institutions of consumers. And the single party that exists under this system is the organized form of the bureaucracy and its collective expression in its grip on political and economic power.

ALTHOUGH THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT never gave much thought to the problems following the displacement of a bourgeois social and political order by a working class society neither capitalist nor yet socialist, the problem of classes and class rule in the new order was raised by non-socialists. Marxists and socialists in general had been brought up on the concept that society can be organized either along capitalist or socialist roads. Obviously, the rise of Stalinist society required a new look at the problem, for this historical bypath that led Russia to a new class state and new ruling class demanded special study which very few gave to it, being content to dismiss the difficulty of analysis by referring to the phenomenon as "state capitalist," "Communist" or "Leninist."

In his *Historical Materialism*, N. I. Bucharin, victim of the new regime,

took up the challenge of Robert Michels, author of *Political Parties*, that "socialists will conquer, but socialism never." Michels claimed that the classless society was utopian; that socialism would establish a new class rule. Bucharin writing after the Russian Revolution, with experiences already in hand, replied to Michels:

We may state that in the society of the future there will be a colossal overproduction of organizers, which will nullify the *stability* of the ruling groups.

"But the question of the *transition period* from capitalism to socialism, i.e., the period of the proletarian dictatorship, is far more difficult. The working class achieves victory, although it is not and cannot be a unified mass. It attains victory while the productive forces are going down and the great masses are materially insecure. There will inevitably result in a *tendency* to 'degeneration,' i.e., the excretion of a lead stratum in the form of a class-germ. This tendency will be retarded by two opposing tendencies first, by the *growth of the productive forces*; second by the *abolition of the educational monopoly*. The increasing reproduction of the technologists and of organizers in general, out of the working class itself, will undermine the possible new class alignment. The outcome of the struggle will depend upon which tendencies turn out to be the stronger.

The outcome has not been in doubt for a long, long time. The working class was "unified" from above by the "regime of the gendarmes." An educational monopoly grew up in the new state. The growth of the productive forces did not prevent the rise of the new class power; neither did the increase of technologists or organizers, who became either part of or supporters of the new class power.

That decisive element which Bucharin did not mention, but perhaps took for granted, was the element of democracy. In absence of democracy the degeneration of the revolution was inevitable, and the degeneration began long before 1924. Christian Ra-

kovsky, one of the outstanding European socialists of this century and another victim of the new regime wrote in the late Twenties that:

Under our very eyes, there has been formed, and is still being formed a large class of rulers which has its own interior groupings, multiplied by means of premeditated cooptation, direct or indirect (bureaucratic promotion, fictitious system of elections). The basic support of this original class is a sort, and original sort, of private property, namely, the possession of state power. The bureaucracy 'possesses the state as private property,' wrote Marx.

Even Trotsky, whose basic writings so wonderfully served the critics of the new society, but who could not bring himself to abandon his theory of the degenerated workers' state, described the driving force of the bureaucracy, which he would not acknowledge was a new class, as "its privileges, power and revenues."

In an introduction to the pamphlet edition of his debate with Earl Browder in 1950, Max Shachtman, writing even more fully than in earlier years, stated:

The distinctive birthmark of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia is this: it made its first appearance when the revolutionary working class of that country was making its last appearance. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that Stalinism could begin its rise to power only because there no longer existed a proletariat in the classic sense of the term. . . .

This bureaucracy was not, however, a neutral reflector of the stagnation and distortion of the class or the remnants of the class that had led the great Russian revolution. It became an active and effective agency for maintaining the working classes, including demoralization and paralysis. Under no other condition could it have consolidated its position as the new ruling class in Russia and completed the work of expropriating the workers of all political power. In a society where the state owns all the means of production and distribution, those who are in absolute control of the politi-

cal power are thereby and therewith likewise in absolute control of all economic and social, that is, all class power.

The triumph of the new class power as a totalitarian regime ended all forms of self-expression of the new immense working class, let alone the new peasants. Under the total bureaucratic regime there followed a total suppression of democracy. The institutions of the people, already heavily controlled and distorted before Stalin's triumph were now completely obliterated as the institutions they were intended to be. All organizations became state organizations. The entire press became a state press.

DJILAS IS QUITE RIGHT when he says that the "intellectual inheritance of the people" was confiscated by the new class. Nevertheless, total as the regime has become, there are chinks in the armor. How and when it will break through we cannot now foretell, but the Khrushchev revelations were themselves not merely the reflection of the inner struggle of the new rulers; they were in addition, a reflection of an enormous, seething discontent in the broad base of the society. A new, different working class exists in Russia. It was created by the enormous industrial drive of the new regime evolving into a larger and more potent social force than its predecessor. So far as Russia is concerned, as the main center of the new society and new class rule, this is explosive factor number one in the contradictions of the regime. And so far as Russia again is concerned, factor number two is the seething national minorities within and without the borders of the Great Russian Power.

In the Stalinist world, the great contradiction of its expansion, produces enormous national discontent and rebellion. The rebellion expresses

itself, too, as a rebellion against a foreign overlord, but one should not forget that the struggle only conceals the internal discontent, but conceals it only in part. The "anti-Russian" feelings are joined to mass opposition to the new class rule.

Both for Russia as the great power, or the satellite regimes as the lesser powers, the issue of democracy remains paramount. Democracy is here meant not only for internal needs, but means national independence as well, since there can be no democracy in any country that is subjugated by a foreign ruler. The new exploiting class has learned little from the disasters of capitalist imperialism. This is an epoch of the destruction of all empires. Yet in the midst of the collapse of the old, the new class power seeks the creation of a new empire. Here it faces the active and conscious resistance of millions of people (Poland and Hungary).

The bureaucracy fears above all the socialist and radical populace; it fears ideas! The "free marketplace of ideas" would destroy the regime because it would put into motion all the formidable social forces seeking the end of the exploitative society and ruling class. Djilas is absolutely correct when he says that:

Persecution of democratic and socialist thought which is at variance with that of the ruling oligarchy is fiercer and more complete than persecution of the most reactionary followers of the former regime. This is understandable: the last named are less dangerous since they look to a past which has little likelihood of returning and reconquering.

He is also right when he says that it would be wrong to think that other forms of discrimination—race, caste national—are worse than ideological discrimination. They may seem more brutal to all outward appearances, but they are not as refined or complete. They aim at the activities of society, while ideological

discrimination aims at society as a whole, and at every individual. Other types of discrimination may crush a human being physically, while ideological discrimination strikes at the very thing in the human being which is perhaps most peculiarly his own. Tyranny over the mind is the most complete and most brutal type of tyranny; every other tyranny begins and ends with it.

IF THE EXPERIENCES OF the new class power has taught one imperishable lesson it is that in all social relations, the struggle for democracy must remain of paramount importance. There is no genuine social progress in our time except through an extension and broadening of democracy. There is, above all, no socialism without democracy. Socialism without democracy is a contradiction in terms. Here again, it is not enough to fight for democracy in the new world of Stalinist class society; it is just as important to carry on the democratic struggle throughout the world, in all countries, all societies and all institutions. This never-ceasing struggle for democracy would prepare the people as a whole against bureaucratic and totalitarian practices and institutions. All things considered in their proper

proportions, the bureaucratization of a teamsters union, or the absence of democracy in any union organization, is only a small replica of the complex bureaucratization of a whole complex society.

Djilas quite correctly points to this democratic struggle and while his views of social democracy are not clear from his writing, this much is true: the labor and socialist world stands at one end of the polar division; on the other stands Stalinist totalitarianism seeking domination and adherence of the mass of people by a multiple and ingenious use of socialist phrases and ideals. The labor and socialist world movements have not yet reached that level of socialist consciousness and socialist democracy that belong to it. But in a world so evenly divided between the capitalist West and totalitarian Stalinism, all socialists belong in the movement of socialist democracy. Whatever the differences in that sector of world organization they are differences that are capable of being resolved in a democratic way in the struggle for a genuinely socialist and democratic society.

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Fromm Views the Sane Society

On Alienation and the New Jerusalem of Erich Fromm

AMONG THE MODERN critics of the de-humanization of life in capitalist society, there is a special place for the works of Erich Fromm. As a psychoanalyst and social psychologist, Fromm stands almost alone in his blanket condemnation of mass conformity to an alienated society and the divorce of the highest human ideals from life which the vast majority of his colleagues pass glibly off as "adjustment to reality." In addition, because of his contributions to psychoanalytic theory, Fromm is one of the few socialists whose works are widely read and respected by young intellectuals in the American universities today. This alone is sufficient cause for consideration when a new work by Fromm appears. And when the work is so provocative, exasperating, stimulating, and oft-times silly an effort as *The Sane Society*,* the cause for examination is multiplied.

Fromm's critique of conformity, alienation, and authoritarianism begins with *Escape from Freedom*, in which he examines the neurotic fear of free choice and individual expression instilled by repressive, class-dominated societies, not only in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, but in the United States as well. In *Man For Himself*, the exploitative character orientation engendered by competitive social and economic human relations is analyzed and contrasted with the "productive orientation" which Fromm conceives as the ideal most conducive to man's inner nature and strivings, and which

can only flourish with the abolition of class society.

The Sane Society has been heralded as a continuation and, indeed, a culmination of Fromm's ideas, in which not only does he condemn modern society but he offers, for the first time, an alternative—a method of social change.

The book begins with a review of Fromm's earlier criticism. Suicide, homicide, and alcoholism tables are published to illustrate his contention that "the countries of Europe which are among the most democratic, peaceful and prosperous ones, and the United States, the most prosperous country in the world, show the most severe symptoms of mental disturbance." He goes on to expand from this that in terms of a normative humanism, man's most vital needs are denied by the society in which he lives, his most noble impulses are stifled, and his basest ones are glorified; it is therefore man's society which is pathological and not man himself. Fromm's long chapter on "Man in Capitalist Society" is a vivid, nightmarish illustration of the trends towards authoritarianism, robot-like conformity, and alienation-produced helplessness. Here, Fromm is at his best, writing with a breadth of scope and an angry indignation which propels his reader to quicken his pace, stimulates intense emotions, and provokes deep thinking about the hundreds of aspects of modern life upon which Fromm's excoriating pen touches. It is Fromm at his best, talking as the outraged puritan whose ideals have been insulted and trampled upon, and who recalls to mind the best in the style of the muckrakers, the Zola of "*J'Accuse*," and the call to nobility

that has been the most cherished heritage of the socialist movement. In his sweep, there is none of the dreary scholasticism, the pussyfooting relativism, the painfully categorized vagueness of Fromm's sociological and psychological compeers. This is clearly a man with a point of view!

YET THERE ARE PAGES here which are exasperating and disconcerting. Fromm is a puritan, and along with his outrage are features of crankishness; and if his scope transcends scholastic bounds, it also sacrifices clarity and leaves us with the uneasy impression that this greatly respected and read anti-capitalist voice is a bit confused. And if the ill-informed and often eccentric nonsense which follows this chapter and masquerades as the road to the sane society requires an explanation, it is here, in the best of Fromm, that we must return to seek out the germs of confused thinking. But first, to do justice to Fromm, let us continue with his "solution."

With the end of his exposé, Fromm begins an attempt to analyze "Various Answers" to man's dehumanization and alienation. Marx is examined with great respect and praise. Historical materialism is viewed as "the most lasting and important contribution of Marx to the understanding of the laws governing society . . . a truly dynamic and holistic theory." But true to the revisionist tradition, there is Stalinism to be accounted for and inevitably it must find its roots in Marx. Where? On page 258, we read, "In the very centralism of Marx lies the basis for the tragic development of the socialist idea in Russia." And on page 261, "It is the tragic mistake of Marx, a mistake which contributed to the development of Stalinism, that he had not freed himself from the traditional overevaluation of political power and

force." And three pages later, we find that the basis for "The Three Most Dangerous Errors in Marx's Thinking" turns out to be none other than "the underestimation of the complexity of human passions." And what were the "Three Most Dangerous Errors?" One: "Neglect of the moral factor"; Two: "Grotesque misjudgment of the chances for the realization of Socialism"; and by all means Three: Marx's belief "that the emancipation from exploitation would automatically produce free and co-operative human beings." So we find that the great creator of historical materialism, tragically, had centralist tendencies, overrated political power and force, underestimated the passions, neglected the moral factor, thought socialism would triumph, and naively believed the end of exploitation would "automatically" end exploitative social relations. But even assuming Marx was terribly wrong in some or all of these (as we do not) one naturally seeks in Fromm's book a scientific explanation for the rise of Stalinism. But all that Fromm—a champion of historical materialism—offers here is the popular fallacy that Stalinism flows from Leninism, for Lenin "*had no faith in man*" (the italics belongs to Fromm). It is not an approach that is likely to bolster our respect for Fromm as a materialist.

WITH MARX AND LENIN most crudely and cavalierly dismissed Fromm continues in search of a solution which presumably is not centralist, does not neglect the moral factor, correctly estimates the passions, has faith in man, etc. Fromm finds his answer in "humanistic communitarianism." This is found in the theory of co-management, for "the principal point here is not ownership of the means of production, but participation in management and decision making." (Au-

*THE SANE SOCIETY by Erich Fromm, Rinehart, New York, 370 pp., \$5.00

shor's italics). Fromm's ideal, in this regard, appears to be a certain watch-case factory in France called Boimondau. Here, it would appear that one Marcel Barbu has truly ushered in the New Jerusalem in abolishing alienation, instilling brotherhood, and laying the framework for the "productive orientation." In this "Community of Work," workers and management turned their swords into plowshares and wrote their own Decalogue of "natural ethics," the ninth commandment of which is "Thou shall fight first against thyself, all vices which debase man, all the passions which hold man in slavery and are detrimental to social life: pride, avarice, lust, covetousness, gluttony, anger, laziness." Furthermore, we find among the principles upon which Boimondau is built that "One has to be actively related to the whole world." Since this is obviously no simple task, these communards have begun with the creation of 28 "social sections" ("But new ones are constantly added"). Among the "teams ("listed according to numerical importance") are "1. Spiritual Section:", composed of Catholic, Humanist, Materialist, and Protestant teams; "2. Intellectual Section," with General Knowledge, Civic Instruction, and Library teams. Other sections include Interior Decorating Festivals and Gatherings, Countereffort, Solidarity, and Bookbinding teams. Included also, toward the bottom of the list, are "2 registered nurses, 1 practical nurse for general information, and 3 visiting nurses" along with male and female Basketball and Physical Culture teams.

One reads of this utopian settlement with some embarrassment when one realizes that this was not written by Robert Benchley, but endorsed as a "solution" by an author with whom we were previously identifying. Of

course, Fromm questions "whether conditions similar to those created by the communitarians can be created for the whole of our society," particularly when the work is of a mass-production rather than artisan nature. Here, Fromm ends up pathetically supporting a scheme for workers buying up all the common stock of the United States Steel Corporation, demagogically advanced by B. F. Fairless as a counter-proposal to the Guaranteed Annual Wage. "Actually," says Fromm, "They would not even have to purchase that much, (he is speaking of an amount in excess of one billion dollars), "But only part of it in order to have enough of the stock to give them a voting majority." But is such humiliating naïveté the road to the Sane Society? Surely there must be more? And certainly there is, for Fromm tells us "Sanity and mental health can be attained only by simultaneous changes in the sphere of industrial and political organization, of spiritual and philosophic orientation, of character structure, and of cultural activities. The concentration of effort in any of these spheres, to the exclusion or neglect of others, is destructive of *all* change." We are told by Fromm, at the very conclusion of his magnum opus, "As long as we can think of other alternatives, we are not lost; as long as we can consult together, we can hope." Man has his choice!

But if this sorry conclusion were all that masqueraded as thought in this book, and if only a snide, sarcastic exposition of these ideas were justified, there would be little reason for considering it. But, we have already noted that Fromm is a figure in American intellectual life, and has developed his views from a laudable anti-capitalist critique. To toss off Fromm's analysis as mere muddleheadedness does him as little justice as he does to

the Marxist solution. What is necessary is to analyze Fromm at his best, in his criticism of modern society, to find out what went wrong in his evaluation. The answer would appear to lie in Fromm's forte: his view of alienation itself.

FROMM BEGINS WITH the definition of alienation as conceived by Marx as that condition of man where his "own act becomes to him an alien power, standing over and against him, instead of being ruled by him." For Marx, the concept of alienation was intimately associated with a sense of helplessness and impotence on the part of its victims, and it was the crucial point for him that under socialism "the full and free development of each individual becomes the ruling principle." Fromm, like Marx, is concerned with the alienating function of money in the process of consumption as well as alienation in production. But here Fromm extends his definition and includes among aspects of alienation the most valuable contributions of modern industrial society. It is in the use value of commodities that Fromm sees alienation as most oppressing, and it is here that we begin to sense the crankishness of Fromm's analysis. Fromm condemns the use of white bread, which is "tasteless and not nourishing"; he sneers at modern man as "consumption-hungry"; he vehemently attacks the process of trading things in: "One loves the newness of things bought and is ready to betray it when something newer has appeared." Photography is seen as an alienated substitute for experience; ball games, movies, television, and all other passive experiences are anathematized as part of the "receptive orientation" which is counterposed to the productive one which he trumpets. In brief, one

senses in Fromm not only an abomination of capitalism, but for modern technology itself. Fromm would not only enrich man's capacity to develop himself freely, but would restrict it to rigidly "productive" bounds.

It is difficult to read Fromm without sensing the nostalgia for medieval artisanry and its fancied "belongingness." His contempt is not restricted to the "automation" of life, but to the automation of industry itself. Fromm's ideals are puritanical ones; the image of the kibbutz, with happy, folk-dancing multitudes working together in the sun and finding joy in sweat, stands over him and serves as a criterion for his analysis. There is an intolerance for passive experience, for leisure spent "unproductively," for human desires and aspirations as they are rather than as they should be. Fromm rails against conformity, but would substitute a more rigid conformity to that which he deems "productive" or "creative." There is a snobbish quality to Fromm's highbrow tastes that would seem to deny others the right to develop themselves from fully gratifying and thereby passing through their lowbrow or middlebrow taste as they presently exist.

It is this intolerance of human feelings that leads Fromm to insist on an immediate leap in all areas at once; and it is his refusal to tolerate deviation from his productive ideal that leads him towards finding his solutions in such intolerantly tolerant communities, divorced from the mainstream of life, as Boimondau. What is meant by the "full and free development of each individual" is a society in which men are free to choose their own destinies with a maximum of awareness and a minimum of limitations. Such a society requires a tolerance for other orientations than

Fromm's Spartan life; and it requires as thorough an automation of production as is possible, not a retreat to the fancied pleasure of the medieval artisan in *his* creation. It requires a development of productive forces to such a level that man will be free to choose whether to center his life about "productive work" or about leisure pursuits. It requires going beyond the dictum of "He who shall not work shall not eat" to an organization of social life summed up in the phrase, "From each according to his capacity and to each according to his need," with capacity determined individually

rather than by forces outside of man. What is more important and urgent today, it requires not more insignificant New Jerusalems at Boimondau, nor more empty formulations about man having his choice, nor even such excellent exposes of "conformity" and "alienation" as Fromm and his followers are capable of. What is required is a respect for human needs as they exist, for social action and for realizable proposals which realistically take into account the facts of life.

JULES SOREL

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Economic Roots of Reformism

A Critical View of Lenin's Theory of Opportunism

We live in a critical period for civilization. During the last half century humanity has suffered two terrible wars and is now living in the shadow of total annihilation. The present generation has witnessed mass unemployment and hunger, fascism and the gas chamber, barbarous murders of colonial peoples in Kenya and Malaya, Algeria and Korea.

However, in the midst of these terrible convulsions, the working class in a number of countries of the West—the United States, Britain, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Denmark, Germany and others—shows a stubborn adherence to Reformism, a belief in the possibility of major improvement in conditions under capitalism, and a rejection of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. Why is this so? Why the general political apathy and rejection of revolutionary changes in society, when humanity as a whole is in the grip of life and death struggles?

Only if we find the correct answer to this question can we answer a further one: For how long can Reformism push aside revolutionary aspirations in the working class? There can scarcely be a question more vital for Socialists in the West, and hence for the world Socialist movement. The present article is an attempt to contribute something towards the clarification of these problems.

THE MOST IMPORTANT Marxist to define the roots of Reformism was Lenin.

In 1915, in an article entitled *The Collapse of the International*, Lenin explained Reformism, or to use the

term he coined, Opportunism, thus:

The period of imperialism is the period in which the distribution of the world amongst the 'great' and privileged nations, by whom all other nations are oppressed, is completed. Scraps of the booty enjoyed by the privileged as a result of this oppression undoubtedly fall to the lot of certain sections of the petty-bourgeoisie and the aristocracy and bureaucracy of the working class.

How big was the section of the working class which received these "scraps of booty?" Lenin says: ". . . these sections . . . represent an infinitesimal minority of the proletariat and the working masses."

And in line with this analysis Lenin defines Reformism as "the adherence of a section of the working class with the bourgeoisie against the mass of the proletariat."

The economic foundation of the small "aristocracy of labor" is to be found, according to Lenin, in imperialism and its super-profits. He writes in a preface dated July 6, 1920, to his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*:

Obviously, out of such enormous *super-profits* (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their 'own' country) *it is possible to bribe* their labor leaders and an upper stratum of the labor aristocracy. And the capitalists of the "advanced" countries do bribe them; they bribe them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert.

This stratum of bourgeoisified workers or 'labor aristocracy,' who have become completely petty-bourgeois in their mode of life, in the amount of their earnings, and in their point of view, serve as the main support of the Second International and, in our day, the principal *social* (not

military) support of the bourgeoisie. They are the real agents of the bourgeoisie in the labor movement, the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, the real carriers of reformism and chauvinism.

An inevitable conclusion following upon Lenin's analysis of Reformism is that a small thin crust of conservatism hides the revolutionary urges of the mass of the workers. Any break through this crust would reveal a surging revolutionary lava. The role of the revolutionary Party is simply to show the mass of the workers that their interests are betrayed by the "infinitesimal minority" of "aristocracy of labor."

This conclusion, however, is not confirmed by the history of Reformism in Britain, the United States and elsewhere over the past half century: its solidity, its spread throughout the working class, frustrating and largely isolating all revolutionary minorities, makes it abundantly clear that the economic, social roots of Reformism are not in "an infinitesimal minority of the proletariat and the working masses" as Lenin argued.

Showing where Lenin's analysis went wrong will help us to see more clearly the real economic, social and historical foundations of Reformism.

The first question one has to ask in tackling Lenin's analysis is this: How did the super-profits of, say, British companies in the colonies, lead to the "throwing of crumbs" to the "aristocracy of labor" in Britain? The answer to this question invalidates the whole of Lenin's analysis of Reformism.

To take an example, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company has been drawing magnificent super-profits over decades. How does this lead to crumbs

being thrown to the aristocracy of Labor? First of all, this company employs only a small number of workers in Britain. And even these are certainly not given higher wages simply because its rate of profit is high. No capitalist says to the workers: "I have made high profits this year, so I am ready to give you higher wages."

Imperialism, and the export of capital, can of course greatly affect the wage level in the industrial country by giving employment to many workers who produce the machines, rails, locomotives, etc., which make up the real content of the capital exported. This influence on the level of employment, obviously affects the wage level generally. But why should it affect only the real wages of an "infinitesimal minority?" Does the increase of employment possibilities, and decline in unemployment, lead to the rise of a small "aristocracy of labor" while the conditions of the mass of the working class is hardly affected at all? Are conditions of more or less full employment conducive to increasing differentials between skilled and unskilled workers? They are certainly not.

One may argue that the high super-profits of the capitalists on their investments in the colonies led to a rise of wages in another way: that the capitalists do not oppose labor laws defending workers' conditions as strongly as they would do if profits were low. This is so. But these laws cannot be said to lead to an increasing differentiation of living standards between the different layers of the working class.

Look at simple examples like the prohibition of child labor or limitations on female labor in certain industries. This does not affect the supply,

and hence wages, in the skilled labor market more than in the unskilled. The limitation of the workday also does not affect the skilled labor market more than the unskilled. Indeed, everything that raises the standard of living of the mass of the workers, unskilled and semi-skilled, diminishes the difference between their standards and those of the skilled workers. The higher the general standard of living, including the educational level, the easier is it for unskilled workers to become semi-skilled or skilled. The financial burden of apprenticeship is more easily borne by better-off workers. And the easier it is for workers to learn a skill, the smaller is the wage differential between skilled and unskilled workers.

Again, one can argue that imperialism throws "crumbs" to workers through the fact that it gets foodstuffs (and raw materials) extremely cheaply from the backward, colonial countries. But this factor, again, affects the standard of living not only of a mi-

nority of "aristocracy of labor" but the whole of the working class of the industrial countries. To this extent, by raising general living standards, it diminishes differences between sections of this same working class.

The effect of trade unions and the political activity of the labor movement on the whole is similar. The better the general conditions of the workers the less is the income differentiation between its sections. (This was only partly counteracted when the trade unions consisted only of skilled workers.)

In fact, all historical experience testifies that the fewer the workers' rights and the more downtrodden they are, the greater are the differentials, especially between skilled and unskilled workers. This is clearly illustrated by the following table comparing the wages of skilled and unskilled workers between the two world wars in an economically advanced country like Britain and a backward one like Rumania:

SKILLED WAGES AS PERCENTAGES OF UNSKILLED

| | Pattern Makers | Fitters & Turners | Iron Moulders | Plumbers | Electricians | Carpenters | Painters |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|--------------|------------|----------|
| Britain | 131 | 127 | 130 | 147 | 152 | 147 | 146 |
| Rumania | 200 | 210 | 252 | 300 | 182 | 223 | 275 |

(Clark, *Conditions of Economic Progress*, London, 1950, p. 460)

Or to take another example: "... a locomotive engineer of ordinary length of service and rating receives 3.3 times the wages of an unskilled man of ordinary length of service in Spain, while in New Zealand the ratio is only 1.2." (*Ibid.* p. 461.)

It can be shown statistically that in the last century the differentiation in the working class of Britain (as well as in many other industrial countries) has become smaller, and that not only an "infinitesimal minority," but the

whole of the working class, benefited from increasing living standards. To prove this one last point, one need but compare present conditions in Britain, with the conditions of the workers described in 1845 by Engels in *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*.

This is his description of typical housing conditions:

In the parishes of St. John and St. Margaret there lived in 1840, according to the *Journal of the Statistical Society*,

5,366 working-men's families in 5,294 "dwellings" (if they deserve the name!), men, women, and children thrown together without distinction of age or sex, 26,830 persons all told; and of these families three-fourths possessed but one room.

They who have some kind of shelter are fortunate, fortunate in comparison with the utterly homeless. In London fifty thousand human beings get up every morning, not knowing where they are to lay their heads at night. The luckiest of this multitude, those who succeed in keeping a penny or two until evening, enter a lodging house, such as abound in every great city, where they find a bed. But what a bed! These houses are filled with beds from cellar to garret, four, five six beds in a room; as many as can be crowded in. Into every bed four, five, or six human beings are piled, as many as can be packed in, sick and well, young and old, drunk and sober, men and women, just as they come, indiscriminately. Then come strife, blows, wounds, or if these bedfellows agree, so much the worse; thefts are arranged and things done which our language, grown more humane than our deeds, refused to record. And those who cannot pay for such a refuge? They sleep where they find a place, in passages, arcades, in corners where the police and the owners leave them undisturbed.

Health, clothing, sanitation, education were all of the same standard. One scarcely needs further proof that the conditions of the working class as a whole, and not only of a small minority, have improved radically under capitalism this last century.

AS WE HAVE SEEN, there has been a close connection between the imperialist expansion of capitalism and the rise of Reformism. Risking some repetition, we think it is worth while summing up the connection between the two.

(1) The markets of the backward colonial countries, by increasing demand for goods from the industrial countries, weaken the tendency for over-production there, decrease the

reserve army of unemployed, and so bring about an improvement in the wages of workers in the industrial countries.

(2) The increase in wages brought about in this way has a cumulative effect. By increasing the internal market in the industrial countries, the tendency for over-production is weakened, unemployment decreases, wages rise.

(3) The export of capital adds to the prosperity of the industrial countries as it creates a market for their goods—at least temporarily. The export of cotton goods from Britain to India presupposes that India is able to pay for it straight away, by exporting cotton, for instance. On the other hand, the export of capital for the building of a railway presupposes an export of goods—rails, locomotives, etc.—beyond the immediate purchasing power, or exporting power of India. In other words, *for a time*, the export of capital is an important factor in enlarging markets for the industries of the advanced countries.

However, in time, this factor turns into its opposite: capital once exported puts the brake on the export of goods from the "mother" country after the colonial countries start to pay profit or interest on it. In order to pay a profit of £10 million to Britain (on British capital invested in India,) India has to import less than it exports, and thus save the money needed to the tune of £10 million. In other words, the act of exporting capital from Britain to India expands the market for British goods; the payment of interest and profit on existing British capital in India restricts the markets for British goods.

Hence the existence of great British capital investments abroad does not at all exclude overproduction and mass unemployment in Britain. Contrary to Lenin's view, the high profit

from capital invested abroad may well be not a concomitant of capitalist prosperity and stabilisation in the Imperialist country, but a factor of mass unemployment and depression.

(4) The export of capital to the colonies affects the whole capital market in the Imperialist country. Even if the surplus of capital looking vainly for investment were very small, its cumulative influence could be tremendous, as it would create pressure in the capital markets, and strengthen the downward trend of the rate of profit. This in turn would have a cumulative effect of its own on the activity of capital, on the entire economic activity, on employment, and so on the purchasing power of the masses, and so again in a vicious circle, on the markets.

The export of surplus capital can obviate these difficulties and can thus be of great importance to the whole capitalist prosperity, and thus to Reformism.

(5) By thus relieving pressure in capital markets the export of capital diminishes competition between different enterprises, and so diminishes the need of each to rationalize and modernize its equipment. (This to some extent explains the technical backwardness of British industry, the pioneer of the industrial revolution, as compared with that of Germany today, for example.) This weakens the tendencies to over-production and unemployment, wage cuts, etc. (Of course, in changed circumstances, in which Britain has ceased to have a virtual monopoly in the industrial world, this factor may well cause the defeat of British industry in the world market, unemployment and cuts in wages.)

(6) Buying cheap raw materials and foodstuffs in the colonies allows real wages in the industrial countries to

be increased without cutting into the rate of profit. This increase of wages means widened domestic markets *without* a decrease in the rate and amount of profit, i.e., without weakening the motive of capitalist production.

(7) The period during which the agrarian colonial countries serve to broaden markets for the industrial countries will be longer in proportion to (a) the size of the colonial world compared with the productive power of the advanced industrial countries, and (b) the extent that the industrialization of the former is postponed.

(8) All the beneficial effects of Imperialism on capitalist prosperity would disappear if there were no national boundaries between the industrial Imperialist countries and their colonies.

Britain exported goods and capital to India and imported cheap raw materials and foodstuffs, but it did not let the unemployed of India—increased by the invasion of British capitalism—enter Britain's labor market. If not for the barrier (a financial one) to mass Indian immigration into Britain, wages in Britain would not have risen throughout the last century. The crisis of capitalism would have got deeper and deeper. Reformism would not have been able to replace revolutionary Chartism.

Here again the weakness of Lenin's theory of the aristocracy of labor is shown clearly. According to Lenin, Reformism is a creature of what he called "the highest stage of capitalism"—the period of the export of capital which earns a high rate of profit and allows for crumbs from this profit to fall into the hands of the "aristocracy of labor." This period of big export of capital began in Britain in the last decade or so of the 19th century.

As a matter of fact a tremendous rise in workers' wages took place long before: in 1890 real wages of industrial workers in Britain were some 66 per cent higher than in 1950 (Layton and Crowther, *A Study of Prices*). The reason was quite obvious: the most important factor in improving real wages in Britain was the expansion of work opportunities—the expansion of production—based on an enlargement of the market for the industrial goods. And this took place long before the period of export of capital.

To put it roughly, between 1750 and 1850, when the expanding output of British industry was accompanied by the ruin of many British artisans and Irish peasants, these went into the British labor market and so kept wages very low. But since the middle of the 19th century, British artisans and, after the "Hungry Forties," the surplus agricultural population of Ireland, were either absorbed into British industry, or emigrated. From then on it was the Indian artisan and peasant who were ruined by the competition of British industry—but they did not enter the British labor market to depress wages.

That the turning point in the British wage trend took place long before the end of the 19th century, and actually at the time when indigenous unemployed artisans and peasants were already absorbed into industry while the colonial unemployed were prevented from entering the British labor market, i.e., during the 30's and 50's of the 19th century, is clear from the following interesting table:

Real Wages, 1759 to 1903
(1900: 100)

| Decades and Trade Cycles | Index |
|--------------------------|-------|
| 1759-68 | 62 |
| 1769-78 | 60 |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| 1779-88 | 60 |
| 1789-98 | 58 |
| 1799-1808 | 50 |
| 1809-18 | 43 |
| 1819-28 | 47 |
| 1820-26 | 47 |
| 1827-32 | 48 |
| 1833-42 | 51 |
| 1843-49 | 53 |
| 1849-58 | 57 |
| 1859-68 | 63 |
| 1869-79 | 74 |
| 1880-86 | 80 |
| 1887-95 | 91 |
| 1895-1903 | 99 |

(J. Kuczynski, *A Short History of Labor Conditions in Great Britain 1750 to the Present Day*, London, 1947, p. 54.)

(9) The effects of Imperialism on capitalist prosperity, and thus on Reformism, do not limit themselves to the Imperialist Powers proper, but spread to a greater or lesser degree into all developed capitalist countries. Thus a prosperous Britain, for instance, can offer a wide market to Danish butter, and so spread the benefits of derived by British capitalism from the exploitation of the Empire to Danish capitalism.

(10) The expansion of capitalism through imperialism made it possible for the trade unions and Labor Parties to wrest concessions for the workers from capitalism without overthrowing it. This gives rise to a large Reformist bureaucracy which in its turn becomes a brake on the revolutionary development of the working class. The major function of this bureaucracy is to serve as a go-between of the workers and the bosses, to mediate, negotiate agreements between them, and "keep the peace" between the classes.

This bureaucracy aims at prosperous capitalism, not its overthrow. It

wants the workers' organization to be not a revolutionary force, but Reformist pressure groups. This bureaucracy is a major disciplinary officer of the working class in the interests of capitalism. It is a major conservative force in modern capitalism.

But the trade union and Labor Party bureaucracy are effective in disciplining the working class in the long run only to the extent that the economic conditions of the workers themselves are tolerable. In the final analysis the base of Reformism is in capitalist prosperity.

(11) If Reformism is rooted in Imperialism, it becomes also an important shield for it, supporting its "own" national Imperialism against its Imperialist competitors and against the rising colonial movements.

Reformism reflects the immediate, day-to-day, narrow national interests of the whole of the working class in Western capitalist countries under conditions of general economic prosperity. These immediate interests are in contradiction with the historical and international interests of the working class, of Socialism.

As capitalist prosperity, together with relatively favorable conditions in the labor market, can be helped by Imperialist expansion, by the exploitation of the colonies, Reformism has been to a large extent the expression of Imperialist domination over backward countries.

As, however, prosperity with more or less full employment and relatively tolerable wages, may be induced at least for a time by the conditions of the permanent war economy (see my article "Perspectives of the Permanent War Economy" *Socialist Review*, May, 1957), Reformism has economic roots also where the Imperialist war economy takes the place of Imperialist expansion.

DURING THE THIRTIES, in the face of the deep world slump, unemployment and Fascism, it looked as if the foundations of Reformism were undermined for good. Writing in that period and prognosticating the future, Trotsky wrote:

In (the) epoch of decaying capitalism, in general, there can be no discussion of systematic social reforms and the raising of the masses' living standards, when every serious demand of the proletariat and even every serious demand of the petty bourgeoisie inevitably reaches beyond the limits of capitalist property relations and of the bourgeois state. (*The Death Agony of Capitalism*.)

If serious reforms are no longer possible under capitalism, then the knell of bourgeois parliamentary democracy is sounded and the end of Reformism is at hand.

The war, as a sharpener of contradictions in capitalism, would lead to the acceleration of these processes, according to Trotsky.

However, Trotsky's prognosis was belied by life. The war, and the permanent war economy gave a new lease of life to capitalism and hence to Reformism in many of the Western capitalist countries.

In itself, the increasing dependence of Reformism on the permanent war economy shows its bankruptcy and the need for a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism with its twins—the permanent war economy and Reformism. However, this bankruptcy of Reformism is not yet apparent to every worker through his daily experience. As I tried to show in my article in the May issue of *Socialist Review*, it will be a matter of some years till the permanent war economy leads to a big deterioration of workers' conditions, and thus to a withering away of the roots of Reformism.

For this to happen it is not neces-

sary, of course, that the standard of living of workers should be cut to the bone. An American worker would react very strongly to a threat to his car and television set, even if workers elsewhere look at these things as undreamt-of luxuries. To the extent that past reforms are accepted as necessities, a series of new reforms becomes the expected course of events. With the eating comes the appetite. When capitalism, however, decays to the extent that any serious demands of the working class reach beyond its limits, the bell will toll for Reformism.

A realistic understanding of the foundations of Reformism, its strength and depth, as well as the factors undermining it, is necessary to an understanding of the future of the Socialist movement. As Engels put it more than a hundred years ago: "The condition of the working class is the real basis and point of departure of all social movements at present. . . . A knowledge of proletarian conditions is absolutely necessary to be able to provide solid ground for socialist

theories. . . ." Preface to *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.)

Of course, even when the economic roots of Reformism wither away, Reformism will not die by itself. Many an idea lingers on long after the disappearance of the material conditions which brought it forth. The overthrow of Reformism will be brought about by conscious revolutionary action, by the propaganda and agitation of consistent Socialists. Their job will be facilitated by a future sharpening of the contradictions in capitalism.

Every struggle of the working class, however limited it may be, by increasing its self-confidence and education, undermines Reformism. "In every strike one sees the hydra head of the the Revolution." The main task of real, consistent Socialists is to unite and generalise the lessons drawn from the day-to-day struggles. Thus can it fight Reformism.

TONY CLIFF

Comrade Cliff's article first appeared in the English socialist paper, *Socialist Review*:

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An Exchange of Views:

A Reply to Max Shachtman

Theodore Draper's "Reply to Max Shachtman" and Shachtman's rebuttal—both appearing in this issue—stem from an article written by Max Shachtman: "American Communism: A Re-Examination of the Past," published in the Fall 1957 issue of *The New Internationalist*. Those who have not yet read this earlier article—which includes a review of Draper's book, "The Roots of American Communism"—are urged to do so. The problems raised in Shachtman's article are important ones which deserve thoughtful consideration and comment from thinking socialists and historians.

Other discussion material has been received but cannot be printed in this issue because of space considerations. It will be printed, however, in succeeding issues.

At the risk of seeming ungrateful for Max Shachtman's kind words about my book, I think it may be best to answer his criticism of one point in order to avoid unnecessary confusion or misunderstanding. Though I have the highest respect for his devotion to his cause and the seriousness of his judgments, he has not convinced me, and we have agreed to have a friendly little discussion. We may not benefit from it, but innocent bystanders should!

Shachtman's article covered a great deal of ground, past, present and future. I intend to restrict myself to a historical question only: Was there any relationship between the pre-1919 Left Wing and the American Communist movement?

Since the entire question revolves around a paragraph in my book, it is necessary for the reader to have it clearly in mind:

Some students have expressed the opinion that the American Communist movement was totally unrelated to the Socialist Left Wing of 1912 [at this point I have a note referring to two such views]. This view seems to minimize historical continuity. The Bolshevik revolution transformed the Left Wing, but it did not create a new one out of nothing. On the contrary, the leading roles were played by men and women who were prepared for them by past inclinations and

experience. The Bolshevik revolution came to fulfill, not to destroy. The peculiar development of American Communism can be understood only in terms of the way in which the new Bolshevik influence impinged on American radical traditions. The interaction of the two was a long, painful, complex process. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that something new was born with the Bolshevik revolution. It was born precisely because the old Left Wing was famished for something new, different, more successful. But as with all newborn things, the flesh out of which it came was not new.

Shachtman interprets this paragraph as a "thesis," though he does not drive this term too far. Actually, it is more the rejection of a thesis. If there is any thesis, it is on the other side. The paragraph starts out with a "denial," as Shachtman himself put it in quoting the passage, of the thesis that "the American Communist movement was totally unrelated to the Socialist Left Wing of 1912." I rejected this view as an extreme position of total dissociation. In effect, that is the only positive content of this paragraph. For the rest, I tried to trace the relationship in all its living complexity in the body of my book; I never attempted to reduce the whole development to a thesis that might oversimplify the entire story.

To repeat: there is a thesis of total negation represented by Shachtman and others. That I reject. All I urge is

a sense of continuity from the Socialist Left Wing of 1912 and even farther back to the newly formed Communist movement of 1919.

Shachtman confines most of his attention to the Socialist Left Wing. The first sentence in my paragraph may perhaps be partly responsible for this emphasis. In a footnote, I cited two formulations which, it seemed to me, sought to separate completely the Socialist Left Wing of 1912 and the particular Left Wing that formed the Communist movement. Later, in the same paragraph, I went back to the more general expression of "the old Left Wing" because I wanted to make a broad point as well as a narrow one. As I understand Shachtman, he does not merely deny a connection between the Socialist Left Wing of 1912 and the Communists; he goes much farther and denies a connection between the old Left Wing as a whole in all its different manifestations and the Communists. Now, it is perfectly conceivable that we might differ about the specific connection with the Socialist Left Wings of 1912 or 1917, and still agree that there is some connection between the Communists and previous Left Wing movements. I suspect that Shachtman is so eager to cut off the Communists from any and all links to the American radical past that he cuts them off from the Socialist Left Wings of 1912 and 1917 in the process.

There is another reason for not thinking of the problem in terms of this or that organization at a particular time. The pre-World War I Left Wing was a rather loose, amorphous radical community. A great many Left Wingers, like the hero of the Socialist Left Wing of 1912, Bill Haywood, had one foot in the I.W.W. and one foot in the Socialist Party, organizationally, intellectually or emotionally. There were sharp programmatic dif-

ferences and organizational loyalties, but there was also a deep feeling that all radicals belonged in the same family, especially when faced with the common enemy. The members of the family were competitive rather than mutually destructive, and there existed a relatively high degree of mobility within the family.

For this reason, I should not give the Socialist Left Wing undue importance against the syndicalists or a hybrid of the two which was often the case. A Ruthenberg need not be given more emphasis than a Fraina or a Foster in the transition from the Left Wing to Communism.

By chance, however, the *American Labor Who's Who*, edited by Solon De Leon in 1925, gives the previous affiliations of 28 representative Communist leaders of the period. They break down as follows: Socialist Party, 20; I.W.W., 1; Socialist Labor Party, 2; S.P.—I.W.W., 3; S.L.P.—I.W.W., 1; S.P.—I.W.W.—Syndicalist League, 1.

There is still, of course, the specific problem of the Socialist Left Wing of 1912. The issue in Article II, Section 6, was that of revolutionary violence, to put it most briefly. The early Communists were violent believers in violence. They flaunted it in their programs and leaflets, and made it a fundamental dividing-line between real revolutionaries and traitorous reformists. Those who fought for revolutionary violence in 1919 could not help but feel a kinship with those who had fought for it in 1912.

I cannot follow Shachtman at all in his version of 1917. The Wallings were wrathful because they succeeded in disrupting nothing at all; they were completely isolated in 1917 (incidentally, should Rose Pastor Stokes belong in this list, since hers was a temporary defection?). Shachtman also seems to say that the anti-war St. Louis

resolution disoriented and disassembled the Left Wing which had to be reoriented and reassembled thereafter. As I see it, the resolution itself did not disrupt the party or the Left Wing; rather, the crisis came in living up to it subsequently. The Left Wing represented an extreme anti-war position in theory and practice. The extreme anti-war position of the Left Wing created one of the first and strongest bonds of sympathy with the Bolshevik Revolution which took Russia out of the war and claimed to possess the social antidote to war itself.

Shachtman's emphasis seems to be numerical, mine political. He is preoccupied with the question of how many of the old Left Wing went into the Communist movement. I look at the question in reverse. Among the early Communists were Ruthenberg, Fraina, Foster, Gitlow, Browder, Katterfeld, Reed, Bedacht, Cannon, Bloor, Dunne, Lovestone, Minor, Wagenknecht and Lindgren—let us limit ourselves to these representative fifteen figures. Every one, depending on age, had served a pre-Communist apprenticeship in some part of the Left Wing, though not necessarily in the Socialist Party or only temporarily in the Socialist Party. As I put it, "the leading roles were played by men and women who were prepared for them by past inclinations and experience"—and, I might have added, frustrations. The relationship to the Socialist Left Wing is not to be determined negatively by the fact that Walling & Co. supported the war, deserted the Left Wing and never became Communists; it should be determined positively by the fact that Ruthenberg & Co. opposed the war, carried on in the name of the Left Wing and became Communists.

But what about the local Russians? Here, the facts are not in dispute. The Russians and East-Europeans repre-

sented the overwhelming numerical majority of the American Communist movement in 1919-1921, after which they faded from the scene. The Russians were mainly "November Bolsheviks" who cashed in belatedly on the Left Wing tradition. But again, the real problem is more political than numerical.

The Russian preponderance was temporary. The American Communist movement was not so dependent on the Russians that it would not have come into existence without them. And it was not so dependent on them that it immediately collapsed after they had left. Does Shachtman believe that there would not have been an American Communist movement without the Russians? If so, I think he is profoundly mistaken. If not, how can he maintain that the Russians determined the very existence of the movement? The Ruthenbergs and Frainas could have started a party without the Russians, and almost did; the Russians could not have started an American party without the Ruthenbergs and Frainas, or they would have done so. In fact, one group of American Communists, led by Reed and Gitlow, formed the Communist Labor Party without and against the Russians. The Russians had no original ideas or program; they were merely the stand-ins or surrogates of the Russian Bolsheviks; and gradually everyone saw through the masquerade. Reed and Wolfe, not the Russians, wrote the Left Wing manifesto of February 1919; and Fraina, not the Russians, composed the Left Wing manifesto of June 1919. Later, the Finns replaced the Russians in even larger numbers, but the party's history was not determined by them. The importance of the Americans was qualitative and enduring, that of the Russians quantitative and ephemeral.

For the Americans, Communism at first represented no abrupt break with their Left Wing past. On every important issue—violence, trade unionism, politics, immediate demands—the Americans carried over their Left Wing preconceptions into the Communist movement. At first, they even saw in Soviet Russia what they wanted to see at home—a peculiar American Left Wing hybrid of socialism and syndicalism. The ideological transition from the Left Wing to Communism took place within the Communist movement after it was formally organized.

If the Left Wing and the Communists were so unrelated, why did the early Communists organize in the name of the Left Wing? The answer is that the term had a long, honorable, radical lineage with which the early Communists identified themselves. The links in the chain of the Left Wing changed with changing times and issues. But one link was connected with another by a common bond of militant revolutionary extremism. The Socialist Left Wing of 1912 was one of the earlier links in this chain, and that is why I rejected formulations that seemed to cut it off from the Communist link. The Left Wing was always more than a particular aggregation of individuals; it was, above all, a revolutionary trend or tradition; individuals could go in and out of it without destroying its continuity.

Is there any doubt that the early Communists identified themselves with the Socialist Left Wings of 1912 and 1917 as their continuators and inheritors? The identification is all over the early literature. I will cite, for brevity's sake, one example: After the founding convention of the Communist Party of America in September 1919, the newly elected International Secretary, Louis C. Fraina, wrote a re-

port to the Executive Committee of the Communist International with an application for admission. In this report, he sketched the history of the Socialist Party, Socialist Labor Party and I.W.W. from the turn of the century. It should be noted that he grouped the three together and moved freely from one to the other in his effort to relate how the American Communist movement had originated. He made the Socialist convention of 1912 the "climax" of fundamental disputes in the entire movement; he recalled, with some exaggeration, that "thousands of militant proletarians seceded from the party in disgust at the rejection of revolutionary industrial unionism." He devoted a paragraph to the anti-war issue of 1917, a part of which reads: "The St. Louis Convention of the [Socialist] Party, in April, 1917, adopted a militant declaration against the war, forced upon a reluctant bureaucracy by the revolutionary membership. But this bureaucracy sabotaged the declaration."* Historically, some of this may be open to question, but the whole paragraph clearly shows that the Communist Left Wing of 1919 viewed itself as emerging from the Socialist Left Wing of 1917. Fraina was not a member of the Socialist Party in 1912 or April 1917, but party affiliation was not the important thing to him or the others. Every Left Winger drew his inspiration from Haywood's cause in 1912 and the anti-war fight in 1917-1918 whether he carried a red card or considered himself a revolutionary free-lance for whom no party was good enough.

Finally, a curious contradiction suggests that there is something radically wrong with Shachtman's case.

*Fraina's report was published in Pamphlet No. 1 of the Communist Party of America, *Manifesto and Program—Constitution—Report to the Communist International* (Chicago, 1919), pp. 26-40.

He starts out by insisting that the Communist movement was primarily concocted by the Russians who "became the leaders of the Left Wing with whose past struggles and traditions they had had nothing whatever to do." He ends up by deploring the split of the Socialist Party in 1919 as a "heavy mistake."

But, on Shachtman's premise, the split was natural and logical. A Communist movement based solely on the Russians with no roots in the Left Wing tradition had no basis for staying in the Socialist Party. By making

the two movements so foreign to each other, so alien in their origins, Shachtman removes all the reasons against a split. Only if the Communist movement came out of the Socialist Left Wing is it possible to think of it going back or never leaving.

The men who split from the Socialist Party felt a compulsion to do so, arising out of their past, that we cannot feel today. It is too late for regrets, and history cannot be written that way.

THEODORE DRAPER

A Rejoinder to Theodore Draper

Theodore Draper wants to restrict himself "to a historical question only: Was there any relationship between the pre-1919 Left Wing and the American Communist movement." He reiterates his denial of the "thesis" that "the American Communist movement was totally unrelated to the Socialist Left Wing of 1912" and the even broader "old Left Wing as a whole in all its different manifestations."

All right.

After reading my article in the last number of the *New Internationalist* in which I review his book on "*The Roots of American Communism*" (which a diabolical proof-reader allowed to appear in a footnote as *The Roots of Russian Communism*), Draper ascribes this thesis to me: "...there is a thesis of total negation represented by Shachtman and others." And: "As I understood Shachtman, he does not merely deny a connection between the Socialist Left Wing of 1912 and the Communists; he goes much farther and denies a connection between the old Left Wing as a whole in all its different manifestations and the Com-

munist." And: "I suspect that Shachtman is so eager to cut off the Communist from any and all links to the American radical past that he cuts them off from the Socialist Left Wings of 1912 and 1917 in the process." And: "Does Shachtman believe that there would not have been an American Communist movement without the [local, American] Russians? If so, I think he is profoundly mistaken." And: "For the Americans, Communism at first represented no abrupt break with their Left Wing past. On every important issue—violence, trade unionism, politics, immediate demands—the Americans carried over their Left Wing preconceptions into the Communist movement."

Now this is not all right.

I am afraid that Draper has misread me. This may well be due to my inability to express myself plainly. It is not due to the thesis which Draper assigns to me, for I do not hold it. I do not "represent" the "thesis of total negation." I would not dream of denying that "there was *any relationship*" between the two movements in question; I never thought to "deny a con-

nection" between them; I am not "so eager," or eager at all, "to cut off the Communists from any and all links to the American radical past."

My concern in the article, in this respect, was rather with the *extent* of the relationship between the two; with the *degree* of the connection; with the *nature* of the continuity *and* of the discontinuity as well as with their *forms*; with the theoretical and political as well as with the personal (or what Draper loosely dismisses as the "numerical") links and breaks between them; with what was the *real* and not merely formal connection between the two and what were the *limits* of this connection. I felt, as I still do, that without defining all these aspects of the famous "continuity" it is not only impossible to place the main emphasis where it properly belongs, but impossible also to understand that "peculiar development of American Communism" which is a central theme of Draper's work—precisely that peculiarity which *distinguished* the American Communist movement from the Communist movements of other modern countries, and particularly that peculiarity which *distinguished* the Communist Left Wing from the older Left Wing in this country so that it represented not a continuation but a break.

Let me approach the question from Draper's own standpoint. I consider his book to revolve around a central theme, stated at the very end of the volume: "But something crucially important did happen to this [the Communist] movement in its infancy. It was transformed from a new expression of American radicalism to the American appendage of a Russian revolutionary power. Nothing else so important ever happened to it again." I subscribed to this statement in my article and I reiterate my agreement

with it here. But this transformation, *exceeding everything else* in importance, according to Draper—this "peculiarity" in the development of American Communism—is precisely what can *not* be explained by stressing its *continuity* with the older Left Wing but only by examining the nature and extent of the *discontinuity* between the two. This is so self-evident to me as to render all counter-arguments trivial and even irrelevant in advance.

That is why I wrote in my article:

There *was* a peculiarity about the early Communist movement in this country (one among several others, it may be noted), but it lies in precisely the other direction from that indicated by Draper. It was peculiar *precisely to the extent* [my emphasis now] that it was *not* related to the 'Socialist Left Wing of 1912' or more generally to 'American radical traditions.' Draper is *not altogether wrong* [my emphasis now] in denying that the Communist movement was 'totally unrelated' to the old Left Wing, for within very narrow limits the relationship is obvious; but he is quite wrong in his emphasis.

Where is my "thesis of total negation?"

I would indeed have been "profoundly mistaken" if I believed that there would have been no Communist movement in this country without the Slavic Federation people. That is why I wrote in my article that "It does not follow, as some epidermal thinkers have put it, that the ideas of the [Bolshevik] Revolution were 'alien and 'unacclimatizable' to the American social soil."

I was aware, it seems, that "for the Americans, Communism at first represented no abrupt break with their Left Wing past." So I wrote that "even though the native Left Wingers were not the continuators of the old Left Wing, they took over most of the negative, that is, the sectarian, traditions of the old Left Wing . . . opposition

to 'immediate demands' and 'reforms,' hemi-semi-demi-opposition to parliamentary activity, opposition to the existing labor movement, the unrequited *amour passionnel* for the I.W.W., and radicalism of language which passed for radicalism of thought."

I held, however, and still hold, to what the article emphasized: "If, then, it is true, that the Bolshevik Revolution 'did not create a new Left Wing out of nothing,' as Draper says, it is not true, or it is 'misleadingly true,' that the revolution 'transformed the Left Wing'—if he is speaking, as he is, of 'the Socialist Left Wing of 1912.' There was not enough of it left by 1917-1918 to be transformed into anything. It would be far truer to say: *the Bolshevik Revolution created the Communist Left Wing and its program and its leadership* . . . By virtue of what we insist is 'the fact', we can understand the 'peculiar development' of American Communism which caused it to be transformed, *more easily and more rapidly* than any other Communist movement of importance, 'from a new expression of American radicalism to the American appendage of a Russian revolutionary power.' Draper's first 'thesis' is wrong *to the very extent* [my emphasis now] that it makes such an understanding difficult."

DRAPER FINDS A REFUTATION of the viewpoint that I do not hold in such data as he cites, as an example, from the *American Labor Who's Who* of 1925. He adds up 28 Communist leaders who belonged to the pre-war radical movement. For whatever his case is worth, it can even be strengthened! *Who's Who* gives 43 of the persons it lists as being members of the then Workers Party (the Communist party). From my own direct know-

ledge, there are no less than 61 of the persons listed in *Who's Who* who were in the Communist movement. But what is interesting is precisely this fact: Out of the 61, there are not ten percent who were known as Left Wingers in the 1912 radical movement as a whole outside their most immediate circles; and of this half-dozen, only two or three could be regarded as any sort of spokesmen for the Left Wing, be it as members of the S.P., the I.W.W., or the S.L.P.; and not a single one of the nationally prominent and authoritative spokesmen for the Left Wingers of those days is included in the list. The same holds substantially for the "representative fifteen figures" in the Communist leadership who are named by Draper.

Since he seems to have missed my point, it is necessary to restate it here. It could not even occur to me to deny that among the authentic (or at least the more durable) of the Communist leadership that developed there were a significant number who had been in one or another Left Wing movement before the war, even going back to 1912. Most of those who were in these movements played an insignificant role in them. I would not spend time arguing that they "could not help but feel a kinship" in 1919 with the Left Wingers of 1912. I grant it (even though only more or less, for I regard Draper's formulation on "violence" pretty loose and questionable). But in 1917, these individuals—the fifteen or the sixty-one—while they may have felt a kinship with the Left Wing of 1912, broad or narrow, *did not constitute a Left Wing*, much less a continuation of the 1912 Left Wing. With few—very few—exceptions, the future leaders of the Communist Left Wing and Communist Party were just so many isolated individuals, not a few of whom had quit the radical move-

ment altogether or had not yet ever been in it. The old Socialist Left, as I wrote, had "nullified itself, came apart and lost its bearings before the Communist Left Wing came on the scene." I see nothing in Draper's facts that contradicts this view, and I do not believe better facts exist. On the other hand, my own view is confirmed by such an authoritative source as the editors of the *Class Struggle* in the statement they wrote for the first number of that review in 1917, dedicated to reassembling and reconstructing a Left Wing movement.

For these factual reasons, which could easily be multiplied and buttressed by others, I repeat that while "it is true, in the literal sense, that the Bolshevik Revolution 'did not create a new [Left Wing] out of nothing,' as Draper says . . . it would be *far truer* to say" that the Bolshevik revolution created the Communist Left Wing. In other words: the Revolution did not "create" the Left Wingers—it found them here, as it did everywhere else—but it did create the Communist Left Wing.

And I repeat that because, in large part, these Left Wingers had *so little* in common with the old radical and Left Wing movements, played *so little* a role in them, had *so little* experience and knowledge, had *so little* authority and self-confidence—especially as compared with the Communist leaders of Germany, Poland, Italy, France and England who were a real continuation of the traditional Left Wing—we got that "peculiar development" of American Communism which "caused it to be transformed, *more easily and more rapidly*, than any other Communist movement of importance" into an abject object. It is just on this point that I find no comment in Draper's letter.

A WORD NOW ON THE "curious contra-

diction" that Draper finds in my "case." There is no logic in my conclusion that the 1919 split was a "heavy mistake" because I make the two movements so alien to each other as to "remove all the reasons against a split." He concludes: "The men who split from the Socialist Party felt a compulsion to do so, arising out of their past, that we cannot feel today. It is too late for regrets and history cannot be written that way."

If I read these words rightly, they represent a kind of reasoning and conclusion which is a little disconcerting. I always thought it was the attribute of a school of historical writing of diminishing acceptability and one to which Draper's competence does not permit him to belong.

If a good dentist, after years of practicing sound tooth maintenance by systematic prophylaxis or curing or removing a diseased molar, suddenly decides for some reason or other (perhaps he has read a book presenting a radically novel theory on dentistry) that the best way to remedy a toothache is to split the skull of the patient, with the result that the patient is highly distressed and the dentist is subject to loss of license, incarceration and public obloquy—then I, who am friendly to the progress of scientific and effective dentistry, am to be gently chided for observing that the dentist made a "heavy mistake." Why? First, because the skull-cleaver had been a dentist in the past and continued to call himself a dentist. Second, because he felt a compulsion to do what he did. I must either deny that he ever had anything in common with dentistry, or I must refrain from calling his novel means of treatment a "mistake." Is it proper for me to point out that other dentists would be well advised not to act as he did, or that other patients should go elsewhere for treat-

ment? Apparently not. It is too late for regrets, and history cannot be written that way.

It is indeed too late for regrets. But then, I am not interested in regrets, in lamentations, in breast-beating, in faultfinding and condemnation, or in re-wishing history. As I indicated in my article, I am interested in the history of the events as a socialist, as one concerned with the building of a healthy and effective movement today and tomorrow. I must try to overcome the objective difficulties for socialism by reducing my quota of mistakes to the minimum. It is not possible to insure the socialist movement against any and all mistakes to come. But it is possible to avoid those made in the past. For that, it is essential that the errors of the past be named, described, analyzed, clarified and understood. And when there are socialists who dream of repeating them, not in the name of a mistake but in the name of a virtue, it is all the more necessary to point out the mistakes, why they were mistakes, and why they must be rejected. If Draper looks upon this attitude as representing belated regrets, he is strictly within his legal rights. I look upon it differently. To me it is one of the indispensable means whereby a socialist movement finds the right road and avoids the wrong one.

When, however, Draper writes that the men who split the Socialist Party felt a compulsion to do so "*arising out of their past*," I must challenge him. Those five words he will not find it possible to sustain, if by "their past" he refers to their past in the older Socialist Left Wing—and I cannot think of anything else he might be referring to.

In my article I pointed out that the Communist Left Wing held the theory that the socialist movement can allow into membership only those hold-

ing the Communist view, as defined at any given time by the party leadership, and must in advance and automatically exclude from membership all socialists not holding this view. "It is this theory," I wrote, "which was the most important distinguishing mark of the Communist Left Wing from its real beginning . . . and distinguishes it and all its ideological derivatives to this day." I added parenthetically:

It is somewhat remarkable that this point does not appear to impinge upon Draper's studies at all. The point appears to us to be of decisive significance. It challenges the contention that the Communist Left Wing was a continuation of the traditional Socialist Left, for such a theory was alien to it. The old one fought the Right Wing, but never thought that it could not live with it in the same party—quite the contrary. . . . [The Communist Left] stopped fighting Hillquit for leadership of the party, and began fighting for a party that would expel Hillquit, all his co-thinkers, and in consequence all their followers in the organization.

In the most furious days of the pre-war fight between the Left and Right wings, I cannot think of a single Left Winger, not even the stoutest sympathizer with the I.W.W., who ever proposed to split the party, and form a new one from which all Right Wingers or "Centrists" would be excluded by program and statute. The impulsion to split the party *did not* arise in the Communist Left Wing out of its past in the old Socialist Left Wing.

I do not see where Draper has answered or even posed for himself the question: was there a single one of the elements in the similarity between the Communist Left Wing and the old Socialist Left which represented the "continuity," that prompted the Communist Left Wing to form its own independent party, separate from the Socialist Party and aimed at wiping it out? Or was it not rather that feature of the Communist Left Wing

which represented a radical break from the old Left Wing—the distinguishing feature that was impressed upon it by the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution—which impelled it to take the unique course that it followed?

I will not say that you can't have it both ways. You can. But only if your

answer to the first part of the question contains the strictest limitations, and the answer to the second part contains the overwhelming and enlightening emphasis that it demands. That is what I tried to do.

MAX SHACHTMAN

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Not on the Recommended List

AMERICAN RADICALS: SOME PROBLEMS AND PERSONALITIES, *Edited by Harvey Goldberg*, Monthly Review Press, New York City, 1951, 308 pp., \$5.00.

There has been a noticeable and welcome increase in the number of books recently published concerned with the history, problems and prospects of radicalism and trade unionism in the United States. Although the quality of these studies is uneven almost all have something knowledgeable, challenging or stimulating to offer. At least one exception to this general rule, however, is *American Radicals: Some Problems and Personalities*, a collection of essays by 15 contributors, edited by Harvey Goldberg and published by the Monthly Review Press—the publisher of the journal, *Monthly Review*. Unfortunately the book's title promises more than it gives. The editor, publisher and most of its contributors have managed to take an enormously exciting subject and transform it into a dull and academic volume. But, to be truthful and not artificially polite, academicism is a relatively minor flaw in the book; it is guilty of more serious intellectual offenses.

The American radicals discussed in the book are Heywood Broun, John Jay Chapman, William Demarest Lloyd, Walter Weyl, John Brown, Dreiser, Marcantonio, LaFollette, Altgeld, Haywood, DeLeon, Debs, Beard and Veblen. There is no portrait of a trade union figure other than Haywood. Perhaps that was an oversight. There is no evaluation of important radical figures such as Morris Hillquit and Victor Berger, center and right wing Socialist leaders who were in many ways more representative of the Socialist Party than Debs. Perhaps this merely shows poor judgment and not bias. Perhaps. But what about the Communist Party—its personalities, its problems and the problems it posed for the radical movement? Not a single essay devoted to any of these questions; not even a few pages; just a sentence here and a phrase there. Yet it was the Communist Party which had dominated the radical scene for more than three decades. In the opinion of democratic socialists for most of these years it was the bane of American radicalism, but for this book's editor the CP was a legitimate wing of the American labor movement. However, whether it was a bane or a boon, or somewhere in between, it is impossible—so it would seem—to avoid a discussion of Communism and/or Commu-

nists in a book purporting to deal with problems of American radicalism. Had any other publisher or editor ignored the CP in a book of this nature it might be chalked up to plain stupidity. But, given the nature of the publisher and editor Goldberg's views, no such generous allowance can be made. Here, it is not stupidity; neither is it mere bias nor an oversight. It stems largely, in my opinion, from a pose affected by so many former Stalinoids—who have not abandoned all their illusions about Russia—of being *Real American* radicals, respectable as all get out. For them to discuss the Communist Party might only prove embarrassing. A portrait, say, of William Z. Foster or a more general analysis of the Communist Party could hardly avoid the question of Russia. And a discussion of Russia by former Stalinoids who still hold that it is some sort of a progressive socialistic society would hardly present the reader with a confirmation of the image they project of themselves as more thoughtful variants of good old-fashioned grass roots radicals. Better, then, to perpetrate a fraud: ignore the Communist Party of today, the past decade, the Thirties and Twenties; forget about its leaders, not only Foster today and Browder yesterday, but disregard the record of leading Communists in the early days—men like Reed, Fraina, Ruthenberg and Lore.

The most extensive "treatment" of American Communism can be found in a paragraph in the book's introductory essay, "*Thoughts About American Radicalism*," written by Harvey Goldberg (the book's editor) in collaboration with William A. Williams. It is a precious "thought" indeed, worth quoting:

In the '30s and early '40s the pitfalls were deep and the failures great for American radicals. Abandoning the inde-

pendence and vigor attached to the rich tradition of the men described below, many sincere men and women were tempted into the easy solution. Either they became Russophiles, or they cast in their lot with the liberals and sought to change America by using the power of the existing national government. Now an intelligent, insightful, and Marxian American Communist might have developed an argument around the thesis that supporting the Soviet Union through famine, purge, and Stalin was actually, in spite of the illiberal features of that government, the only way to establish the necessary preconditions for a truly American radicalism.

The authors' Stalinoid mentality—at least in 1957—is clearly revealed in this passage. Theirs would have been a more "insightful" and "Marxian" policy: "supporting the Soviet Union" while admitting that in Russia there was "famine, purge and Stalin" and, to use their hilarious euphemism, "illiberal features" in its government. But of greater interest for the moment is the view that "supporting the Soviet Union"—critically, of course—was a precondition for building a healthy radical movement. This thought is certainly worth some elaboration, particularly as in subsequent lines the authors vaguely intimate that a renascent radical movement in this country would have to adopt a similarly critical but friendly attitude toward Russia. However, this point is dropped as abruptly as it is raised; it is more of a teaser than a thought.

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER ESSAYS in the book? There is not one which is first rate or nearly so. The sketches of Veblen, Beard, LaFollette and most others are pedestrian. Bert Cochran contributes an article on Debs that plays with a comparison of the Socialist leader and Lincoln, and winds up with a half hearted defense of Debs' dual unionist inclinations. Nevertheless, it is supe-

rior to most other chapters in the book.

A measure of the book as a whole is the inclusion of a eulogy of the cheap little politician, Vito Marcantonio. The effrontery of including him as one of America's foremost radicals, preceded in the book by a sketch of John Altgeld and followed by the essay on Debs, is matched only by the vulgar apologia of his biographer, Richard Sasuly. When Mr. Sasuly writes of Marcantonio that, "on the foreign issues as on the domestic ones, his position had an underlying consistency throughout his seven terms in Congress" he must be relying on the naivete of his readers—unless the consistency he is talking about was Marcantonio's consistent kow-towing to the tortuous twists, turns and somersaults of the Communist Party. (Marcantonio's public criticisms of the Communist Party came only at a time when he had no chance of being returned to Congress and the Party and he had outlived their usefulness to one another.)

One essay does deserve special mention: "The Renegade: A Study of Defectors" by Russell Fraser. Mr. Fraser is an English professor and he lets his reader know it in a chapter that is almost painful to read. His turgid prose liberally sprinkled with Latin and French and his incredible name dropping reads like a parody of a would-be "belletrist" on a rampage. One of the defectors and renegades who drives Mr. Fraser to a religious frenzy is Walter Reuther. Reuther, you see, was guilty of "pulling down . . . the moderate [R. J.] Thomas on charges of Red domination" which was reminiscent of Homer Martin's earlier campaign to organize an auto union "cleansed of Red elements." And Homer Martin was praised by Harry Bennet, Ford's chief of police. So

where does that leave Reuther? Get it?

But, as a literary man, Mr. Fraser concentrates his fire on such writers as John Steinbeck, Clifford Odets, Irwin Shaw and John Dos Passos. These were all writers who once found it possible to work with the Stalinists but have long since repudiated the Communist Party. They are, naturally, on Fraser's list of defectors and renegades from radicalism. Of Dos Passos, we are assured that "A novel like *1919* proclaims on every violent page, in each meaningless incident in every joyless character, the future course of its creator." (Shades of Mike Gold!) After polishing off Dos Passos, Mr. Fraser gets right to the core of another defecting writer's weakness. In John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* we are told that ". . . the shoddiness of that novel as a portrait of 'the people,' its basic lack of integrity, are the best indication that the radicalism of Steinbeck *et hoc genus omne* was only of the surface, after all." With Steinbeck out of the way Fraser hops right into an assault on the "jeremiads" of Robinson Jeffers, takes a poke at Edgar Lee Masters for a "pitiful attempt to diminish the stature of Lincoln" and in a few polished phrases disposes of the "maunderings" of Ezra Pound. It is not clear from who or what Pound, Jeffers or Masters defected or reneged. But what's the difference? A little bit of learning can't hurt.

In a charitable mood and in restrained manner the best I can say about the book is that it is not on my recommended list.

JULIUS FALK

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL
The Marxist review for serious students of social issues

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

Aimed at The Moderates

A HISTORY OF SINO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS by Tien-fong Cheng. Public Affairs Press. 355 pps.

Many pro-nationalist books have been written in the United States. Some have been aimed at the liberals in an effort to reduce their antipathy toward greater aid to Chiang; some have aimed at consolidating the Knowlandites. *A History of Sino-Russian Relations* by Tien-fong Cheng, how-the internationalist moderates, the Eisenhower political—who are now at least thinking of revamping the U.S. attitude toward Stalinist China. For them, a "factual," unadorned casebook is the indicated procedure; where the liberal desires social proofs and the Knowlandite wants Red-baiting, the moderate relies on more institutional descriptions.

Cheng serves up a lengthy background in his painstaking narration of Czarist investiture of the Chinese northern territories. This serves as evidence for his essential point: that the Communist seizure of power represents the culmination of a continual, unbroken pattern of Russian attempts to dominate China. For him, that is the real meaning of the Maoist revolution, since, in effect, he denies any indigenous character to Chinese Communism and considers the Chinese C.P. to have been simply a tool of Russian subversion.

Dr. Cheng's accounts of Czarist Russia's imperialist ventures into China is detailed and valuable for reference.

Winter 1958

He traces Russian expansion into Siberia culminating in clashes with tribes owing allegiance to the Manchus and describes the various treaties down through the years which gave Russia huge territories (Amur, Ussuri etc.), great military and economic penetration into Mongolia, Sinkiang, Manchuria, etc. Cheng then deals with the other imperialist powers and their roles in the rape of China, highlighting the conflicts of interest between Japan and Russia over Manchuria and the railways. Of course in this narration, the U. S. is the kindly foreign friend. Following his detailed backdrop of pure-1917 imperialist penetration, Cheng arrives at the Bolshevik revolution vizaviz China. One might think that the October Revolution itself was a topic of some importance to a consideration of *A History of Sino-Russian Relations*, however he gives it little attention.

CHENG VIEWS THE CHINESE Communist Party as simply the mechanism of Russian subversion in China; and his lengthy discussion of the Kuomintang, the formation and role of the Communist Party and the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 is utilized to prove his point. The revolution for Cheng was simply a patriotic one. The question of land reform, social revolution, the rights of workers are not dealt with. He portrays the Kuomintang as a vibrant, anti-warlord, anti-imperialist group devoted to Sun Yat-Sen's famous Three People's Principles (interestingly Cheng never mentions what they were.)

Cheng accurately describes why the Kuomintang accepted the Chinese C.P. into its ranks and turned toward Russia; (1) because of the Versailles Treaty, (2) because of Russian guns and aid, (3) because of the need for organizational help, (4) because of

the impact of the Russian Revolution on all Asia. He further states that the Communists immediately began to subvert the Kuomintang and attempt to seize control of this institution which had raised them from nothing and given them a place in a mass movement. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Kuomintang had been a small group of intellectuals and bourgeois who more or less based their aspirations on the strength of warlords aligned to it. The Communists and the Russian "advisor" Borodin showed Dr. Sun the usefulness of the mass movement; the possibilities that could be obtained with the support of the workers and peasants. Borodin held the Communists in check to prevent precipitous or divisive action within the Kuomintang. In fact, the C.P.'ers participated in the raising up of the mass movement and then the curbing of it so as not to offend the bourgeoisie. Consequently, the revolution, the mass movement, and the Communists were drowned in blood by Chiang Kai-Shek. This, Cheng views as a positive accomplishment.

After the revolution was smashed, Stalin finally ordered the Chinese C.P. to insurrection, but at that point it proved disastrous. The remnants of the C.P. and its following became guerillas and wandered through China setting up Soviet Republics which were soon smashed. Finally, after the famous Long March they lodged themselves in northern China to reappear forcefully, years later, during the Sino-Japanese war.

One thing is apparent in the story of the Chinese C.P. It represented indigenous growth in Chinese society itself as well as a Russian instrument. For better or worse it was the only group with a real appeal to the workers and peasants during the 1925-7 revolution and in the following diffi-

cult period. Even as a Stalinized party it survived and even expanded. No group without roots in the society, without representing at least some of the aspirations and needs of the people could have done so. A simple Russian extrusion certainly would have folded. In general, the C.P. though isolated from it, followed the Moscow line in the period leading up to and including the War. Within that context, though Mao Tse-tung put forward serious ideological differences with the Russian ideology: instead of basing themselves on workers the Chinese CP found roots in the peasantry and, secondly, Mao formulated basic differences on the nature of the future state.

The seizure of Manchuria by the Japanese brought into being a series of different attitudes on the part of Russia, including at one point, the recognition of and a treaty with the Manchukuo puppet state. As part of the popular front line the Chinese C.P. entered into an alliance with Chiang against the Japanese invaders. Chiang had been primarily concentrating on fighting the Communists and the possibility of social reforms, and consequently taking only hesitant actions against the Japanese. The famous "Sian Incident" as well as pressure from large sections of the Chinese people forced him to make a new turn. But he retreated constantly before the Japanese and tied up huge armies blockading his "allies in the north."

Cheng tries to place blame for the ineffectiveness of the Chiang-C.P. alliance upon the shoulders of the Stalinists. However, beginning with the Nationalist attack on the Stalinist 4th Army, the Kuomintang was clearly the more disruptive. A major portion of the difficulty was due to the dynamism of Mao's legions and the corrupt,

demoralized and extortionist character of the Central Government and its troops. The Stalinists were able to maintain popular support in the areas they controlled by dispensing reforms, manipulating the various strata of the peasant populace, establishing peasant armies and organizations with an illusory semblance of democracy. Consequently their areas of influence widened and they were able to generate large scale guerilla activity behind the Japanese lines. In contradistinction to this, the Nationalist government was unable to organize the areas under its control. They imposed unfair taxation, extorted the local populations, repressed the "uncontrolled" popular movements.

It is interesting to note that Cheng rarely refers to the question of corruption and when he does it is a passing statement about war and the moral climate it engenders.

Despite America's attempts to mediate between the Mao forces and the Central Government in order to create a coalition regime, the hostilities broke out afresh. At the start of the conflict the Kuomintang won some victories, but quickly the picture reversed itself and the more poorly equipped Maoist armies completely vanquished the Nationalist forces. Cheng feebly ascribes this to logistical questions plus demoralization of Chiang's troops due to being away from home for so long. The clear facts in the situations were that the C.P. legions were a dynamic new force capable of appealing to the Chinese masses because of its anti-capitalism, its land reforms, its pretension of democracy, and its concern with village problems. This program masked the emergence of a new totalitarian class force which never intended to give free reins to the people.

The Kuomintang armies fell apart

due to the absence of any popular support, because of their inability to accede to any popular needs, their looting and their corruption. Nationalist troops, in fact whole armies, deserted or capitulated, leaving huge amounts of American arms for the Stalinists. Russian military aid to the Chinese Stalinists was negligible and the reason for the victory of the revolution was in large part indigenous to China—the inability of capitalism to organize Chinese society—and the absence of a socialist alternative.

Cheng ends his book with a "description" of Formosa as it now is and a statement that the Kuomintang will once again rule China. It is a hope as empty as it is pious. The Maoist regime will be overthrown by the body of Chinese people, but they will never tolerate a return of the corrupt Kuomintang.

SY LANDY

A Moral Breakthrough

THE NAKED GOD by Howard Fast, 197 pp., Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1957.

On June 12, 1956, Howard Fast wrote his last article for the *Daily Worker*. Writing about the Khrushchev report, Fast said: "It is a strange and awful document, perhaps without parallel in history; and one must face the fact that it itemizes a record of barbarism and paranoiac bloodlust that will be a lasting and shameful memory to civilized man." With those words, Howard Fast ended a chapter of his life begun thirteen years earlier when he joined the Communist Party. In *The Naked God*, written over a year later, he has attempted an examination of his own political metamor-

phosis and has succeeded in providing a valuable addition to the literature describing the Communist Party, its leadership and membership, its rites and rituals, its nightmarish atmosphere.

Although Howard Fast joined the Communist Party in 1943, he had committed himself to its ideology during the Thirties; a commitment broken only for the period of the Stalin-Hitler Pact and reaffirmed by actual membership when he "came to accept the proposition that the truest and most consistent fighters in this anti-Fascist struggle were the Communists." Even as he joined, Fast was aware of the many other writers before him who had similarly committed themselves only to leave the Communist Party in bitterness and disillusionment. Their experience failed to act as a deterrent.

Of his years in the party, Fast has much to say. He painstakingly points to what he considers the difference between the sincerity and dedication of the rank-and-file as opposed to the opportunism and omniscience of the leadership. His composite portrait of a leader of the party, spiked with anecdotal illustrations, is properly devastating, as witness his own experience after a talk with one of the leaders of the Indian Communist Party who asked that the conversation be reported to Eugene Dennis. On his return to this country, Fast made several attempts to see Dennis and was unceremoniously put off. Finally, after a lengthy wait he managed to obtain an audience. "I was led to the large, impressive office, where Dennis sat in his lonely lordship, and when I entered the room, I was told, with a cold nod, to say whatever I had to say. It took me some ten minutes to say it. I finished. 'Very well. You may go,' Dennis said." Not even the warden of the Federal prison where he served a sentence

as a political prisoner years later, Fast remarks ironically, treated him or anyone else with such inhuman disdain and contempt.

But the power to rationalize is almost infinite. "They are not the Party," Fast and others like him were to say for many years. Even now, Fast writes with an emotion bordering on reverence for the average member with whose courage and idealism he identifies. Yet he knows that the leadership was the Party, that the members were and remain largely disfranchised while the colorless men on top obeyed the Kremlin decisions necessitating tortuous twists and turns of political line, resulting in total commitment and utter subservience to Moscow.

It is in his attempt to answer the question about the length of time he took to discover the truth about the Communist Party that Fast flounders. At one point, in discussing his near expulsion on twelve different occasions, Fast says:

I can say, looking back now, that I think I did right through those years in refusing to allow myself to be expelled from the Party. If I had allowed it to come to that, as so many others did, I would have lost all power to influence the hundreds of thousands the world over who today see themselves in much the same position as myself.

While it is true that Howard Fast enjoyed enormous prestige and popularity in Communist circles and that his testimony is valuable, it is extremely dubious that as a result of successfully retaining his party membership, he is now in a better position to influence the hundreds of thousands throughout the world who remain loyal to the Communist Party. Were that true, think of the many, including Fast, who should have been similarly influenced by the appearance of essays on precisely this subject by such eminent writers as Andre Gide, Arthur

Koestler, Richard Wright, Ignazio Silone, Stephen Spender and Louis Fischer, none of them even mentioned by the author, who described their painful break with Stalinism. Fast's is the Naked God while theirs was the God That Failed. They may have influenced some, but obviously they failed to move Howard Fast, a fellow writer.

Much nearer the truth is a discussion of the reality of expulsion from the party; the fear of being cast out, abused and alone. It is this fear combined with the tremendous desire to cling to illusions about Russia—which is, after all, not an abstraction but a great world power with which to identify and absorb prestige and authority—that leads to the special type of selective ignorance displayed by so many members and followers of the Communist Party. Fast is candid about having for years heard charges against the Russian regime, talk of slave labor, anti-Semitism, suppression of liberty, torture and utter bestiality. These charges he refused to believe. When a comrade of his reported some impressions after a visit to Russia, including a conversation with a Polish Communist high up in government echelons who had spoken of fifteen million people having felt the direct terror in prison and five million of them who had died, Fast refused to believe. His friend, to this day a member of the party, replied sadly: "I also refuse to believe it. I cannot believe it. Only—I know it is true."

The possibility for talking about such matters, even listening, was provided by the Khrushchev report which gave these "slanders" the status of truth. Fast does not spare himself when he writes: ". . . but to man's ancient dream of freedom and equality I owed a great deal, and this I betrayed out of an ignorance almost as awful

as the truth." It is the awful ignorance, the self-imposed censorship, the refusal to believe even while believing which provide the basis for continued loyalty and devotion to the Naked God.

Fast suffered not only as a member and spokesman for the Communist Party but especially as a writer. The party leadership might not have had the wit or imagination necessary to provide its writer members with plot and story line, but they were all expert in the field of literary criticism. They pounced on each new literary creation, eager to go over it word by word in their hunt for heresy. The twelve near expulsions Fast mentions were all based on material found in his books—the use of the word "nigger," depicting a worker drunk, "Jewish bourgeois nationalism." In the CP, Fast writes, ". . . all nationalism can be both admirable and a progressive stage in the development of a people except Jewish nationalism. Jewish nationalism is anti-Party, anti-Soviet, anti-progressive. Irish nationalists are heroes, but Jewish nationalists are the 'running dogs of imperialism.'"

If Fast is now an outcast, he makes it clear that his experience in the Communist Party did not leave him permanently debilitated. Disillusioned with Stalinism, he has not given up the dreams, hopes and ideals of his youth. He continues to believe in the validity of the socialist ideal and has come to the welcome realization that the Communist Party and Stalinist ideology are its deadly enemy.

PHYLLIS HOFFMAN

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A Study of Russian Radical Thought

STUDIES IN REBELLION, by E. Lampert, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1957, \$6.00.

Studies in Rebellion is a study of 19th century Russian radical thought; or more precisely, of three of its leading representatives — Belinsky, Bakunin, and Herzen.

The author, E. Lampert, a colleague of Isaiah Berlin, approaches his subject with sophistication, although somewhat pedantically. *Studies in Rebellion* is not the usual Ph.D. thesis, the simple compilation of quotations, abstract and dull, never understanding the first thing about radicals or their thoughts. Rather, this author shows his awareness of the relationship between the radical's ideas and the society in which he lives; Lampert understands and sympathizes with the radical driven by inhuman conditions. It is the mark of a first-rate study.

The sympathy and understanding is most important in a subject so remote from the modern scene as those mid-nineteenth century Russians. Their conflicts are alien to our age—even while all three touched upon the most fundamental philosophic and political problems, such as the nature of man, freedom, society and the state.

Yet Lampert's concern is not only to bring us the background of 20th century radicalism (particularly Russian radicalism), but to show us the influences upon the present and, above all, the importance of these older radicals' thought for today's world and its problems.

Let us begin with the influences upon the 20th century. Lampert believes there is a direct continuity:

Their fierce revolutionary element was ordained as an investment into the process of regenerating their country's spiritual resources . . . it was increasingly and persistently incorporated into political action. The sin was not, of course, in politics itself, but in a surrender to the vampiric quality of politics. . . . The fate of the Russian intelligentsia was thus finally played out in the figure of Lenin, the supreme example of the *zoon politikon*, whose human image was more closely approximated to his superhuman political task than that of any other man in history. . . .

Lampert seems to draw the same causal relationship as Plekhanov (who wrote that "if speculations are in order, then we shall take the liberty to speculate that Belinsky would have become ultimately a zealous partisan of dialectical materialism. . . . Belinsky was precisely our Moses") and Lenin himself (who maintained that Herzen had broken "from the illusions of 'super-class' bourgeois ideology" and had come over to the side of "the stern, inflexible, invincible class-war of the proletariat"). The only difference between Lampert and the Russian Marxists is the obvious value judgment, upon which we will comment later.

Here, I feel, lies a simplification. That, in certain periods of their lives, one can find cause for calling Belinsky or Herzen the predecessors of Russian Marxism (or in Lampert's peculiar expression, "vampiric politics") is unquestionable; however, to simply leave it at that overstates and distorts the relationship.

The problem arises because of the often contradictory nature—at different periods and even in the same period of thought—of these early radicals' ideas. But in the main, I would argue that Belinsky, Bakunin, and Herzen generally represent a different current of radical thought, one whose continuity is broken by 1870, certainly by 1890, only to be resumed in our

own time by the French existentialists.

On the philosophic level, the main argument for continuity (the best expression of which is to be found in Plekhanov's "Belinsky and Rational Reality") is that in breaking from Hegelianism, they (Belinsky in particular) were merely repudiating the later, conservative Hegel, the Hegel of the *Philosophy of Right* where necessity has become equated with the existing order of things. They were *not* denying—in fact were emphatically reaffirming—the essence of revolutionary Hegelianism, the critical dialectic, where the existing forms are undermined by the contradictions within those forms, where reality and necessity stand "higher than mere existence." Thus their revolt against Hegel in the name of all the suffering individuals was really only a revolt against a Hegel who had compromised his Hegelianism with the *status quo*.

This would be a completely irrefutable argument . . . except that in rejecting the conservative Hegel, the three Russians went further—even if in a confused and contradictory way. They tended to throw out determinism altogether.

Lampert fully documents this thesis. On Belinsky: "He confronted it (the objective, "inhuman and faceless world"—M.S.) . . . with man in the 'mysteriousness' and 'immediate absoluteness' of his personal character."

Even more startling is Herzen: "Every domain . . . leads continuously to a painful realization that there is something elusive, irrational in Nature . . . and this brings to man an awareness of Nature's irresistible strangeness." And further, "All that is in time has a latent element of the fortuitous and arbitrary, which overrides necessary development and cannot be deduced from the determinate Nature of things." And finally:

Outside everything is changing, everything is shifting. . . . Twilight approaches, and there is not a loadstar anywhere on the sky. We shall find no haven except in ourselves, in the consciousness of our limitless freedom and our sovereign independence.

On the overtly political level a far stronger case can be made for the continuity between the 19th and 20th century Russian radicals. Clearly these words of Belinsky are evidence of an awakening historical approach:

Russia needs no sermons . . . but an awakening among the people. . . . She presents the ghastly spectacle of a country where human beings are sold without even that justification of which American plantation lords cunningly avail themselves, by maintaining that a Negro is not a man. . . . The most vital national questions in Russia now are the abolition of serfdom, the abolition of corporal punishment, the implementation of at least those laws which already exist.

Or we can point to Herzen's well-known estimate of the Russian *mir* and his lesser known interest in the industrial working class in Western Europe.

However, even this overt political level is not overwhelming in its support for the continuity theory. For one thing, the French existentialist also often arrives at political positions indistinguishable from that of the Marxist, but no one would maintain a contiguous relationship between the two. For another, there is the complication, in the case of Bakunin and Herzen (Belinsky died in 1848, before the question was raised in the Russian circles) of their anarchism. Certainly, anarchism, politically and philosophically, does not conform to the theory.

(As an aside, it should be noted that Lampert is highly sympathetic to Herzen's and Bakunin's anarchistic views. But at no point does he attempt to meet the Marxist criticism, to wit, that

the anarchist has placed the state as the motor force of history. All evil resides in it, not in the class relations that have produced the state. Thus the anarchist is forced to disregard the "cultural lags," all the psychological and social hangovers from the old society that necessitate law and thus a state (even if a "state that is not a state") in the transition from capitalism to the free community. The anarchist is thus forced into an historical, magical, utopian politic—he must call for an impossible leap from capitalism into the classless commonwealth. It must be noted, however, that Lampert does raise one Marxist argument—that the anarchist can make no *theoretical* distinctions between various *kinds* of states, between a democracy and a monarchy. They are simply all evil. But Lampert merely states this argument and goes back to eulogizing the anarchist's quest for freedom.)

Enough has been said on the relationship between the 19th and 20th century radicals to show that if a continuity exists, it is only in the widest of possible senses. It is what binds all radicals together: the horror of man's

suffering, of inhuman societies; *homme revolt*. Thus, in the final analysis, Lampert's study is of interest mostly for the light it throws on the background of 20th century Russian radicalism, for bringing us a well written account of the ideas and "anxious strivings of souls in travail" of Herzen, Bakunin, and Belinsky.

One final note on *Studies in Rebellion*. Lampert has a remarkable facility to combine sophistication with vulgarities. On the one hand he is capable of grasping the subtle essences of Hegelian dialectics; on the other hand, he can crudely call revolution the outbreak of madness (in the midst of a section extolling Bakunin no less!). He shows respect for Marx's genius and crudely passes off his thought as authoritarian — or even suggesting that Marx's later interest in Russia was caused by his increasing popularity among the younger revolutionaries.

But these blemishes occur only rarely in the volume. Overlooking them, one can gain much by reading *Studies in Rebellion*.

MEL STACK

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