

*The American*  
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Power Elites  
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# CLIPPINGS

THE British Tribune, paper of the Bevan wing of the Labor Party, sent Jennie Lee, a member of its editorial board, to Yugoslavia to report her first-hand impressions of the "Djilas affair." Djilas was convicted under article 118, paragraph 1, of the Yugoslav penal code which makes it a criminal offense to publicize views on international affairs in conflict with official government policy. Miss Lee's reaction was a strong one. She wrote: "The Yugoslav leaders say they would like to have more cordial relations with the Labor and Socialist movements of Asia and the West. I can think of no way of damaging good feeling between us more effectively than by the contemptible act of accusing a man in public and then refusing to allow us to hear what he has to say in his defense. This violates every principle of fair play, and shows either an ignorance of Western values or a cynical contempt for our point of view. . . . Marshal Tito can know very little about us if he thinks that by jailing Djilas, who has paid us the compliment of saying that he agrees with much of our democratic Socialist faith, he is doing other than lengthening the distance between Belgrade and the West."

PRESIDENT Walter Reuther is talking about including the shorter-work-week demand in the auto union's next contract negotiations. Some other labor leaders are pouring cold water on the idea. President David J. McDonald of the steel union said at his organization's Philadelphia regional conference that a shorter work week without a cut in weekly earnings would be "too costly" for the employers and could not be "realistically" demanded. He thought that a three-month paid leave of absence for steel workers once every five years might be the answer to the automation problem. John L. Lewis told the miners at his union's recent convention in Cincinnati that he was against the proposition. The January 1 issue of the United Mine Workers Journal approvingly reprints an editorial from the Cleveland Plain Dealer which informed its readers that "Lewis is an unusual labor leader. He can see both sides of a question—the owners' side, as well as that of the miners." Lewis told the convention, "If you want to stop eating so much and loaf more, we can get you the six-hour day."

JOHN and Sylvia Powell are scheduled to go on trial April 15 in the Federal Court at San Francisco under the war-time sedition act. As editors of the China Monthly Review, English-language paper published in Shanghai, they accused the U.S. government of waging aggressive war, stalling the Panmunjom peace talks, and employing germ warfare. The American Civil Liberties Union has charged that the prosecution is unwarranted and represents "a serious threat to fundamental liberties." The ACLU statement went on to say: "It is not charged that there was any effort to interfere with the United Nations operations in Korea by any other means than that

of attempting to influence general public opinion in the United States. Under the circumstances we cannot regard this prosecution as consistent with our constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press."

LODGE 2140 of the International Association of Machinists, recently chartered from a seceding local of the independent United Electrical Workers, is trying to raise funds for its recently deposed leader, John Gojack, who has now been forced to leave the labor movement. Gojack, when he was president of UE District 9, was cited for contempt of Congress when he refused to answer questions before the House Un-American Activities Committee where he invoked the First Amendment. Gojack was convicted and sentenced to nine months in prison. The case is now in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Washington.

THE U.S. Appeals Court in Washington unanimously reversed the conviction of Harvey O'Connor for contempt of Congress on the ground that the Committee's questions were too vague. Harvey O'Connor declared, "I am delighted that it is now possible for an American citizen to have contempt for Joe McCarthy without having to go to jail. . . . I regret that the Appellate Court did not base its decision on the First Amendment, which protects the citizen's freedom of opinion. Nevertheless, the unanimous decision is a decisive thrust at un-American trends of which Joe McCarthy was a leading exponent." Union News, paper of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, ran an editorial, titled, "Thank You, Harvey O'Connor." The edit praised O'Connor for having "the courage to refuse to answer," and said that in the future "bullies like McCarthy will have less power to browbeat people."

THE Guardian, a union paper published in Windsor, Canada, ran an important story about automation which a number of other local union newspapers have reprinted. The article relates that "Holmes Foundry here, once one of the city's biggest employers, has laid off all its plant workers for at least six months—because the year's production has been met in half the time. Holmes turns out engine blocks for Ford of Canada. . . . Back in 1954, Holmes had 476 men on its payroll. Its production per year was less than it is now. Then it began installing automatic machinery. . . . The new Holmes equipment resulted in a) the permanent layoff of about half of the work force, and b) the ability for the remaining half to meet sensational production demands." Len Baker, UAW Local 456 recording secretary, is quoted as saying: "The only limit to automation is man's imagination and the only answer to it is higher wages, shorter work week and lower prices to consumers. Otherwise, we're in the great position of employing too few people for too few days of the year, paying them too little, soaking the customer too much—and then wondering why more and more people can't buy what is now being produced so cheaply."

JOHN Steuben, well known Communist for years, and formerly union organizer in various fields and editor of March Of Labor, has demonstratively broken with the Russian leaders as a result of events in Hungary. The N. Y. Times labor correspondent reports an interview where Steuben told him that "the excesses of Stalinism were not only being continued, but were taking on worse forms and dimensions. He said that any government that decreed death for strikers was morally bankrupt." Steuben went on to urge American Communists to "repudiate everything that smacks of Stalinism. . . . If the Communist Party is to become a force in this country, it will have to declare its independence of the Soviet party and make it clear that it will 'reject and resent' any interference from that source."

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## Dust Bowl of the Fifties

**T**WO decades ago, whirling winds picked the precious topsoil off tens of millions of acres of land in our plains area, and carried it away to waste and oblivion. The famous Dust Bowl of the thirties ruined thousands of farms, impoverished hundreds of thousands of people, and reduced a whole great region of hundreds of thousands of square miles to helpless poverty. At the time, it seemed as though the only redeeming feature of the catastrophe was that it had taught the nation a bitter lesson. Liberals, conservationists, New Dealers, rejoiced that free-wheeling profiteering and governmental irresponsibility would now certainly come to an end so far as soil conservation was concerned. Various federal programs were initiated, and a new day seemed to be coming. But today, unbelievable as it may seem, the Dust Bowl is back bigger than ever. Behind this incredible fact lurks a forceful lesson in free enterprise as she is practiced even after twenty-four years of so-called "welfare statism."

The drought conditions in a ten-state Great Plains area are the worst in our history. Nearly two million acres of land, the Agriculture Department's Soil Conservation Service estimates, were damaged by wind erosion in November alone. More shocking, some 29 million acres are estimated to be dried up and open to the parching winds of late winter and early spring; only a miracle can save this huge area from powdery dust storms only a few months from now. The region has been baked by a dry spell for almost a decade. Extending from mid-Texas to southeastern Wyoming and from central New Mexico across Nebraska and Kansas, it represents a potential Dust Bowl about twice as big as that of the thirties. Already, tens of thou-

sands of square miles are in a disaster condition, with cattle being fed on prickly pear cactus with the spines seared off, and with thousands of farmers near ruin.

**A**LL of this could have been avoided by large-scale, vigorous, and unremitting federal action. In the light of that fact, President Eisenhower's



SINCE 1948: Eisenhower examines dried grass on farm of William Davis (left). Davis told President that his 5,000 acre farm had produced exhibit samples for the 1948 Colorado State Farm Fair, but has failed to produce a crop since.

speech to the conference on the drought problem in Wichita on January 15 hits a new low for McKinleyesque Toryism. The *N. Y. Times* correspondent summarized it uneasily:

*The President congratulated them for a "chins-up" attitude and said "everyone will do his best."*

*But it remained uncertain wheth-*

*er this signaled a reversal in current Administration policy against huge expenditures for more water conservation projects.*

*Everywhere President Eisenhower went he was confronted with pleas for Federal help in building new conservation projects that would trap flood waters in the spring to save them for the hot summer months.*

In Texas, water projects totalling a billion dollars are being proposed. In Oklahoma, Governor Raymond Gary has compiled a list of new reservoirs needed to sustain a normal agriculture in his state. Elsewhere there is also a growing determination, in this region of traditional free-enterprising prejudices and political conservatism, to save the land by appropriate government measures, at whatever cost. But Eisenhower, in his short speech at Wichita, found this the best occasion to deliver one of his fatuous little homilies on states' rights and free enterprise. His entire talk was devoted to "our private privileges and rights under the Constitution of America." "Now," he burred in the inimitable Eisenhower football-coach style, "I practically wanted to get up and start a cheering section of my own when I heard the remarks about the local initiative, responsibility and direction in these programs. I am one who fears control that is located too far from the scene of action. . . ." etc., etc. Who cares if the terrible Dust Bowl returns; we are free, free! It is not likely that this sermon on the virtues of suffering drought, erosion, and impoverishment as "one of the joys of a free economy" will be satisfactory to the farmers of the area.

**T**HE Great Plains story is worth a lot of careful study by the people of this country, whether they are interested in the problems of agriculture directly or not. As a demonstration of the failure of free enterprise, it is unsurpassed; as a test of the adequacy—or rather feebleness—of the trickling welfare statism with which we have thus far starved off social disaster in a dozen different areas of national endeavor, it is equally important. The New Deal may have inaugurated a bit of social responsibility in our eco-



**OCEANS OF SAND:** Texas farm road, covered over by drifting sand and topsoil, shows what uncontrolled drought can do. The area to left of road would normally be knee deep in cotton, that to right would be grassy pasture.

conomic life by giving in to pressing needs which private capital would not and could not answer, but private capital has taken its revenge by keeping those social services teetering always at the borderline of disaster, by keeping them limited, inadequate, and stunted.

Soil conservation has come to the fore only in the last twenty years; prior to that conservation had been thought of mainly in terms of forests, fisheries, minerals, and recreational areas. But the awesome Dust Bowl of the thirties and closer investigations into the problem drove home the fact that there had been a downward trend in land fertility since colonial times. The New Deal inaugurated a good many soil conservation programs, including conservation payments for turning planted areas to grass, educational programs aimed at teaching the farmers how to save and renew fertility, the planting of shelter belts of trees to break wind erosion, and, on a smaller scale, water conservation, utilization, and irrigation projects.

**B**UT the basic needs of water conservation were not met by the program, as we can see clearly today. The New Deal efforts suffered from a serious trouble. While long-range needs for saving our topsoil were given consideration, uppermost in the minds of the planners was the need to make our capitalist agriculture work by restricting output and maintaining prices. Occupied as they were by all kinds of

schemes to cut down acreage, make various farm crops scarcer, and reduce the output of the farms, the Administration policy-makers could not help but think more in terms of taking advantage of the short-range effects of drought than in terms of fighting its long-term hazards. Removing acreage from cultivation in order to "conserve" it came to be just another name for restricting output. The recent authoritative study by the Twentieth Century Fund titled "Can We Solve the Farm Problem?" pointed out: "The dominant influence on the supply situation, so far as wheat and corn were concerned, was the severe drought of 1934. This caused a far more drastic cut in output than anything contemplated by the AAA. If the droughts of 1934 to 1936 had not occurred, agriculture probably would have been plagued by heavy stocks and depressed prices almost all through the decade, unless much more drastic controls on output had been put into effect."

The point here is not to challenge the sincerity and idealism of New Deal planners, many of whom undoubtedly were motivated by a real desire to avert such disasters as the Dust Bowl. The point is that the chief conservation scheme of that day, taking land out of production and paying the farmers for doing it, fitted in with the market need of putting a floor under farm prices. In the end, much of this conservation method came to be really a farm-income device, as Professor Troy J. Cauley notes in

his "Agriculture in an Industrial Economy":

*The blunt truth of the matter is that the Agricultural Adjustment Administration was throughout the pre-World War II period interested essentially in increasing the cash incomes of farmers, and the conservation approach was simply dragged in by the neck, so to speak, after the Supreme Court had declared the 1933 Act unconstitutional. The field-men of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration had been really strict in checking to see that farmers did not exceed their acreage allotments, but their checking on the execution of conservation methods had been, in many cases, largely a formality.*

The consequences furnish a powerful lesson in the fatuity of trying to "plan" only when the planning fits in with the needs of free enterprise. The Dust Bowl was restored, partly by the fallow-lands conservation program and partly by a few fortunate years of plentiful rain. The demand for staple grains soared again, as a result of the war and postwar European dislocation—and, within ten years after the Dust Bowl, the conditions for its repetition were renewed. Big factory farmers and smaller "suitcase" farmers hastily plowed up a vast area, far larger than the old Dust Bowl, and, with water utilization not notably improved over that of the thirties, and with a new periodic drought on its inevitable way, the disaster was re-invited on a much bigger scale.

"When the Devil is sick, the Devil a Saint is he; but when the Devil is well, the devil a saint is he!" Having given in to temporary soil conservation at a time when it fitted in with crop reduction needs, the demon that lives on in our free enterprise system proved to be a devil of a saint when soil conservation that went against the profit motive was needed on a large scale. Not that it's the farmer's fault; as an individual he must operate within the system. Let all those who have found in capitalism's recent history a basic change in attitude towards the social weal take heed of this advance notice, in one of capitalism's sectors where

the reform movement was most active, of how little the change has been.

**C**ONSERVATION of our soil requires a very big push, financially very costly, far sighted from a planning point of view, and geographically widespread, to effect a real change in the situation. A shrewd and forceful article written for this magazine in June 1955 by the old socialist educator Arthur Wallace Calhoun from Sterling, Kansas, foresaw the debacle:

*Twenty years ago a prosperous Kansas farmer was asked when he and his neighbors would have to start fertilizing. He said, "We ought to be fertilizing now." A dozen years later he was asked whether he had begun to fertilize, and he said, "No." His son had left to become an engineer, and there was no reason for the old man to bother about the future of the farm. Recently, a young farmer remarked: "My grandfather robbed the soil; my father robbed it; and I'll rob it." So much for free enterprise in its most notable field. There are good farmers, but they are not numerous enough to save the day. Soil conservation on the farm might make huge dams unnecessary by keeping the water where it falls, but it will not actually come fast enough to cope with the crisis. Last year a large local flour mill closed because the quality of the local wheat will no longer meet the demands of the milling industry. . . .*

*The point is that it is too late for individual enterprise to save the day on the High Plains. Even if individual effort were capable of saving the soil, such effort cannot be enlisted fast enough, and unless the region is to be returned to the buffalo, there will have to be a mandatory program directed by government.*

That is what emerges from the whole story. The farmer will not make the change on an individualistic basis, partly because it means a costly effort that will not bear fruit for many years to come, and partly because he cannot, as the kind of projects needed for a permanent solution are vast regional enterprises suitable only for government construction.

**L**OOK at the scope of the area involved in our Dust Bowl region. If one were to set the point of a compass in the Oklahoma panhandle and inscribe a circle with a radius of 400 miles, most of the circumscribed area, involving ten states and more than half a million square miles, would be drought area. To prepare a permanent solution, dozens of rivers draining from as far north as Wyoming down into the gulfs of Mexico and California would have to be harnessed, a huge program initiated of tapping the subterranean tablelands for water, and millions of acres taken out of cultivation and put to grass. Yet even the smallest of these projects, the grassland idea, horrifies our Washington free-enterprisers. Administration land and water specialists have suggested legislation restricting the use of land. A high Administration official close to the President called the plan "a sort of police action but not without merit." "He noted however," the *N. Y. Times* reports, "that it was morally repulsive as well as 'politically unacceptable.'"

Nor is this all. The present Administration plan calls for the returning

of still more lands—the so-called "land utilization" areas bought up as a conservation measure during the thirties—to private ownership. Millions of acres would be plowed up anew under this scheme, a proposition which causes the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* to cry editorially: "In the midst of drought, and with dust storms growing worse by the year, the Administration is planning to push again for release of several millions of acres of Great Plains land to private ownership. This is very much as if, in the midst of a conflagration, a proposal were put forward to set fire to a few more blocks."

What needs to be done is quite clear. That it will most likely never be done adequately by capitalism is also quite clear. The large-scale solution of general community needs calls urgently—even in the midst of this unparalleled prosperity which has satisfied a lot of people that capitalism is all right—for measures which socialism alone will be able to give America. It has to become part of the program of a real peoples' movement to create a real welfare state.

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## What Price Brinkmanship?

**I**N his recent book, "The Power Elite," C. Wright Mills, one of America's leading sociologists, calls attention to the fact that the U.S. Congress is no longer at the top rung of political power, that top level decisions are now in the hands of corporate and military cliques working through the executive machinery of government. This shift of power was dramatized two years ago when Congress abjectly surrendered its constitutional prerogatives and voted Eisenhower a blank check to wage war in the Far East. It is now being repeated with the Administration demand upon Congress to give the President another blank check to wage war in the Middle East.

Even before the proposal was formally offered to Congress, the "Dulles Doctrine" was splashed across the nation's newspapers and broadcast over the air waves, and the public fever was built up that unless these dicta-

torial powers were handed over to the Executive, dire results were sure to follow. By the time Congress opened its sessions, and the public hearing began, the whole proposition was, for all practical purposes, signed, sealed and delivered. At most, Congress may modify it with a secondary amendment or two.

The arrogant demand to confer the supreme power of sovereignty—the power to declare war—upon one man, has not ruffled our Democratic opposition unduly. Its leaders are taking it quite calmly. The Southern Bourbons who make up the Congressional leadership are repeating their customary performance as the King's loyal opposition. Former Democratic President Truman is all for it, except he thinks Eisenhower ought to take an even more bellicose course. They are not, with a few praiseworthy exceptions, excited about preserving the Constitution or opposing imperialism and war. On

matters that count most, the Democrats "ain't home" as an opposition. That is how our much-vaunted democracy is practiced in the very citadel of the "free world."

**T**HE Dulles Doctrine is another foundation stone in the far-flung structure that America's rulers are impelled to build to attain the imperialist overlordship of the globe. As the strength of the old European empires ebbs and dies away, the United States is driven for strategic reasons to rush in and attempt to fill the so-called vacuum, and is impelled by its expansionist monopolies to try to exploit the riches of the colonies on their behalf. For a decade now French and British power has been on the wane in the Near East. The old divide-and-rule principle has been breaking itself against the wall of insurgent nationalism. The Anglo-French attempt to halt or slow down the disintegrating process by war ended in disaster (see *American Socialist*, December 1956), and given the circumstances of international politics, it became a foregone conclusion that the United States would try to take over.

Those who saw a new dawn for the UN because an international police force entered Egypt, or who thought that our State Department was at long last breaking with colonialism, because the U.S. government momentarily joined forces with Soviet Russia to get British and French troops out of Egypt, grasped at tactical links of the chain, but failed to comprehend the essentials of America's new policy or the shape-up of the current line-ups. The changing State Department policy was clearly foreshadowed on October 2 when Dulles announced to a crowded press conference that this country would have to play a "somewhat independent role" in the Near East and disassociate itself from the "so-called colonial powers." From this point on, Dulles has carried through with the grim determination for which he is noted, and with more or less the artistry which he would like to believe he has mastered, right up to the present Doctrine, which former State Secretary Acheson correctly dubbed a new "brink."

The policy has been unrolled on the working principle of taking care of one

thing at a time. When Britain and France started war on Egypt, Eisenhower immediately went on the air to announce that the United States did not approve and was not involved. With that began the weeks of methodical, murderous pressure moves, utilizing the mechanism of the UN, to push through a cease fire (imposed by Russia's near-ultimatum), and then secure the withdrawal of British, French and Israeli troops. Employing its allies' need for oil and dollars as a battering ram, the United States drove through this part of its policy with single-minded purposefulness despite the anguished shrieks of its chief NATO allies, the protests of Zionists, and the trepidations of some cold-war elements at home who were frightened of the episodic alliance with Soviet Russia in the UN voting, and of the threat that Soviet volunteers were about to move into the conflict. The State Department continued hewing to its line of dramatic disengagement from the Anglo-French who could no longer control the situation, and of building up Arab friendship for the U.S. to get into proper position for the introduction of the next phase of its policy.

**B**Y the end of December, as the last of British and French troops ignominiously departed and most of Israeli forces had withdrawn, as work got started to clear the canal, and as America was basking in its new-found standing as self-proclaimed protector of small nations and foe of all aggression, Dulles called in a select group of Washington correspondents and leaked the outlines of the new scheme which was to set the stage for America's proposed emergence as the Near East's new overlord.

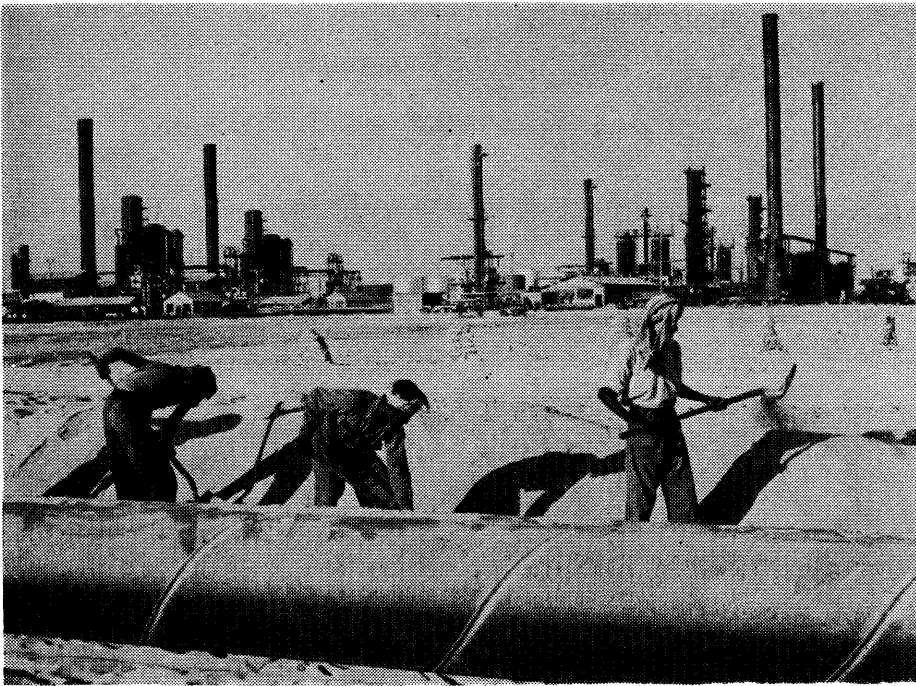
Although its purpose is brutally clear, the policy's details have been left purposely vague, ostensibly to keep the Russians guessing, but actually to give the Administration *carte blanche* for its next round of maneuvers, and for any adventures it may see fit to undertake. Under the new Doctrine, the President will have the power to send U.S. troops into certain unspecified foreign countries "to protect the territorial integrity and political independence" of these nations from Communist aggression. The President also

wants \$400 million to use in the next two years at his own discretion over and above the regular foreign-aid programs.

Whom are Dulles and Eisenhower proposing to protect? Ostensibly, only such countries as are menaced by "Communist aggression" and who ask for U.S. "protection." Actually, as everyone in Congress and the world's chancelleries realizes, this is the unilateral proclamation of the American imperialist colossus that it is moving into the area, that it will subsidize and set up an armed alliance of those nations that knuckle under, and will isolate, deprive of funds and punish those that do not; that it will not tolerate any nation doing business or maintaining friendly relations with Russia, and those that persist may find themselves in military conflict with their neighbors, and may even face invasion by U.S. troops. Such is the actual "protection" we are offering the Arab peoples and governments.

**W**HO is to get the money that Eisenhower wants for his private purse, and how is it going to be used? Dulles put it on the line in his testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "We do not want to give help except to a country that we believe is dedicated to maintaining its own independence, and by that we mean fighting communism. . . . They have to be dedicated to fighting international communism before we give them help."

What countries are included in the Middle East? Dulles gave the term a new flexible definition when he informed the Congressional Committee that the State Department regarded it as lying between and including Libya on the west, Pakistan on the east, Turkey on the north, and the Arabian Peninsula to the south. The Arabian Peninsula, Mr. Dulles added, should include Ethiopia and the Sudan. It is wise to check this statement against a map so that we fully absorb the extended boundaries of the enlarged Middle East of the Dulles Doctrine. That we have in Dulles a statesman with a commanding vision compared to whom Cecil Rhodes and Warren Hastings appear as pigmies he made even clearer before the Senate Foreign Relations



OIL FOR THE LAMPS OF WALL STREET is the Middle East prize. Labor gang shown here digs in sand near Ras Tanura refinery, Saudi Arabia.

Committee. Here, he unburdened himself of this pregnant thought: "Gradually, one part of the world after another is being brought into it [the U.S. system of alliances] and perhaps we may end up with a, what you might call, universal doctrine reflected by multilateral treaties or multilateral authority from the Congress."

Dulles called for quick action; he is reported to have voiced "definite belief" that the Middle East would be "lost" to the Communists, otherwise. Where is the imminent danger? Are Russian troops being massed to march into the area? No one claims that. Has Russia threatened any Arab country? No one maintains that, either. So, where is the emergency? The emergency is in Washington. Dulles' "crash" program aims to chloroform the American people into acceptance of another round of imperialist adventures; to intimidate the Russians with the threat of war if they don't stop dealing with the Arab countries; to frighten the Arab rulers into thinking that if they continue sliding between the major world blocs, they will be undermined and deposed and their countries are liable to be laid waste; finally, to effect a new *modus vivendi* with these rulers that will convert their countries into new-style colonies on the order

of the Philippines, and as in the latter instance, stamp out all peoples' movements seeking genuine liberation.

That is the program. Can Eisenhower-Dulles put it across, or more correctly, get away with it? It is necessary to weigh three component elements—Russia, the Arab rulers, the Arab peoples—in order to essay any answer. We can not, for the present, include in the list the American people, as for the time being the latter are too apathetic and bewildered to give any effective opposition to the designs of their decision-makers.

**R**USSIA is hurt by the shambles in Hungary, the continuing uncertainties in Poland—and is generally preoccupied with difficulties within its own bloc. Its available funds for external loans and grants, especially now, do not begin to compare with those at the disposal of the United States. Nevertheless, we can reject any notion that Russia will be intimidated by the Dulles Doctrine, and on its part, proceed to cut off relations with the Arab world. The January 18 Russo-Chinese declaration promising "necessary support" to the Arab nations to ward off "interference" in their affairs from the West can be accepted at face value.

The Arab rulers—a motley collection of greedy feudal autocrats and military dictators—are in a tight spot. Most of them want to be independent and continue the old policy of playing off the powers. Even though they may be frightened of U.S. threats, and would like to be beneficiaries of U.S. handouts and loans, they nevertheless must keep their leadership of—or at the very least, give lip-service to—the fiery nationalist movements, else they are in danger of getting destroyed at the hands of their own people. Even those who are inclined, or scared enough, will find it difficult to bow the knee to Washington. Nasser, the leading figure of the area, is embarked on a struggle for independence and neutrality and wields enormous influence throughout the Arab world.

As for the Arab peoples, they may be too backward and disorganized for a clear-cut drive to achieve their full aspirations, national and social, but they have proven strong enough and militant enough to pull down governments time and again which succumbed to the blandishments of the imperialists.

Dulles' grand design will therefore run into a buzz-saw of complications and opposition right at the start. Maybe a few of the princelings will be bribed into subservience and find a temporary haven in Washington's embrace. But even if this occurs, it will most likely add up to Washington creating a slightly enlarged Baghdad Pact under its suzerainty. (The Pact presently includes Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and Britain.) In the end, Dulles may have to collaborate again with Britain in order to shore up Arab forces of reaction against the rising tide of nationalism.

The area as a whole will not be pacified, and above all, Egypt is not prepared to capitulate, and her reactionaries are not strong enough to stage a counter-revolution à la Iran. The Dulles Doctrine may rate a few notches higher than SEATO in Southeast Asia, but it will fall far, far short of the claims and hopes of its authors. Rather than imposing a *Pax Americana* upon the troubled area, Dulles has opened up a new Pandora's box of tensions, intrigues, convulsions and mass struggles. We are all due to pay a high price for Dulles' "brinkmanship."



**POLICE GUARD:** Cops stand by as white and Negro children arrive at school in Hereford, Md., after bus was stopped by racists.

The labor movement's growth from small beginnings to a mighty flood is seen as a parallel to how the Negro movement of the South is growing today. Living history for Negro History Week.

# Labor and the Southern Negro

by Carl Braden

AS AN observer and participant in both the labor upsurge of the 1930's and the Negro liberation movement of the 1950's, I am struck by the similarity of the courses taken by these struggles. Analysis and comparison of these movements point to still greater victories in the South—and much sooner than most people expect. Also foreshadowed is the inevitable merging of these two movements.

Right now, the integration fight is in a period of consolidation after a series of important gains. This does not mean that the struggle has halted; it is just not as intense as in the fall of 1956. Neither does it mean that the segregationists are idle; they are preparing further assaults on the people's organizations; they also hope to slow down integration through legislative action at the state level.

Just as the organization of the industrial workers into the CIO was sparked by the sit-down strikes, so the integration movement has been given inspiration by the bus boycotts. Both types of struggle captured the imagination and sympathy of a decisive sector of the American people. Both grew out of long-standing needs of the participants, and both came after many other efforts had failed. In the final analysis, both were successful because the people concerned finally took matters into their own hands instead of continuing to trust their welfare to those who professed to be their friends.



These same factors shaped the nature of the struggles. The people involved created their own forms of action. In each case they chose a form of passive resistance—economic in nature. The mass production workers sat down and refused to be moved; the bus boycotters walked and refused to sit down.

Organization of the CIO came during a period in which American capitalism was in danger of collapse because of its inability to provide jobs for the population (among other things). The ruling class was divided over whether to use the whip to keep the people in line. Those who preferred the use of the carrot won out, fortunately for all of them. The integration struggle comes during a period in which American capitalism is in grave danger of losing its position in the world because of its denial of democracy to the Negro people. There is a division between capitalists who have a vested interest in "keeping the Negro in his place" and those who have no special desire to deprive Negroes of their civil rights. So far, the latter group is in the ascendancy.

**I**n neither the 1930's nor the 1950's has the ruling class acted out of the goodness of its heart. The big industrialists fought with every means at their disposal to block and blunt organization of the industrial workers. They were finally overwhelmed because the American people

supported these workers in their fight for justice. So today, the ruling class grudgingly doles out concessions to the Negro but seeks to channel the struggle so as to keep control of the movement. Red-baiting and curbs on civil liberties are used to keep the Negroes divided from their potential allies among the whites. However, as the integration movement gains strength, this division will tend to disappear.

Both of the struggles under consideration began after the law was aligned on the side of the oppressed people. And of course the law swung in this direction because of tremendous pressure from the oppressed group and its allies.

You will recall that the labor upsurge followed adoption of Section 7A of the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933. This was soon knocked out by the Supreme Court, but was restored by passage of the Wagner Act in July, 1935. In both instances, the workers were guaranteed the right to organize without interference from employers. The Supreme Court continued to kill legislation beneficial to the workers and farmers, who were demanding and getting legislation to save them from ruin. The workers and farmers showed where they stood by re-electing Franklin D. Roosevelt by a record majority in 1936.

Two things then happened simultaneously. First, the industrial workers adopted the sit-down strike as a tactic in a big way. They brought General Motors and other giants to their knees with this device. Big Steel then signed a contract with the CIO. Then, Roosevelt, confident of the support of the working class, threatened to unpack the reactionary Supreme Court by adding some liberals to its ranks. In April, 1937, the Wagner Act was upheld and other favorable decisions followed. Thus, by the spring of 1937, the industrial workers had reached a plateau similar to that now occupied by the freedom fighters in the South. They still had a long way to go, but they were definitely on the way and they were confident they would get there.

Let's trace how the fighters for integration reached a similar point in history. In May, 1954, the long fight for civil rights resulted in the Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation. This was followed by the court's directive of May, 1955, defining how integration should be carried out in the schools. Some people thought that everything would now change for the better without much effort, but the Negro people of the South did not share this illusion. They had lived too long under the Bourbons to expect any gains without a battle. Some of their white friends also recalled Frederick Douglass's warning that without struggle there is no progress.

This time Congress and not the Supreme Court was the center of opposition to advance. Reactionary representatives and senators from the South worked with local politicians back home to thwart the intent of the Supreme Court and Negro aspirations. NAACP leaders and Negro ministers began to move more rapidly to secure the rights of their people. Whites here and there began to speak out more forcefully against injustices to Negroes. Suddenly the boycott of the busses began in Montgomery, Alabama,

### About the Author

**F**OR Negro History Week this year, we present this interesting analysis of a parallel between the Negro movement in the South today with the wave of labor organization that swept the country in the thirties. "It seemed to me," Mr. Braden writes us, "as I traveled over the country in recent years that many of your readers were trade-unionists. I have therefore pitched this story at them. It will also provide insight for other readers, I hope, but it is the labor men who must be reached on this question."



CARL BRADEN

Carl Braden was a reporter, feature writer, city editor and labor specialist on a number of papers in Kentucky and Ohio from 1930 to 1954. He aided in organization of various units of the American Newspaper Guild in its formative years, and also worked for a number of unions as public-relations man. In 1954, while serving as a sub-editor on the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, he was sentenced to serve 15 years in prison on a "sedition" charge. His crime: Helping a Negro family to buy a house in a segregated neighborhood, a house which was dynamited by racists who were never brought to justice although many significant clues to their identity exist. Braden spent two years touring the country on the situation in the South and on his own case. His conviction was finally reversed, but not until he had already spent eight months in prison.

At present, Mr. Braden is doing free-lance writing, and, he adds, "planning to stay in the South and fight."

which soon startled the reactionaries and stirred the world, much as the early sit-downs had done.

**S**POKESMEN for the reactionaries sneered that Negroes didn't have the heart or the brains to carry their boycott to a successful conclusion. It was the same thing they had said about the industrial workers in the early days of CIO. And now, as then, the reactionaries resorted to court action, beatings, bombings, and other forms of terror to try to break the spirit and the cohesion of the struggling people and their allies. It didn't work. Instead, like the sit-down strike, the boycott spread. One began in Tallahassee, Florida, and others were threatened. Meantime, Negroes asserted their right to go to schools of their choice. They were admitted to schools in almost 700 Southern districts without incident, but were met by violence in other places.

In the midst of this came the election of November, 1956. Negro voters in the North and South swung to Eisenhower. Of course, a lot of other voters did too, but the trend was more pronounced among Negroes. They were definitely credited with winning Tennessee and Louisiana for Eisenhower and with insuring the election of one of the two Republican senators elected in Kentucky. Negro voters swelled Republican victory margins in Virginia, Florida, and Texas. Montgomery, where the bus boycott was then 11 months old, went Republican for the first time in history—thanks to the Negro voters. Similarly startling results were recorded in other cities.

Just as in the days of Roosevelt, reactions were not long in coming. On November 12, the Supreme Court outlawed segregation on busses and refused on December 17 to review the ruling. The busses were desegregated December 21. Public transportation in two dozen other Southern cities was quietly integrated.

On November 20, a judge at Louisville threw out a dozen criminal charges against seven white persons who had supported the right of a Negro family to live in a previously segregated neighborhood. Two years before, this same judge had allowed the prosecutor great leeway in obtaining my conviction and sentence to prison on a sedition charge arising out of the same case.

A dramatic demonstration of the election results took place in Clinton, Tennessee. There, the Negro people and their white friends had been struggling for three months to keep Negro students in the formerly segregated high school. On December 4, segregationists assaulted the Rev. Paul Turner for escorting Negro pupils to school after they had stayed home for several days as a result of abuse by a minority of white students. The Board of Education ordered the school closed. That same day, the segregationists took a beating at the polls in Clinton. Their candidate was defeated 4 to 1 in the mayor's election. Within two days, U.S. marshals arrested 18 segregationists who had violated an injunction against interfering with attendance of Negroes at Clinton High School. Supporters of the segregationists began to cry that their rights were being violated.

This recalled how spokesmen for the big industrialists cried back in the 1930's about supposed violation of their rights by the National Labor Relations Board. In both



cases, it showed that the exploiters were on the defensive. Their lame propaganda campaign contrasts with the sharp and clear statements of principles and objectives by the foes of segregation.

**T**HERE were counterattacks as the year ended and 1957 began. A U.S. judge in Dallas, Texas, ruled December 18 that the Supreme Court decision against segregation was not based on law, and that Dallas schools need not integrate immediately. Ten days later a majority of a House investigating subcommittee recommended that racial segregation be restored in District of Columbia schools. The four Southern Congressmen said they found "a definite impairment of educational opportunities for members of both white and Negro races as a result of integration."

These court and legislative actions recalled similar tactics used against the CIO in its early days in an effort to discourage the organization of industrial workers. You recall how this movement was described as a menace to American industry, harmful to our institutions, and sure to bring disaster to all of us. Then, as now, the people moved forward in some sectors as they were temporarily pushed back in others. A plant was won here and another lost there, but the movement as a whole went forward relentlessly. That is what is happening in the South today. A mighty tide is in motion and it will not be stopped.

The parallels between the two struggles do not end here. In the 1930's the organization of mass production industries was supported by one part of the labor movement while another section was openly hostile or stood aloof from the struggle. The AFL chieftans held a

special convention at Cincinnati in 1937 to vote a war chest to fight the CIO. This was six months after they expelled the 10 unions that dared to help organize the industrial workers into industrial unions. These graybeards were terrified at the prospect of vast numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled workers having some say about their own destiny. The old heads could not see that greater organization meant more strength for the whole movement.

This seems to be part of the affliction visited upon many Southern trade union leaders today. They find it hard to believe that greater strength will result from unity of white and Negro workers. They are captives of the fears and prejudices of their members, and in some cases of their own backwardness, as well. They are falling right into the trap set for them by the new industrialists moving into the South.

Some trade unionists in the South are working hard to break down the myths that divide the people, but too many are afraid to speak out openly on this question. They fear to offend the prejudices of their more ignorant dues payers. As a result, they hobble along when they could easily run. They will not move faster till the Negro people force them to by establishing their right to be heard through the vast struggles now in progress or in the making. Many of these trade unionists will then rush forward and embrace the Negroes like long-lost brothers. That is what many AFL leaders did after the CIO established itself by mighty struggles.

These comments do not of course apply to Negro trade-unionists, North or South. In the North these men have been able to move their white brethren on civil rights, albeit often with difficulty. This is a legacy from the struggles of the 1930's. The integration struggle is made easier by the fact that the industrial workers were organized without regard to color; also by the very fact that they were organized at all. Similarly, unions outside the South helped make it possible for us to win a victory over state sedition laws in Kentucky, and they are contributing to other battles in the South. However, the fact remains that labor leaders nearest to the source of the segregation poison are the most laggard on this question.

The Negro people are naturally disturbed by this, but they are not going to let it stop them in their drive toward freedom. They say they could do the job better and quicker with the help of the white trade-unionists, but can do it eventually without them.

**E**VEN in a supposedly advanced city like Louisville, white unionists avoid direct contact with movements to improve the status of the Negro people. A committee of Negro ministers called a meeting of Negro, labor, and church leaders to coordinate a drive for an FEPC ordinance. Not one white person showed up, or even deigned to explain his absence by replying to the invitation. The Negro leadership went ahead and formed the committee, confident the whites would be around when the movement gained enough strength. The theme on which these ministers are proceeding is simple: "The interest of the Louisville and Vicinity Ministers and Deacons Meeting is centered in the economic as well as the spiritual problems of the people we serve. We hold that Christianity best expresses

itself in an environment in which a man is enabled to carry over into his everyday relationships the things that he professes and believes." There, in two sentences uttered by a Negro Baptist minister, you have the whole basis of the struggle for decency, dignity, and democracy in the South.

The churches are helping to spearhead the struggle because they are the institutions that most Southern Negroes know and trust. The church is the focal point of their lives. It is at once a social institution and a place of worship. Consequently, it was to the church that they turned when conditions became intolerable in Montgomery and Tallahassee and Birmingham and elsewhere in the South, and it was there that they found the leadership that they needed.

The leaders trained in these struggles are preparing for the next steps toward integration. There are still almost 3,000 school districts to be desegregated and 2,400,000 Negro pupils to be integrated. There are continuing barriers in housing, employment, recreational facilities, and other areas of living. In January, a meeting was held in Atlanta at the call of the Rev. Martin Luther King, heroic figure of the Montgomery boycott, the Rev. F.L. Shuttlesworth, whose home was bombed from under him because he led the integration fight at Birmingham, and the Rev. C. K. Steele, leader of the Tallahassee boycott, to form an alliance against "violence directed toward the Negro communities."

In my opinion, the South's freedom fighters at present occupy a position similar to that of the industrial workers in early 1937. At that time, the CIO had not yet tackled Little Steel and other basic industries. The Memorial Day massacre was still to come later that year. And Ford was not signed up till 1941, four years after the first giants were toppled by the CIO. Hundreds of other plants were still to be organized.

So it is in the South today. States like Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia, and perhaps a couple of others may have to be surrounded and isolated before they can be made to yield the Negro people their rights. Victories in the bus disputes will make the task easier, but these states will be no pushovers. There might still be something similar to the Memorial Day massacre, although it is unlikely. National and world opinion is working against it, to say nothing of the rapidly changing opinion in the South. Walter Lippmann showed his usual keen insight, sharpened by his close contact with certain segments of the ruling class, when he said recently:

*The movement in this century toward desegregation and against legal and economic discrimination is one of the most impressive phenomena of our era. But it is highly unlikely that federal legislation will be allowed to play much part in this movement. The movement will proceed mainly by local actions that reflect extraordinary changes of public opinion in almost all sections of the country.*

**T**HE "public opinion" that Lippmann is in closest touch with represents some of the interests that are penetrating the South with new industries, seeking to exploit

it as a low-wage area. Large movement of industry into a previously agrarian area always brings changes that make for progress in the long run. Better educational, communication, and transportation facilities must be provided to meet the needs of industry. Housing and other living conditions are improved. Industrialization of what was a largely feudal economy has naturally created new conflicts and given the impetus for new struggles.

Southern politicians have depended for generations upon the landowners, the heirs of the plantation economy. They have kept in power by playing upon the fears and insecurities of a half-ignorant mass of lower-middle class whites, some of whose representatives now form the White Citizens Councils. (Government figures show that about a third of Southern whites are rejected for military service because they are functional illiterates, or worse.) Now it is to the advantage of politicians representing the new interests to seek the Negro vote, as their power is asserted through the Republican Party as opposed to the Democratic Party, which is the main vehicle of the old aristocracy. This is a job that requires skillful manipulation, because on the one hand, the industrial lords wish to cultivate the great mass of Negro workers in the South as a source of political power and cheap labor, on the other hand, they want to prevent the white workers from joining with the Negroes. By playing upon the fears and insecurities of each, they hope to keep the two groups from uniting into unions—or at least strong unions.

The task facing both labor and the Negro people is still tremendous. However, there is no question that their experiences will bring them together in the long run. It may take another period of crisis to produce this amalgamation—just as it required crises to bring about organization of the industrial workers. But the forces are building up for it. As the most oppressed group, the Negro people will provide the spark and a lot of the leadership for this merger. It will be up to the white workers to shed their fears and prejudices for the benefit of the whole movement.

There are other important changes in the South worthy of notice. One is a change of attitude as white Southerners become more educated. This is already true among professional and technical workers. Of course, they are not in direct competition with Negro labor, so that may help explain the speed with which they are losing their prejudices. Anyhow, they have been the decisive factor in several struggles in the South. It was white lawyers, ministers, educators, editors, etc. who rose up at Clinton, Tennessee, and declared they would have no more lawlessness in connection with integration of the high school—after the Negroes showed they were willing to fight for their own rights. A similar situation developed at Henderson, Kentucky, where the Ministerial Association led the fight to stop a boycott of an integrated school. They organized the stable white and Negro people of the community and beat the White Citizens Council and its allies in their efforts to close the school.

**T**HE magazine *Liberation*, recently printed a statement that seemed to sum up an unfolding development in the South. It said:



*The "politics of the future" must develop from a creative synthesis of the insights of the great ethical and religious teachers and of the collective social concern of the great revolutionaries. The transformation of cultural and political structures and the transformation and creative self-realization of the individual go hand in hand.*

The white church collectively, like every other institution in the South, is split on the question of segregation, but there is a strong movement to apply the principles of Christianity in the solution of this problem. A number of white churchmen have been caught up in the spirit manifested by their Negro brethren at Montgomery, Tallahassee, and other places. The Rev. Paul Turner showed courage of a high order. The Rev. Robert S. Graetz contributed much to the Montgomery struggle, and his home was among those blown up by the segregationists. Other white ministers in the South are giving leadership and service in the fight, often at the cost of losing their pulpits.

Now, the church is a potent institution in the South. It has been said that socialism is a natural outgrowth of Christian doctrine. Personally, I see no conflict between basic Christianity and socialism. There are people in the South who say Jesus Christ was a socialist. I cannot say how widespread is this opinion, but I have heard it in Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. Something more than economic arguments will certainly have to be presented in order to bring about a strong movement toward socialism in the South. And by socialism I mean ownership of the means of production by all the people and their *democratic* control of it.

Of course, one prerequisite is the freeing of the Negro people. Another is the organization of white and Negro workers into strong unions. A third is a strong movement to oust Dixiecrats from the halls of Congress, the state houses, the courthouses, and the city halls all over the South.

Theorists have long juggled with the notion that some kind of an elite must rule the world, as the masses cannot rule themselves. Has socialism got the answer to this claim?

# Socialism, Power Elites and Bureaucracy

by Bert Cochran

THE most telling attack on the Marxist system was not the holes that economists may have exposed in its economic theory, which neither Marx nor his disciples had fully plugged up; it was not even that Marx had misread some of the directional signposts, and had miscalculated the speed with which history would play out its themes; and it was certainly not the incidental correction of factual data which later investigators were able to introduce. It was not any of these, important though some of the criticisms and new data have been to modify and supplement the system, and above all, to bring it up to date. The most basic criticism, however, has remained, and that is that Marx succumbed to the very utopianism that he was battling when he imagined that communism would bring an end to the class struggle and usher in a new classless and stateless society of free brotherhood.

Long ago the most astute of the middle-class thinkers understood that Marxism was not just another intellectual exercise of a German philosopher, which, while astounding the mind by its virtuosity, nevertheless had no immediate application to the mundane affairs of man. Long ago many of them concluded that Marx with the prescience of genius had caught the essential trends in modern history, and what was even more diabolical from their point of view, had devised a program of how to organize modern labor movements and hasten the historical trends along. In other words, they accepted as scientific Marx's proposition that the modern class struggle would lead to the downfall of capitalism and the creation of a new collectivistic society.

But they thought that at this point Marx said goodbye to his science and turned himself into another doctrinaire and dreamer when he avowed that proletarian rule would be the instrumentality to abolish the class struggle and eventually do away with the domination of society by a privileged minority. "All that is going to happen," the wordly-wise assured us, "is the substitution of the rule of the capitalistic oligarchy by a new socialistic aristocracy." They rested their case on an admittedly powerful argu-

ment: all hitherto known societies have been dominated by ruling aristocracies, and since it has always been that way, a case can be made out for thinking that it always will continue to be that way. Or, as the positivists stated it, all talk of a future classless society is outside the realm of scientific discourse. Since we never saw it, we can't know about it.

IT is necessary to return to this question as the rise of Soviet Russia and similar states in China and Eastern Europe, rather than resolving conclusively the theoretical problem, have merely transferred it onto a more specific arena of conflict. The theoretical question, moreover, has assumed burning importance in everyday politics as the capitalist ideologists and propagandists are warning the peoples—not without successes—that the evidence proves that Communism represents merely the rule of a new elite based upon state ownership of property; that this new ruling class is more tyrannical and ruthless than the capitalist—and that the exchange would therefore not be in the popular interest.

We socialists are up against the fact of life that a new generation, especially in America, has to be *convinced* afresh that socialism does in fact represent a superior system for the peoples, that Marx's idea of the eventual withering away of the state is not a pipedream, but a realistic if very rough sketch of the future state of human society. New cadres for socialism will be created only when young people believe these things again, and only by cogent reasoning and intellectual demonstration can we hope to convince them. They will certainly never be won by repeating the old, tired shibboleths, or by casuistry, or socialistic cant.

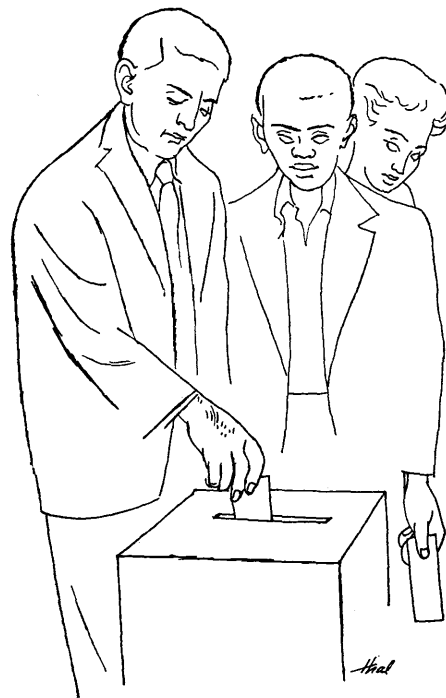
To return to our subject. At the very height of the era of Western democratic parliamentarism, liberalism, and social reform, when the idea of gradual and unlimited progress was accepted as an axiom of political life, there arose important exponents of a neo-Machiavellian school of political science. This development, running counter to

the prevailing intellectual winds, would seem at first glance inexplicable on any materialist ground, until we remind ourself that Gaetano Mosca, Wilfredo Pareto and Robert Michels pursued their studies under the impact of the burgeoning mass socialist movements of Western Europe and the gathering war clouds on the international horizon. For these political students, trying to grasp the underlying meaning of what was going on around them, the apocalyptic visions of Marx did not seem far-fetched at all, but rather the basic substance of the true direction of events. Possessing greater insight than many of their philistine colleagues, they sensed the coming breakup of existing capitalist society. But as ideologists who identified themselves with the middle classes, they were inevitably propelled to blend parts of Marx with Machiavelli, Nietzsche, and in the case of Michels, even Rousseau, each arriving at the end at either a cynical or exalted variety of misanthropic Tory sociology.

**WHAT** interests us here is not a detailed exposition or critique of these writers, but the common conclusion that they all reached and believed to be a veritable law of the social process, namely, that in all society there is and must always be a ruling minority that grabs all sorts of special privileges for itself, and the ruled majority, whose destiny is to be directed and controlled by the minority and to toil on its behalf. This remains true whether the society is feudal, capitalist, slave, or socialist, or whether its form be monarchical, oligarchical, or democratic, and this will always remain the situation because the majority cannot rule itself.

Mosca insisted that the representation system under a so-called democracy inevitably leads to the people choosing from among two or three persons picked by organized minorities. The stratification of societies into rulers and ruled is therefore universal and permanent, and cannot be otherwise. Pareto analyzed various revolutions throughout history and concluded that all that was involved was a "circulation of elites." Even where masses enter into the fray, nothing is changed, because masses can only succeed when they have leaders, and these soon install themselves as the new elite. So, while revolutions are sometimes necessary in order to pep up an old worn-out elite, or replace it entirely with a new vigorous elite, it does not and cannot change the basic law of minority rule.

This conception is by no means foreign to this country. Actually, beneath the facade of democratic rhetoric, it is a commonly accepted proposition on the part of both the rich and poor: The smarter, tougher, wilier, trickier, luckier, will always get to the top and live off the fat of the land; the rest will form the gray mass below. Charles A. Beard, who mirrored the spirit of this country in more ways than one, rested essentially on this same proposition although conceived and expressed in American business terms. He said: "The grand conclusion seems to be exactly that advanced by our own James Madison in the Tenth number of the *Federalist*." (James Madison there wrote: "Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. . . . The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation. . . .")



In alluding to the developing inequalities and stratifications in the first years of Soviet Russia, Beard was scornful of the leaders' promises: "Of course, they said that this was all temporary, and merely an introduction to the postponed millenium. That may be, but viewing politics from the standpoint of an experimental science, we cannot take into serious account dreams unrealized." Beard concludes: "In other words, there is no rest for mankind, no final solution of eternal contradictions. Such is the design of the universe."

**THE** underlying note of a narrow pragmatism strongly permeates Beard's impatience with what he considers as visionary schemes and pie-in-the-sky utopias. But at least he tries to understand the social process. Despite the scientific pretensions of Mosca and Pareto, their writings don't go beyond intricate rationalistic constructions around power mechanics. Both give innumerable illustrations from both modern and ancient history, but the outstanding fact of their writings is the absence of a historical approach, and the determination to ignore the effects of social organization upon the mechanics and physiognomy of political struggles. When you get all through with the elaborate constructions, you are back to the proposition that beneath its various disguises, history has always operated that way and always will. As Beard said, "Such is the design of the universe."

Actually, this hasn't gotten us too far beyond the proposition that it is so because that's the way human nature works. Regardless of the common-sense strictures that there must always be a small group of bosses on top and the mass that is bossed below, it is a fact that human society has made vast advances from the time of Moses and the Pharaohs to the present, not only in scientific knowledge and material enrichment, but in the altered

status and growing power of the mass of people in relation to their rulers. At the very least, one must admit that the universal elite theory is barren in explaining and elucidating this evolution.

**A** MORE fruitful contribution to this question was made by the German sociologist, Max Weber, and his pupil, Robert Michels, both of whom wrote their major works in the immediate years preceding the first World War. Weber is considered by present-day sociologists as the founder of the systematic study of bureaucracy, and his writings are the subject matter of much annotation in university circles. As in so many other of the big questions confronting modern social science, the true father of the discussion on bureaucracy, although it is no longer considered good form in the colleges to say so, was Karl Marx. He formulated the matter before others even knew of the problem's existence. In studying the class struggles of France since the 1789 revolution, Marx came to an understanding of how the centralized state power of modern capitalism came to be organized. Here is the picture he drew with characteristically broad strokes:

*This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organization, with its artificial state machinery embracing wide strata, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half a million, this appalling parasitic growth, which enmeshes the body of French society like a net and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system, which it helped to hasten. The seigniorial privileges of the landowners and towns became transformed into so many attributes of the state power, the feudal dignitaries into paid officials and the motley pattern of conflicting medieval plenary powers into the regulated plan of a state authority, whose work is divided and centralized as in a factory. The first French Revolution, with its task of breaking all local, territorial, urban and provincial independent powers in order to create the bourgeois unity of the nation, was bound to develop what the absolute monarchy had begun—centralization, but at the same time the extent, the attributes and the agents of governmental authority. Napoleon perfected this machinery. The Legitimist monarchy and the July monarchy added nothing but a greater division of labor, growing in the same measure that the division of labor within capitalist society created new groups of interests, and therefore, new material for state administration. Every common interest was straightway severed from society, counterposed to it as a higher, general interest, snatched from the self-activity of society's members and made an object of governmental activity, from the bridge, the school-house, and the communal property of a village community to the railways, the national wealth and the national university of France. The parliamentary republic, finally, in its struggle against the revolution, found itself compelled to strengthen, along with repressive measures, the resources and centralization of governmental power. All the revolutions perfected this*

*machine instead of smashing it up. The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principle spoils of the victor.*

From his observation that the state bureaucratic machine survived intact in France during both the 1830 and 1848 revolutions which saw various shifts in capitalist rule, Marx concluded that a genuine peoples' revolution will have to break up this bureaucracy and replace it with a new state mechanism of its own. He thought that the short-lived Paris Commune of 1871 indicated the outlines of how the new socialist society would operate to make the state apparatus a servant of society instead of its master. The Commune filled all posts—administrative, judicial, and educational—by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, with the right of the electors to recall their delegates at any time; and all officials, high or low, were paid only the wages received by other workers. Lenin in 1917 considered this the realistic course on which to run a socialist regime, which would gradually eliminate bureaucracy and eventually usher in a new society free of state compulsion.

**F**ROM his entirely different end, Max Weber took off from Marx's proposition about bureaucracy and proceeded to generalize it into a new universal institutionalism transcending social systems and class specifics. The urge to utter universal truths which spread across all human history from the times of Hammurabi to our own is well nigh irresistible to many an intellectual. We are confronted with discussions of bureaucracy in Egypt during the period of the New Empire, in the later Roman Principate, in the Roman Catholic Church since the end of the thirteenth century, and in China from the time of Shi Hwangti. All this weaving back and forth across the centuries and continents gave Weber a chance to show off his vast erudition, but it is doubtful that it shed much light on the question at hand. His attempted deepening of Marx's proposition into the generalization that an existing bureaucracy will survive revolutionary changes hasn't withstood the test of time, as witness the destruction of the Czarist bureaucracy after the 1917 revolution, and the old Kuomintang bureaucracy in China after the civil war.

What probably accounts for Weber's vogue among a number of present-day sociologists is his concentration on the subject of bureaucracy. (He had an excellent model to work from in the Prussian state and military bureaucracy, which he apparently admired as an example of efficiency and rational organization.) His notion that there is a tendency toward bureaucratization of modern societies strikes a resonant chord among many students of society today, who think he caught the trend of the times when he said: "For the time being, the dictatorship of the official and not that of the worker is on the march."

**I**F the student of sociology concludes that Weber's speculations have been too diffused to have brought us very far along, he would probably be right. It was left to his co-worker, Robert Michels, to supply a semblance

of proof for Mosca's proposition that majorities are congenitally incapable of ruling. In his brilliant work, "Political Parties," first issued in 1911, he subjected various political structures, particularly the German Social Democratic Party and the mass trade unions, to a truly searching analysis. In rapid order, he demonstrated that the modern capitalist-parliamentary state and the traditional conservative parties are not genuinely democratic. That is why he concentrated his attention on the mass socialist movement where democracy presumably should be in full swing.

Michels showed with a wealth of proof that in the socialist organization the same mechanics are at work that breed bureaucracy in the state and other political organizations: the necessity for a division of labor, the inevitable rise of a professional leadership, the conversion of the leaders into masters of the organization rather than its servants, because of their control of all the levers of power. Michels drew the general conclusion that there is an "iron law of oligarchy" which operates in all social movements and all manner of societies, and that the democratic ideal is consequently impossible. Society cannot exist without a dominant ruling group even though its elements may be subject to frequent renewal. "The social revolution would not effect any real modification of the internal structure of the mass. The socialists might conquer, but not socialism, which would perish in the moment of its adherents' triumph."

If Michels had in truth demonstrated the universality of his law of oligarchy, then socialism would indeed be utopian, and the socialist conquest of power merely the prelude to a new circulation of elites. Let there be no misunderstanding: Michels' analysis of the bureaucratism of the pre-war German Socialist movement was exceptionally cogent, and as far as it went, accurate. Its weakness and limitation is the general weakness of all followers of the elitist school: they blandly ignore the social relations upon which all political structures necessarily rest, and they cannot grasp that the mechanics of political struggle are subject to change under different social conditions. That is why all the elitists fall back finally upon an untenable cycle theory of history according to which, humanity, without sense or reason, continues to wage its fruitless struggles over and over again, with society ever revolving around the same series of stages.

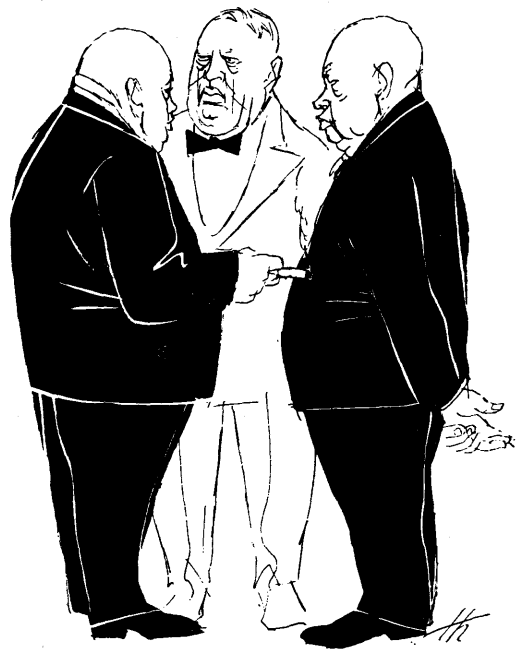
**M**ICHELS had certainly penned an invaluable sociological study of the German Social Democracy; moreover, his mechanics of mass organizations have considerable validity under various conditions of democratic capitalism and the present going levels of material and cultural attainment. Michels couldn't see, however, that where he was describing the general apathy of a membership, he was talking not about a universal condition of mankind outside of spatio-temporal considerations, but a condition arising from the lack of leisure of the masses, and their consequent lack of time and energy for larger affairs—and that the same was true for all his other so-called innate laws of organization. He didn't understand that he was describing working rules that operate only for a certain structure conditioned by specific social and political forces.

At any rate, the question stood on a purely intellectual plane up to the World War I period. None of the elitist thinkers directly influenced the mass movement with their theories because they were cloistered scholars, but their ideas were picked up by a host of capitalist publicists and used for all they were worth against the socialist movement. In their practical political effect, they constituted one more capitalist attack on socialism, and were largely viewed by socialists as a philosophical variation of the "you can't change human nature" argument.

The revival of elitist theories of power represented in a certain sense an anticipation of the decline of the capitalist order. But these thinkers first elaborated their theories while official public opinion still believed the system to be firm and durable. It was the mass carnage of the first World War, the Russian revolution of 1917, the German revolution the following year, and then the breakdown of Italian parliamentary capitalism and the rise of Mussolini, that imparted a new public interest to their speculations. The Italian events seemed on the surface to vindicate the theory of the circulation of elites, and, as a matter of fact, Italian Fascism embraced Pareto as one of its patron saints.

The subtleties of political philosophers notwithstanding, the man-on-the-street pretty well understood, even if not in a sophisticated form, that fascism represented some newfangled variety of capitalist reaction and dictatorship, and that its triumph did not affect one way or another the validity of socialism—although it might be a reflection on the tactical effectiveness of socialist movements that permitted themselves to be outmaneuvered and cut to ribbons by their enemies. What affected liberal and radical opinion far more drastically than Italian Fascism or German Nazism was the Stalinization of Soviet Russia—the first big experiment in socialism.

**H**ERE, after the first few years of high idealistic equalitarianism, a new bureaucracy of vast proportions





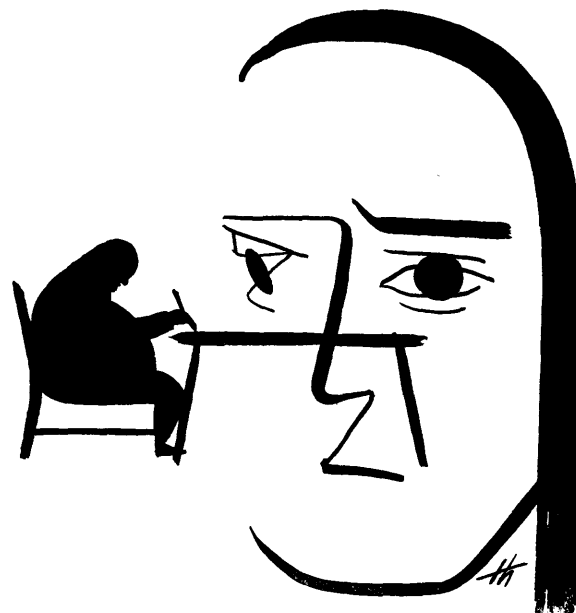
arose that definitely constituted a favored caste in relation to the rest of the population, and whose topmost rungs enjoyed living standards and privileges that were positively aristocratic compared to the mode of life of the average Russian. What was even more disturbing was that with the first successes of industrialization, the gap between the mass and the aristocracy seemed every year to be growing rather than diminishing; and that the state authority rather than softening, much less withering away, was constantly growing more burdensome and oppressive. The empirical evidence seemed, as far as the naked eye could observe, to add up to a crushing refutation of Marx and Lenin and their hopes that proletarian dictatorship would constitute the first step toward the eventual introduction of a classless society. By the same token, it seemed to reinforce the elitist theory that no society can get away from the domination of a privileged minority, as well as Weber's general notion that the trend was toward the hegemony of the bureaucrats. This Soviet development poses in truth a serious theoretical problem which Marx could not have foreseen and which this generation of socialist scholars is called upon to study and unravel.

There are three main lines of thought that seek to explain the underlying meaning of the Soviet experience.

The Stalinist school explains the problem by denying its existence. The stratification of Soviet society is systematically ignored or denied, and the meaning of the rise of a swollen bureaucracy is treated as involving purely bad habits and psychological defects, which, like red tape, rudeness, inattentiveness to complaints, etc., have to be eradicated by greater watchfulness and stronger administrative measures. The Twentieth Congress admitted the existence of tyrannical abuses but shied away from any social explanation to account for the rise of a bloody dictatorship. It put the blame on one man having gained too much power and turning megalomaniac. How the working masses can be the ruling class when they don't even enjoy ordinary political rights is explained by a combination of empty rhetoric and a pointing to some of the profound difficulties facing the Soviet leaders in trying to build a new social system.

**T**HE second main line of thought holds that a new minority ruling class has gotten ensconced in Russia. Some think it is a state capitalist class, others call it a new bureaucratic class. The relation between this alleged new class to capitalism on the outside is most often left up in the air. We are not told whether this new class has a universal character and is destined to replace capitalism on a world scale, or whether it's some kind of a unique mutation, with only local significance. The most ambitious recent attempt to give the concept a theoretical expression was that of James Burnham and his European counterparts, who denominated Russian society as being ruled by a new class of managers destined to supplant decaying capitalism, and that the Soviet development was just one manifestation of a world-wide movement in this direction, Nazi Germany and the New Deal in the United States representing different aspects of the same phenomenon.

Burnham's managerial theory was the most brash at-



tempt to set down what had been hinted and implied by Western writers from Max Weber to Thorstein Veblen. Unfortunately, for him, two of the alleged managerial states got crushed in the war, with old-style parliamentary capitalism taking over again; while in the Soviet Union, the managers and bureaucrats still have no right of tenure in the new system of nationalized production. The benefactions they draw from their positions cannot be passed on to their descendants (except for secondary personal property); and the bureaucracy as a whole lacks the necessary legal sanction and standing to permit its consolidation and insure its continuity that would warrant calling it a new class formation. These latter objections, let it be noted, do not appear impressive to those who define classes by how much political power they wield, or who deny the existence of classes altogether, and divide society into elites and non-elites, and subdivide them into status groups in accordance with whom they meet for lunch.

**I**N 1936, when the theories of a new bureaucratic class were travelling the rounds in intellectual circles, Max Nomad wrote an article for Calverton's *Modern Monthly* which achieved a local fame at the time. It was called, "Masters—Old and New." Nomad tried to splice together Pareto and Marx, and to combine the former's elitism with a note of revolutionary fervor. Back in 1905, Nomad's old teacher, the semi-anarchist Polish revolutionary writer, Wacław Machajski, had written that Marx himself was guilty of deliberately shielding the bureaucracy with his formula in *Capital* that higher or more complicated labor has a higher value than unskilled labor. Machajski went on to accuse the socialist movement of giving aid and comfort to the intelligentsia, and that with malice aforethought it was not fighting to abolish all exploitation. Nomad now came forward in 1936 to announce that it's worked out just the way it had been planned all along. The new bureaucrats and office holders have taken over in Russia and the workers and peasants have become their menials and serfs; although Nomad believed that the new

system represented an advance historically over capitalism, and would be the next world form of the new exploitative society:

*The abolition of capitalism, the result of the "final revolution" championed by the various political parties of the underdog, eventually leads to the establishment of a new class rule, of a new exploitation of man by man. That new form of class rule must naturally call forth a violent dissatisfaction both among the down-trodden manual workers and among the step-brothers or poorer relations of the new bureaucratic masters. There arises the urge towards a new "final revolution" in which the old process is repeated under the guise of a changed vocabulary. For whether they call themselves left communists, syndicalists or anarchists, the victorious rebels against the bureaucracy of a socialized form of exploitation cannot help establishing a new bureaucracy, a new ruling aristocracy—in other words, follow the example of the Russian communists. For the process of revolution is always the same: Seizure of power; organization of a new revolutionary government; its defense against the reactionaries at first; and then its consolidation against the masses as well as in the interest of a better paid aristocracy of office-holders, technicians, and other members of the educated layers of society. . . . That process knows of no millenium when full harmony has been achieved once for all eternity. There is no "happy ending" just as there is no "final revolution" that will eliminate all further class struggles.*

As can be seen, we are back with Pareto's endless circulation of elites, although Max Nomad gives the process a shrill anarchist-revolutionary tone, and injects into Pareto's cycles the element of a spiralling upsweep. Whichever variation of the new ruling class theory we were to accept, it is difficult to see how we could avoid the conclusion that the socialist program, which was to inaugurate the rule of the majority for the first time in history, has been proven a utopia; that given the opportunity, the working class demonstrated its incapacity to rule, and necessarily exuded out of its midst a new exploitative elite.

**I**T may be held that this conclusion follows regardless of the nature of the explanation once you maintain that a privileged minority has taken over. Those who hold that the socialist program nevertheless retains its validity got around this difficulty by explaining the Soviet dictatorship as an abhorrent relapse that was due to straighten itself out in the course of historical development. This third line of thought on Soviet Union developments is commonly associated with the theory of Leon Trotsky. He believed that a privileged bureaucracy had arisen not because of universal characteristics embedded in leadership, or in the nature of society, but because of the backwardness of Russia. "The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. When there is enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they

want to. When there is little goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting point of the Soviet bureaucracy. It 'knows' who is to get something and who has to wait. . . . The poverty and cultural backwardness of the masses has again become incarnate in the malignant figure of the ruler with a great club in his hand. The deposed and abused bureaucracy, from being a servant of society, has again become its Lord."

According to his analysis, because of the antagonisms between workers, peasants and bureaucracy, and the isolation of the country within a hostile capitalist world, a Bonapartist-like dictatorship was elevated to act as the supreme arbiter of the conflicting claims and to eradicate opposition by police repression. Trotsky held that the bureaucracy was not a new class because it had not worked out any new relationship to the nationalized mode of production, but simply represented a parasitic caste which had been thrown up because of the specific difficulties, and which would be undermined when those specific causes disappeared.

He accused the bureaucratic regime of a host of crimes relating to internal and international policies, but he thought that the sociological character of the Russian state had remained as it had been established by the Russian revolution because of the nationalization of property, planned economy and the monopoly of foreign trade. What was involved was a degeneration of the Soviet state and not its transformation into a different kind of state. As he saw it, when the laboring masses regained their strength and revolutionary ardor, they would put through a political revolution to remove the Bonapartist regime



and restore Soviet democracy in all phases of government, planning, production, etc., but they would not disturb the existing economic foundations. He believed that the tendencies of bureaucratism which can be seen in the workers' movement in capitalist countries will show themselves everywhere even after the socialist revolution, but that they will not prove so crude and unmanageable as they did in backward Russia.

**I**SAAC Deutscher, the noted writer on Soviet affairs, has introduced several important modifications into this conception, and in part, has drawn it out into the post-Stalin era. Here is his own summation:

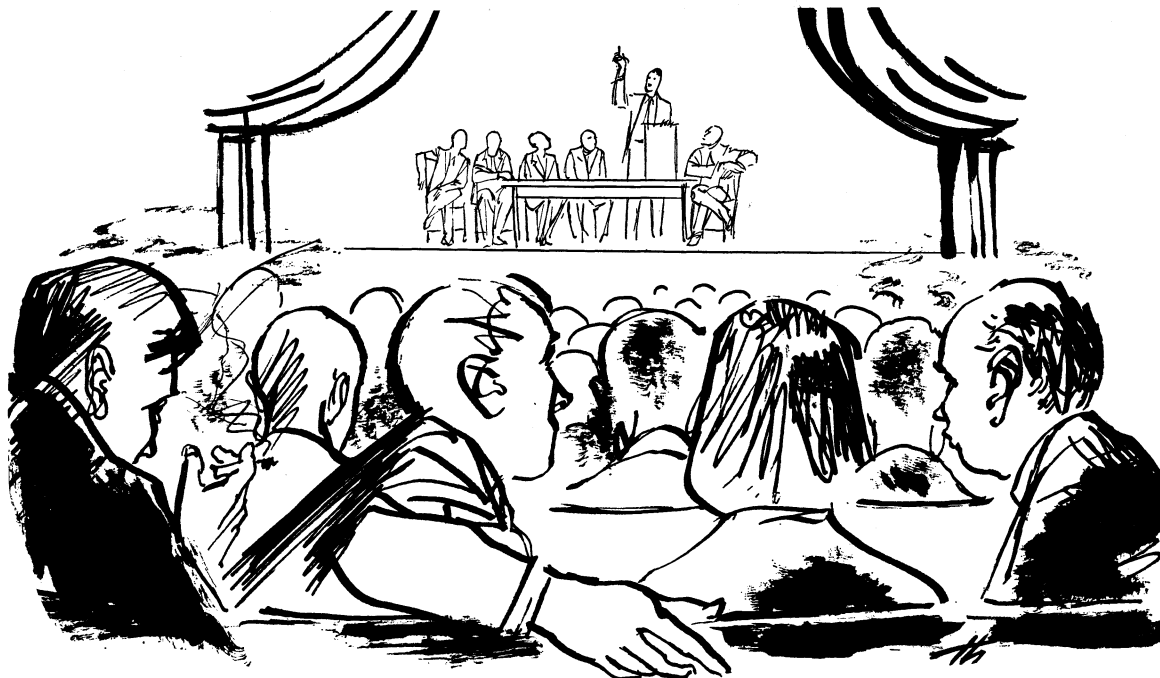
*Any realistic analysis of the Stalin era and of its conclusion must draw a balance of the Soviet industrial revolution of the last twenty-five years, the revolution by force of which Russia has from one of the industrially most backward nations become the world's second industrial power. This process was accompanied by vast educational progress, into which the bulk of Soviet society has been drawn. Stalinist despotism and terrorism drove the Soviet people to carry through this industrial revolution, in part despite themselves, at an unprecedented pace, and in the face of unprecedented difficulties. The "primitive magic of Stalinism" reflected the cultural backwardness of Soviet society in the formative years and in the middle stretches of the Stalin era. From this argument I concluded that with the progress achieved in the 1950's, the Stalinist terrorism and primitive magic had outlived their day and were coming into conflict with the new needs of Soviet society. The higher level of industrial and general civilization favoured a gradual democratization of Soviet political life, although a military dictatorship, of the Bonapartist type, might also arise amid mounting international tensions. Both these prospects signify an end to Stalinism. An attempt to galvanize the Stalinist regime and orthodoxy was still possible and even probable; but it could hardly meet with more than episodic success. . . .*

*We cannot say beforehand to what degree the privileged groups may resist any democratic-socialist and equalitarian trend emerging in Soviet society. It may be that they will defend their privileges tooth and nail and fight any such trend with stubborn cruelty. But it is at least quite as possible that the "class solidarity" of the privileged minority should prove weak, that its resistance to the democratic-socialist trend should prove half-hearted and ineffective, and that the first impulse for quasi-liberal reforms should come, as it has already come, from the ranks of the bureaucracy itself. This is not to say that one ought to expect democratization to be brought about exclusively by reform from above: a combination of pressure from below and reform from above may be necessary. Yet at a certain stage of development it is the quasi-liberal reform from above that may most effectively spur on a revival of spontaneous political action below or create the conditions under which such action may become possible after a whole epoch of totalitarian torpor.*

One or more points remain to be made to conclude this introductory exposition. From Hegel on, bourgeois writers have been prone to view the bureaucracy as an autonomous body with ultimate power over all classes. Max Weber thought that "Generally speaking, the trained permanent official is more likely to get his way in the long run than his nominal superior, the Cabinet Minister, who is not a specialist." Marxist writers, in contrast, have held that only classes rule, and classes are defined according to their relations to social production, which under conditions of civilization, have invariably embodied their special property rights in a legal code of law. The bureaucracy, consequently, no matter how big and powerful, remains an administrative arm of the ruling class. If this theorem applies to the Soviet bureaucracy as well as the capitalist bureaucracy, the political dispossession of the working class, which in legal fiction is presumed to be the ruling class of Soviet society, can only be given rational explanation on a theoretical level by an analogy with Bonapartist or Caesarian regimes in past history. These, while operating as dictatorships over all society, retained nevertheless their characteristic as representatives of slave-owning, feudal or capitalist classes by the forms of property that they safeguarded. If this applies to Russia, it would signify that the Soviet dictatorship retains its socialist character because of the socialist property forms that it safeguards.

**T**HE experiences with socialist governments have not yet been conclusive, especially because both Russia and China started their revolutions as largely feudal countries, and because of their backwardness, were or are preoccupied in the first phases of their existence with the solution of pre-socialist tasks. Nevertheless, enough has taken place, especially when coupled with the existing bureaucratization of the trade union, Social Democratic, and even Communist movements in the West, to conclude that bureaucratism—that means the elevation of a specially favored caste—is the problem of problems facing the workers' movement, both in its struggle for socialism and after it has succeeded in setting up a socialist government. The workers will be cheated out of their victory if while the Socialist Constitution declares them to be the salt of the earth, they continue to be oppressed in actual life. The difference between a class and a caste may have commanding importance in the theoretical sphere, but for the living generations, it makes little difference if they are kicked around by capitalist entrepreneurs or arrogant bureaucrats.

Finally, socialism will justify its boast of being a science only by its capacity to encompass the accumulated experience of the recent decades. It is necessary to subject the problem of bureaucratism both in the Soviet-bloc countries and the labor movements of the West to a scientific investigation and analysis, as a preliminary to devising the best safeguards against the menace. Scientific socialism has to become a tool again for going to the roots of existing social problems and pointing the way to their solution. If the tool is to be employed for apologetics and special pleading, it will surely be relegated to the museums with other tools of Man which in time became useless, or obsolete.



Socialists used to be accused of being too "libertarian," but today they are charged with being "totalitarian." How did this shift in the debate happen, and what can be done to win back the lost ground?

## New Birth of Freedom

A Speech by Harry Braverman

The following talk was delivered at a panel discussion on the anniversary of the Bill of Rights on the topic: "Socialism and Democracy—East and West." The meeting, sponsored by *I. F. Stone's Weekly*, drew an audience of about 600 to New York's Community Church.

More recently, Braverman spoke at a number of meetings in the Midwest, including forums in Chicago and Milwaukee sponsored by the *American Socialist*, and the Sunday morning meeting of the Du Page Valley Unitarian Church, where his message of socialism was well received. He also defended socialism in a debate with Professor Milton Friedman at the University of Chicago before a large audience of students.

**T**HE Bill of Rights is one of the things that made this country a big improvement over the state systems of bygone days. It has always been a point of pride that these rights came to be part of our Constitution by popular demand, and not by *noblesse oblige*.

Of course, there were plenty of fences around our democracy in its best days. Despite the Bill of Rights, men, women and children were owned as chattels for several generations. When that was wiped out, the new factory system started covering the countryside with industrial concentration camps ruled by mill-town police who had never read the first ten amendments. The scepter of power never really slipped out of the grasp of one or another kind of aristocracy of wealth, even though the so-called aristocrats had to make plenty of compromises to keep their grip.

Still, there is no doubt that our democracy in its heyday showed the world something new in the line of politics. While the Old World was still trying to shake off the moth-eaten robes of monarchy and churchly superstition, politics on this side of the ocean was a turbulent, heel-kicking, irreverent business. The people may not have run the government, but the government had a hard time running the people.

More recent times have brought some big changes. A massive oligarchy of wealth has arisen, and fastened an ever-more totalitarian hold upon the economy and politics of the country. A darkening shadow has spread over American democracy. The individualistic farmer no longer had the answer; neither did the individualistic democrats like Mark Twain. The old foundation of democracy in America, which was an economy of widespread independent production, was gone. The answer, as many soon understood, was to put democracy on a new and sounder footing by way of a socialist commonwealth.

The early socialists didn't have any special troubles with the problem we are discussing here tonight. It is true they weren't simply civil libertarians, as they were impassioned battlers for a new social order, and a fighter is not the same thing as a referee. But they were clearly on the side of freedom, a fact which even their bitterest opponents rarely questioned. In fact they were assailed as libertarians who would bring about "license and anarchy"; they were denounced as enemies of order and authority.

**T**HINGS have certainly changed since then. Now, socialism is attacked as "the road to serfdom," and as a tyranny over the working people themselves. It is useless to dismiss this as nothing but venal propaganda. It may be that, in large measure, but every debater and propagandist looks for the weakest points in his opponent's armor. How did it happen that socialism developed a weakness on this, its formerly strongest side?

The trouble is that the world got its first look at socialism under the most onerous conditions imaginable. The working-class takeover in Russia ran into civil war, repeated foreign intervention, poverty, illiteracy, famine, and devastation. Russian socialism found itself in the unforseen position of still having to solve ancient problems of capitalism and feudalism. The job of industrializing the country, of putting agriculture on a modern basis, of creating a science, a modern culture and labor productivity, a broad system of popular education—things which *capitalism* accomplished in Western Europe and America—remained to be done in Russia.

With this rough debut as a form of society and economy, socialism's entrance as a political system suffered terrible deformities. Under these conditions it was a sure thing that the government structure would have a lot more authoritarianism than socialists had previously allowed for. But history added its own bitter dividend: Conditions created the machine, but then the machine ran wild to the point where the atrocious situation described by Khrushchev came into being even at the very pinnacles of power. As for the daily rights of the average citizen—they were curtailed to the vanishing point and there they remain to this hour.

The result of all this is a terrible stain on the banner of socialism. The rebellions of the Hungarian workers, intellectuals, students and youth, and the frightful measures which were taken against them are the most recent, and possibly the worst, manifestations of this disgrace.

**B**ut mourning and bewailing solves nothing. The question is: How can we help create an American socialist movement which can reply to the questions raised in the minds of Americans by these things, surmount the bitterness that has been engendered against socialism, and get back the good name socialism used to enjoy wherever democracy was cherished?

The Left is badly in need of a new posture towards Russia, because the old one has proved both wrong and a failure. This means a more honest, more truthful, more objective view of that part of the world. The Left has to get its throat cleared and say loudly just what socialism calls for in the way of democracy. It has to understand that unless the Soviet countries find a working mechanism of democracy and a closer touch with the people and their aspirations, the entire pioneering effort along the road to socialism will be endangered.

We need that new stance to get squared away with the requirements of honesty and with socialism's own democratic foundations. It's not that we, on this side of the ocean, are going to straighten out Russia, or Hungary, or Czechoslovakia. We need it to straighten ourselves out. We need it to give the right kind of shape to American socialism,

and to give it a basis of honesty and consistency from which it can generate some appeal among Americans.

None of this means that we have to give up our sympathy for the great Russian, Chinese, and other developments in the direction of socialism. Big things have been and are being accomplished by these first applications of socialist methods to economic construction and social endeavor, and we don't have to be bashful about calling these to the attention of the American people either. But we've got to shake off the old curse of trying to conduct American socialism as an extension of Russian politics, or we're going to get left at the starting post.

I will not pretend that an independent and critical attitude towards dictatorship in the Soviet Union will, by itself, make a mass movement out of socialism here. In general, nothing we say about Russia can have that magical effect. Socialism will prove itself only as an increasing number of Americans find in it an answer to their present and coming problems. And I am sure that the socialist movement which American labor will shape with its own hands—as distinguished from anything the doctrinaires recommend—is not going to be in a continual high fever about Russia. But it will have its own ideas on the matter, and many of them will be highly critical—and rightly so if Russia hasn't changed a whole lot by that time.

**W**ILL the reactionaries be the ones who get the ultimate advantage out of all these new and knotty problems? I don't think so, as they are too badly compromised by imperialism, colonialism, witch-hunting, and cold-war fanaticism. Dulles, Eden, and Mollet are too fresh from Guatemalan, Algerian, and Egyptian crimes for their mealy-mouthed hypocrisy about Hungary to go over. Besides, socialism, for all the problems it has uncovered, is the real tide in the affairs of men, and all the historic advantages are on its side.

There is a new birth of freedom in the world! In Asia, Africa, even South America, a many-millioned mass is rising to its feet, and cracking the old crust of imperialism and white supremacy. In our own South, the Negro has heard the new message and is driving with great intensity towards freedom and equality. In the countries of the Soviet bloc, the people are calling for a new model of socialism, more democratic and more in tune with their aspirations than the old. Even in staid Britain, the Labor Party got into a state of unparliamentary excitement recently and knocked Eden's Suez adventure into a cocked hat.

But in all this, the movement of American labor remains badly apathetic, and American socialism disgracefully stunted. Can we find a way to take our rightful place in this new birth of freedom and new advance of socialism? I am convinced we can, if the kind of a fresh start is made which many are beginning to realize is needed. With such a fresh start, a far more successful fight can be made against the witch-hunt, and a counter-offensive can be opened against the oligarchy that has been changing America into a nation of fear and conformity.

But to do that we have to attack our problem with complete honesty. We have to put the truth above other considerations, and break down old walls of dogma. Along that road a new movement can be born.

## Some Comments on Our Debt-Proped Economy

The following comments were elicited by Harry Braverman's article on debt, "Prosperity on Easy Payments" in our December issue. Readers who are interested in Prof. Pritchard's full treatment of the subject can read his lengthy article in the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, Nov. 10, 1955. Prof. Pritchard is Chairman of the Department of Economics at the University of Kansas.

Mr. Ray O. Caukin, a California economist whose comment follows that of Prof. Pritchard, is the author of "Economics and American Democracy."

### Point of No Return

by Prof. Leland F. Pritchard

**T**HE points I regard as being crucial to an understanding of the problem of debt are these:

- The present aggregate burden of all debt, public and private, is relatively low because we have been expanding debt, and particularly bank-financial debt, at such a fantastic rate. Non-bank financial debt expansion maintains the circuit velocity of funds; and bank-financial debt enlarges the money supply at the same time setting in motion forces which tend to increase the velocity of funds. All of this increases the *dollar* volume of the Gross National Product and the National Income and increases our ability to service accumulated debt.

- But there are limits, albeit indefinite and indeterminate, to the use of debt expansion as a device to keep incomes and employment high, and the burden of debt at tolerable levels.

The expansion of debt is stimulating, but the servicing of debt has a constrictive effect on the economy—and the obligation of servicing debt remains long after the multiplier effects of debt expansion have become dissipated. It requires therefore ever-larger dosages of debt expansion to achieve the same "hypodermic" effects.

- In due course, we will come to a fork in this road we are following; the one fork leads to hyper-inflation, a complete breakdown of government credit and the collapse consequently of our entire monetary and banking system. The other road leads to greater and greater degrees of government intervention (some call it totalitarianism) in economic processes. We have no other choice and I believe we will chose the second alternative. National bankruptcy is precluded, if we wish to forestall it, because of our vast productive capacity and because our debts are held internally. But before we come to the point of no return, so to speak, we will have a lot more of the slow-burning kind of inflation that we have experienced since 1942.

- The pervasive effects of monopoly elements in our price structure, combined with the apparent commitment of the federal government to maintain high levels of employment, will lead to further inflation in spite of our high and increasing productivity. These pricing practices create a deficit in purchasing power. Purchasing power created in the production process is inadequate, even if fully utilized to clear the markets at the prices asked. To avoid the unemployment that would otherwise result, we supplement this purchasing power with new bank credit, i.e., monetized debt expansion.

The real question in my mind is not whether we will or will not have a controlled economy; the real question is: Who will be the controllers? And for what purposes and objectives will the controls be exercised?

### Unreality of Capitalism

by Ray O. Caukin

**C**ONGRATULATIONS to Harry Braverman on the clarity and comprehensiveness of his treatment of "Prosperity on Easy Payments." He shows up the merry-go-round of debt in its frantic chase of "prosperity" by as artificial a system of rides on "nothing down," as a carnival imitation of horseback riding on a ticket for a dime. At least, however, the carnival gets only what it is entitled to. Mr. Braverman explains the exploitative course of the debtors' periodical payments and the interest payments on government debt.

I hope that the discussion is not ended with Mr. Braverman's speculation on what capitalism has in mind in the way of feeding the government and consumer debt machinery with expansion formulas and projects.

The situation calls for something that will provide a base of reality in the economy. The unreality of capitalist management is due to the people's mental and emotional resistance to extending democratic principles into the area of getting and enjoying a living, the area of economic concern for good living for all Americans, and all peoples, for that matter. Political and civil democracy must be joined by economic democracy, and made genuine all the way through, to give the American way of life an acceptable meaning.

Our way of life as we see it in the extremes in opportunities for well-being, and in the cruelty and distress in American life, is not the democratic way, nor the way of humaneness demanded by loyalty to religious truth. Religious truth and economic principle have the incentives and guide posts for progress on the true way of life.

## Rebellion on the High Plains

*POLITICAL PRAIRIE FIRE* by  
Robert L. Morlan. University of  
Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1955,  
\$5.75.

**T**HE last of the great farm revolts was in many ways the most spectacular. In the Nonpartisan League, which originated in North Dakota early in the first World War and spread as rapidly as a prairie fire to a dozen other states, the American farmer seemed at last to have found a weapon with which to confront Big Business on terms of equal combat. But the discovery, if such it was, came too late to fulfill its promise, as the farmer's weight in the economy, numerically, industrially, and politically, was waning too fast by the twenties of this century for it to be anything more than a last gasp of revolt.

Professor Morlan of the University of Redlands in California has written a first-class story of the meteoric movement. He has caught a lot of the spirit of the rebellion as it is portrayed in the accounts of such participants as Herbert E. Gaston, whose 1920 book, written before all the returns were in on the League, doesn't read badly even now. Morlan's research work has been exhaustive enough for a definitive book, and he has supplemented his reading with personal interviews of many of the leading participants in the movement. But he hasn't made the mistake of dumping his wheelbarrow-load of index cards at the reader's feet; he has done the work of sifting and analyzing without which no book should go to the printer, and the result is a lively and judicious narrative that holds the interest.

When one reads today the factual story of the rooking the Northwest wheat farmers were getting in the years before the Nonpartisan League, there is little room left for feelings of surprise about the explosive backing the League got. Rather, it is surprising that Minneapolis and St. Paul, headquarters of the banking, milling and railroad interests that milked the farmer, were left standing intact.

"This section of the Upper Midwest," Morlan writes, "with its severe winters and short growing seasons, produced some of the world's finest wheat. This wheat, possessed of superior milling qualities, was in constant demand, and since farms for the most part had been acquired by pre-emption and homesteading and thus represented an insignificant investment for land, the raising of it should have been a highly profitable enterprise. Unfortunately, however, while fortunes were indeed being made from wheat, the average farmer was hard-pressed to provide the bare necessities for his family and keep up the interest on his debts. The profits appeared to be going instead to that familiar bugbear of producers, the "middleman"—in this case an amazing combination of middlemen consisting of line elevators, terminal elevators, commission houses, grain brokers, millers, speculators, and so on."

**I**N 1900, only 31.4 percent of North Dakota farms were mortgaged, but ten years later the figure stood at 50.9 percent, one of the highest in the nation. And the average mortgage indebtedness had nearly tripled. The primary squeeze was put on the farmer by the system of grain grading. Dr. Edwin F. Ladd, professor of chemistry at the state agricultural college and an important figure in the Nonpartisan League, showed the loss to the farmers of North Dakota in a single year to be well over \$5 million as a result of sharp practices in grading wheat.

This particular steal worked as follows: Wheat was graded into six classes upon purchase: numbers one, two, three and four, no grade, and rejected. As an example, one Duluth elevator is recorded as having purchased a total of 890,243 bushels of grain, of which no less than 377,030 bushels were bought at prices for No. 4 grade or lower. Yet when the same wheat was

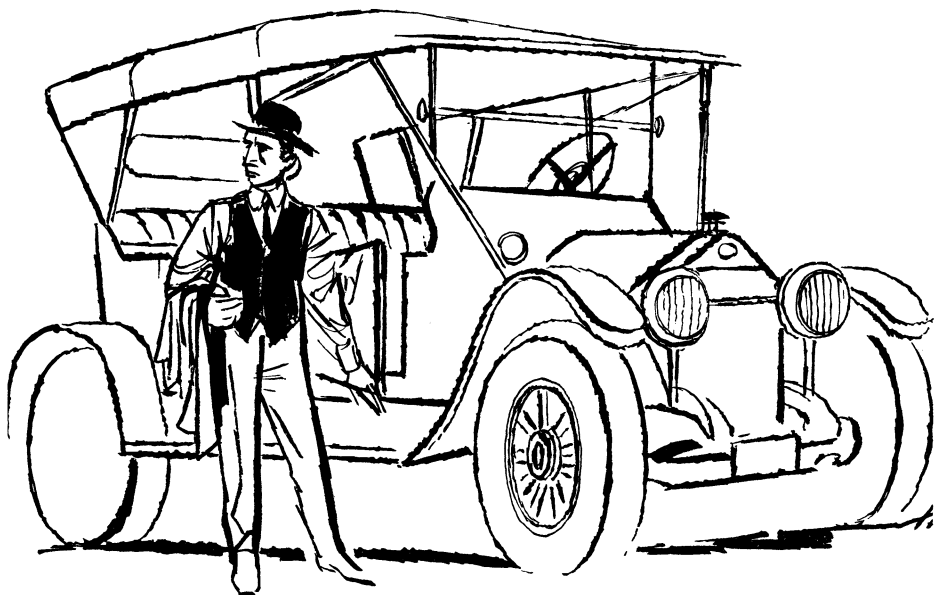


shipped, none of it was sold at any price lower than that for No. 3 grade. Fully 467,764 bushels were shipped as No. 2 grade, although the elevator had paid No. 2 prices for only 141,455 bushels; and twice as much No. 1 wheat was shipped out of the same lot of grain as was paid for to the farmers. On top of all this, the farmer was forced to pay "dockage" for impurities in the wheat, despite the fact that when it was later sifted out it was sold for \$20 a ton.

The farmer was dazed by the regularity with which he saw wheat prices drop as soon as the crop was ready for harvest, and he was forced to sell at the lower price because he had no place to store. With fifty bushels of "phantom" wheat being bought and sold by speculators on the floor of the Minneapolis grain exchange for every bushel the farmer raised, the market was rigged and manipulated mercilessly by concentrated interests to fleece the unorganized farmer.

When grain was being exported in large quantities, to warring and hungry Europe in 1915, the farmers who raised oats and wheat could easily calculate that they were being fleeced out of \$4½ million a week in the foreign trade, over and above the regular commissions and handling costs taken by grain exporters. Railroad rates had not gone down in North Dakota from the time the roads were first built, although traffic had increased a hundred times over; leaky cars furnished by the roads jolted out an average of seven bushels a car along the roadbeds, an illegal loss for the farmer as the law required the supplying of well-coopered cars. Banks charged as much as the traffic would take; a report in 1915 showed that two-thirds of the national banks in North Dakota were charging usurious interest rates, over ten percent!

**PROTEST** against this state of affairs was not lacking, but earlier Grangerism and Populism had not worked much of a change in North Dakota. The American Society of Equity did not go beyond some ineffectual lobbying, and the Farmers' Union was very new. The agricultural college was a hotbed of sedition in the eyes of the financial and political manipulators. President Worst and Dr. Ladd dug up a lot of the facts and fig-



ures that would later be used as potent ammunition, but what could a few professors do against the interests if the farmers were not in motion? Once the farmers could be gotten to move, however, if they handled themselves right they were bound to be a powerful force in North Dakota, where the population was 70 percent rural, and no city was larger than 20,000.

Although farm protest would certainly have been forthcoming in one strong form or another, a lot of the success and power of the Nonpartisan League was unquestionably due to the remarkable gifts and energies of Arthur C. Townley. Townley, originally from Minnesota, had taught school for a couple of years after getting out of high school, and then had a varied career as plasterer's helper, wheat farmer and flax grower. In this last venture, which occupied him from 1907 to 1912, he had become one of the largest flax growers in North Dakota, and, with everything sunk into one huge crop in 1912, he was hit first by an early frost and then by a wildly speculative market which dropped the price of flax to one-third its former level. Ruined, \$80,000 in debt, and radicalized, he turned first to the Socialist Party, comparatively strong in North Dakota at this time.

**TOWNLEY** was a boomer; his whole instinct went against doing anything in a small way or at a slow pace. He was also a man of exceptional abilities as a speaker, organizer, and leader

of men. He had read widely in his youth in economics, politics, and philosophy. But he was not a man for the contemplative political life, and when he went into the Socialist Party he started organizing farmers in a business-like way. The party set up a special "organization department" for him, which would take in farmers upon their agreement with a moderate farming program that stressed state-owned facilities for milling, marketing, storage, credit, and insurance.

Within three months, Townley had hired four organizers to tour the state in Fords, and the new department soon had almost as many members as its parent organization. But here the Socialist Party felt itself running up against the classic difficulty of American radicalism in that the kind of mass organization Americans were ready for fell considerably short of the standards of socialism, and the party heads saw themselves threatened by a tail that would soon wag the dog. At the January 1915 state convention, the Socialists voted to discontinue the program, leaving Townley, who had meanwhile run for the legislature on the Socialist ticket, feeling considerably miffed, so that he severed his connection with the party.

In February, the idea for the Nonpartisan League was born in his mind, and he went to work on a prominent farmer in the northern part of the state, Fred B. Wood. Within a few days, Wood and his two sons were con-



vinced to the point of giving the thing a whirl, a platform was scribbled out, and the bobsled was hitched up for a bit of recruiting. Dues were set at \$2.50 a year, and the very first day, nine of Wood's neighbors were signed up. The first 77 visits, as a matter of fact, were all successful.

The idea of the Nonpartisan League was both extremely simple and breath-takingly grandiose. Its program embraced the basic propositions of the Socialist Party's "organizing department": State ownership of terminal elevators, flour mills, packing houses, and cold-storage plants; state inspection of grain and grain dockage; exemption of farm improvements from taxation; state hail insurance; and rural credit banks operated at cost. All of these proposals had generally received farmer endorsement for a number of years.

**B**UT Townley had introduced a startling innovation in the means for securing the program. He proposed a whirlwind campaign to take over the entire judicial, legislative and executive machinery of the state government by means of a nonpartisan political association which would mobilize the votes of the farmers for candidates pledged to the League. In practice, as the Republican Party dominated the politics of the state almost as much as the Democratic Party dominated the Southern states, this meant taking over the Republican Party. Since the choice of candidates by direct primary had recently been introduced in North Dakota, the farmers were to put up a full slate at the next primary, with the object of capturing as many places as possible.

The organizing campaign was in itself among the greatest of innovations. Quick to seize upon the latest of salesmanship practices, Townley soon had a large corps of organizers trained to deliver a strong spiel out in the field in Fords—the early cars being bought on credit and the later ones financed out of dues. The organizers would generally take along their most respected convert in the neighborhood, and after getting him to make the introductions and recommend them to the new prospect, they went into their routine. Often, they brought along a hired hand to take over the farmer's

chores while he talked with the organizer or while he went along to the next farm. The organizers were paid on a percentage basis, and accepted dues in post-dated checks, against the time when the harvest was in and the farmer had some ready cash. Dues were soon raised, first to six dollars a year, and later to sixteen dollars for two years, to cover operating costs.

**Y**OUNG and enthusiastic farmers as well as Socialist militants were recruited for the work and given a careful training; within a few months, dozens of Fords were rolling. The chief reliance was upon radicals—socialist, IWW, or other—as they had the zeal, stump experience, and idealism for the work. By the fall of 1915, 18,000 members had been signed up, and for the first time, after months of rumors about "six-dollar suckers," the organization was unveiled with the publication of the *Nonpartisan Leader*, a paper planned for December 1915, but issued somewhat earlier to reassure the farmer-members. Charles Edward Russell, the well-known Socialist writer and lecturer, was brought to Fargo, as well as a number of other Socialists, John M. Baer was pressed into service as cartoonist, and a well-edited, informal, and hard-hitting paper was started.

The first public meeting of the League was held in an out-of-the-way spot, as the leaders had no way of knowing whether they would be able to hold successful meetings, but it was a rousing affair, and from then on the largest meetings and parades in state history were regularly organized by the Nonpartisan League. Thus, after a brief eight or nine months, the new organization suddenly emerged from behind a veil of self-imposed secrecy to become a great power in the state, with a giant organization, a paper that had the largest circulation in the state, and a militant political program.

In February, 1916, the League organized a series of precinct meetings throughout the state, for the purpose of choosing delegates to district meetings, where both candidates to the legislature and delegates to a state convention would be voted on. The membership of the League, which thus far existed mainly in the form of figures on the books, recipients of the *Leader* through the mails, and stacks of post-

dated checks, responded in amazing fashion. Dozens of precincts saw a full 100 percent turnout of all members, and in not a single precinct of the state was an attendance of under 90 percent reported! In all, 26,000 farmers gathered on that sensational day.

On March 29 and 30, the state convention met in Fargo, where a full slate of candidates for state office was picked. Lynn J. Frazier, a respected farmer, was picked to run for governor, William Langer as candidate for attorney general, and three off-beat lawyers (a law professor, a single-taxer, and a Socialist sympathizer) as Supreme Court candidates. Most of the candidates were farmers who had not been office-seekers before their choice by the convention; this was especially true of the men running for the legislature.

**B**Y this time the Nonpartisan League was the storm center of state politics, and was undergoing a withering fire from the politicians and most newspapers of the state. Townley was a "socialist bankrupt," the League was the herald of "Red Anarchism" and the overturn of all law and order. The "free love" gambit, more shocking in that pre-Hollywood day, was pushed for all it was worth. The League and the *Leader* answered with considerable bite and cleverness, and the allegiance of the farmers remained solid.

The campaign was thus understandably lively, with Townley, who emerged as a great mass speaker, inspiring and sarcastic by turns, holding the center of the stage. To cut a long—and fascinating—story short, primary day dawned to the accompaniment of the worst electrical and rainstorms in state history, but when the returns were in it was found that the Nonpartisan League, seventeen months after it was born in A. C. Townley's energetic mind, had succeeded in nominating every one of its candidates for state office from the governor on down, by majorities of two to one in most cases, all three Supreme Court candidates, and 104 out of 120 of its candidates for the legislature. The forthcoming November elections were a foregone conclusion, and after they were held the Nonpartisan League found itself in control, lock, stock, and barrel, of every instrument of state government with the

exception of the Senate, where old forces held on by virtue of the fact that only a portion of that body was elected at any one time.

The new state administration was in actuality a third party, its participation in the Republican primary having been only the form through which the new party chose to operate. It had little in common with schemes for "infiltration" that have been so numerous in our history. It did not work with either wing of the Republican Party, the Progressives or the Stalwarts; it made no attempt to capture any of the party machinery (the state committee soon fell under its control as an unsought by-product of the election victory); it was organized in total separation from the structure or personnel of the Republican Party. It merely utilized the direct primary which the law provided for as a more practical way of mustering a vote than putting a third party in the field against both Republicans and Democrats.

**I**N power at Bismarck, the farmer-legislators soon found themselves confronted by a lot of complex problems. Townley organized them into a tight caucus, however, which met every night of the session to plan strategy and arrive at majority decisions that all League legislators were bound to uphold, although in practice a number of them jumped the fence from time to time. In the next election, the League took over the Senate, and in the years between 1916 and 1920, a portion of the program of the League was enacted into law over the bitter opposition of the diehard reactionaries. In 1916-17 alone, a state grain-grading system was established, constitutional amendments to enlarge the suffrage and to exempt farm improvements from taxation were put in the hopper, bank deposits were guaranteed by the state, a nine-hour limit on the working day for women was set, railroad rates and practices were brought under regulation, and state aid to rural education was almost trebled. A number of other important League measures were killed by the holdover Senate.

But within a month after the adjournment of the first League-dominated session of the legislature, the country entered the first World War, to the accompaniment of the long-remem-

bered wave of hysteria and chauvinism. In the Northwest states where the League was strong, the large German population made popular movements extremely vulnerable to divisive propaganda. The League was subjected to a ferocious jingoist assault.

This region of the country was heavily tinged with pacifism, anti-war sentiments, and so-called "isolationism," in part because of the large German-origin groups, in part because of traditional opposition to Wall Street profiteering and the draft of farm boys. Many of the League leaders had a Socialist Party background, and had strongly opposed entry into the war. Much of the League propaganda consequently had a strong anti-war flavor. But Townley and the others, anxious to preserve the organization, were careful to avoid any statements of outright opposition to the war, and in fact, once they were under attack, tried to make a record for the organization by backing Liberty Loans and patriotic drives of all sorts. Their opposition was transmuted into a vigorous attack on Wall Street profiteering in the war, a demand that wealth be drafted along with men, and a series of "war aims" for a democratic settlement.

**A**LL of this, however, was inadequate to ward off the inevitable assault by the old ruling powers, who were overjoyed to have secured this sturdy club to beat the League. Many prosecutions were initiated against League speakers on the charge of "seditious" utterance, and some were imprisoned (Townley was to serve ninety days himself after the war on a wartime charge). Meetings were broken up or prevented, organizers were tarred and feathered or beaten, and dumped across state lines, and other hysterical acts of violence perpetrated against the League. But the progress of the work in North Dakota does not seem to have been impeded too seriously. In other states, to which the League was now spreading (in 1917 the League already had 10,000 members outside North Dakota, and by 1920 could claim 200,000 members in 13 Western states) the progress of the League was undoubtedly slowed by wartime persecution. Nevertheless, the League gave the direct impulsion to the big farmers' movement in Minnesota out of which



the Farmer-Labor Party was to grow, and became a power in a number of other states in the next years.

The Nonpartisan League dominated North Dakota state politics completely from 1916 to 1921. Its accomplishments, as might be expected, were mixed and limited. Undoubtedly its greatest gains were in the field of state regulation of the grain trade, railroads, etc. Millions of dollars were shifted to the farmers as a result of these measures of control. A whole series of social and labor reforms also resulted from the League's efforts.

So far as state-owned enterprises are concerned, the record is not so clear. The new administration organized a state bank, and built one small grain elevator which it operated with dubious results. The banking business can get pretty complicated for radicals. The North Dakota bank was no exception. Were it operated on straight capitalist standards, it might have stayed more solvent, but then it would not have been very satisfactory to the farmers. Operated as an island of easy credit in a sea of capitalist profit-making, it was headed for trouble, and soon found it. While the bank, in the end, scraped through with a passable record, it was no shining light of the farmers' regime.

**T**HE League swept every election between 1916 and 1920, including a special congressional election in 1917. It sent a number of Congressmen—and later Senators—to Washington, and laid a permanent foundation for itself in North Dakota politics. But

its high point came within the first year after it had taken office, and after that its decline began.

The troubles that beset the League were the common ones of movements of its kind. First, it was beset by factional difficulties, as Townley's personal control ebbed and the movement became a rich trough for profit-and-office-seekers. Attorney General William Langer led the most important defection in 1919, and was instrumental in organizing the forces that were to defeat the League.

Then, its program gained such a resounding victory that, as is often the case with reform movements, it succeeded in creating a whole new climate of opinion and legislation, which was eventually adopted even by the opposition. The opponents of the League who eventually defeated it, in a special recall election in 1921, claimed to subscribe to every important tenet of the League, and they had among them enough defectors from the League to confuse the issues. The clearcut antagonism between farmer and banker that characterized the early days of the League's struggle was blurred by new and confusing lineups. And the opposition's claims weren't all fake, as the farmer had succeeded in establishing new standards of consideration for farm problems and the farm vote through the League, and even those who threw it out of office continued certain basic policies, such as the successful hail insurance, a new large grain elevator, etc. As a matter of fact, in the very election where the League was defeated, the voters approved most of the League program in a series of referendum votes.

**P**ROFESSOR Morlan pinpoints one of the main causes of the League defeat by recognizing that every insurgent tide has its ebb: "Perhaps the most important cause, however, was one that has always plagued movements of reform. It is a herculean and well-nigh impossible task to keep a large mass of people sufficiently excited over a 'cause' for them to exert themselves actively in its behalf over a long period of time. Especially when a part or all of the original objectives have been achieved does it become much easier to 'let George do it.' In many respects, therefore, the recall is less surprising

than that after six years of bitter strife and a tremendous opposition campaign the League program should be sustained and its candidates defeated by only a narrow margin."

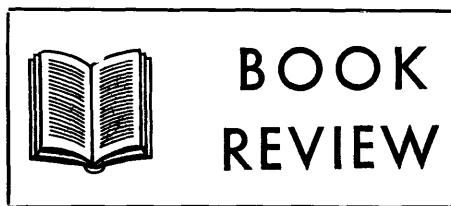
The truth of this is exemplified in the decline of A. C. Townley in the councils of the organization. As the League created its own stratum of successful politicians, and adjustments were made with regular Republican elements, his single-handed hold was loosened, and the kind of crusading zeal he exemplified was less and less in demand in League campaigns. The state committee pretty well froze him out of the campaign of 1921, and his absence was only a reflection that the idealistic spirit which had made the League a movement of special significance in American history was subsiding. Of Townley himself, the author relates:

*It is a striking commentary on the fortunes of politics that the man who once made governors and legislators, whose word was law to tens of thousands of faithful followers, whose speaking swayed multitudes as but few men have ever done, known at once as a savior and a demon, acknowledged foremost leader of one of America's great movements of protest, should today be a virtually penniless traveling salesman, lonely, unknown to most who meet him, wandering aimlessly through the states in which he once knew fame and honor.*

**T**HE relationship of the Socialist Party to the movement was rather negative. Its early decision to discontinue Townley's wholesale organization of farmers was based on the notion that the Socialist Party could not pretend to be either a labor union or a farmers' union. Weighty as this idea is, the SP heads made of it a kind of organizational fetishism. Instead of assisting and cooperating with Townley in the organization of an independent movement with informal friendly relations to the Socialist Party, too many Socialists could only see in it a rival and one which had to be damned for that reason.

Thus, apart from occasional enthusiastic references to the farmers' revolt by some party papers or spokesmen, the Socialist attitude was unfriendly. In their concern about the numbers of Socialists who were enlisting for work under the new banner, and in their eagerness to refute ill-advised proposals for "merger" with the farmers' movement—totally illusory in any event—the Socialists missed the historic meaning and sweep of the upsurge. They forgot that socialists could appraise and back a genuinely popular movement without necessarily dissolving themselves in it. Their concern for the doctrinal integrity of their own movement was certainly laudable, but an integrity that is preserved at the expense of antagonism to genuine, if partial, popular movements is badly served.

H. B.



### *Fifty Years of Struggle*

*THE GREAT ROAD*, by Agnes Smedley.  
Monthly Review Press, New York, 1956,  
\$6.75.

**A**GNES Smedley was of that splendid company of American journalists who went abroad and got caught up in the

great liberation struggles of our era. Born in Missouri in 1893 of a poor working-class family, she first went to China as a correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and soon became closely identified with the Communist leaders, although she never became a member of the Communist Party. Her books, "China's Red Army Marches" and "Battle Hymn of China," won her an international reputation as a chronicler of the events in that distant country, and made her an invaluable propagandist in the English speaking world for the Chinese Communist cause.

The present work, subtitled "The Life and Times of Chu Teh," is based on a series of conversations that she had with the Chinese Red Army head in 1937 at Yen-an, after she decided that his life exemplified the Chinese revolutionary struggle and that she would write a biography of him. The

conversations were never finished as Chu Teh left for the front with the beginning of the Sino-Japanese war, and Miss Smedley's failing health prevented her from completing the work. The manuscript consists of a first draft, parts of which are skimpy, and there is a complete break between the years 1931 and 1934, either due to the loss of part of her draft, or because she never had the opportunity to work up her notes of this period. Miss Smedley left China in 1941 and was never able to go back again. She died early in 1950, and after her death, several attempts were made—all unsuccessful—to publish the manuscript. It first saw the light in a Japanese translation and is issued by Monthly Review Press for the first time in English.

As a semi-biography, the book naturally concerns itself quite a bit with the life of Chu Teh. Primarily, however, it is of that genre that other journalists have popularized, part biographical sketch, part social reporting and historical description. The results are engrossing and informative when well done, and Miss Smedley's book, despite its hasty and unfinished state, is of this class. It is written in lively style and she is thoroughly conversant with her subject.

**C**HINA achieved its victorious revolution in 1949-50 only after a half century of agony, in which every manner of reform, revolt and resistance was tried out, with each succeeding effort ending in ignominious defeat.

In 1898, the movement of "Hundred Day Reforms" swept through the country projecting the creation of a new modern capitalist China, walking in the footsteps of Japan. But the movement did not touch the fountainhead of all evils, the system of feudal land tenure. The peasant therefore remained indifferent, the middle-class reform movement soon petered out, and darkness descended over China, as before. Two years later began what Westerners called the Boxer Rebellion. A surging mass movement, largely unarmed and all but politically leaderless, it spread from Tientsin to Peking, and for a short spell even forced the cowardly Manchu Court to pay it lip service. The imperial Court maneuvered to divert the movement into one aimed solely at the foreigner—in order to save the dynasty. At the same time it was underhandedly negotiating with the imperialists to betray the Boxers. The imperialists suppressed the revolt with utmost savagery

and imposed an indemnity that bankrupted the country.

Next, came the Sun Yat-sen movement which eventually led to the formation of the Kuomintang. Japan's defeat of Russia in 1905 made a deep impression in Asia. Dr. Sun was in Japan at this time, a revolutionary exile with a heavy price on his head. It was there that he founded in 1907 the Tung Meng Hui, an alliance of secret revolutionary societies whose goal was the armed overthrow of the Manchus and the establishment of a Republic on the Western model. For the next four years the storm clouds kept gathering as the dynasty was selling the country, parcel by parcel, to the imperialist powers. Finally, in 1911, revolutionary troops entered Yunnafu, and the rule of the Manchus was at an end. Chu Teh explained: "The dynasty was so rotten that when we blew on it, it collapsed."

But independence and unity still eluded China's grasp. The Republican National Assembly met in Nanking in December 1911, elected Dr. Sun Yat-sen as provisional President, and drew up a democratic constitution. But on the insistence of the imperialists, Sun Yat-sen was forced to withdraw as President in favor of General Yuan

## Bernhard J. Stern, 1894-1956

**T**HE death of Professor Bernhard Stern has brought to a halt the career of an eminent teacher, scientist and writer. Stern's contribution to anthropology will be measured, as it has always been, by his colleagues. Likewise, his influence as a teacher is an aspect of his career measured best by the many pupils who studied under him. What I shall confine myself to is Stern's dedication to scientific truth and to a socialism which provides a generous place for the welfare and values of the individual.

Stern's approach to the science of anthropology was optimistic as to its potential and critical of its present status. The analysis of culture requires an intimate knowledge of history, biology and economics for its fruitful development. Stern's belief in a firm historical mooring for anthropology was strengthened by his work on, and attachment to, the ideas of Lewis H. Morgan and Frederick Engels. He provided ample evidence that anthropology need not be restricted to differentiating the cultures of primitive and advanced societies. He used the anthropological approach to illumine the myths, mores and meaning of medical practice in modern civilization. He was acknowledged to be an expert in all phases of the social impact of medicine.

Stern's knowledge of genetic literature prevented him from accepting Lysenko's speculations on the mutability of the gene. He never confused the ideological and the scientific, rejecting the practice of making the latter the sacred cow of the former. He dispassionately catalogued the ambiguities of method and evidence that characterized Lysenko's polemics in genetics and agronomy. Unlike Julian Huxley, Stern's critique stemmed not from an effort to ridicule Soviet society, but to show others that a respect for Russian achievements is sometimes best expressed by analyzing its not infrequently dismal failings.

Historical materialism played an important role in shaping Stern's views on anthropology. He believed that its dilemmas would remain intact just as long as its practitioners tended to crude data-gathering on one hand, and fatuous claims that anthropology embraced the whole of science on the other. A science lacking a sufficiently clear perspective as to its

scope could hardly claim to be infallible. In the historical matrix, in the unfolding of economy and polity elucidated by Marx, Stern envisioned well-defined limits within which anthropology could make vital contributions to scientific knowledge.

The respect for historical concreteness did not diminish Stern's belief in the values of individual liberty. His historicism had "insistently to take account of man as a dynamic agent in culture. . . . Faith in the ability of human beings to influence the course of history, to plan the direction of cultural change. . . ." ("Historical Materialism," in *Philosophy for the Future*). This humanist strain in Stern urged him to conceive of socialism as so enriching the intellectual and moral qualities of man as to allow the fullest possibilities for self-expression and self-fulfillment. Love and friendship, the prattle of the present, would become the practice of the future.

**S**TERN worked ceaselessly to purge anthropology of an inherited colonialist bias. He saw the solution to the problems of applied anthropology in a willingness to transform the words "self-determination" from a sentimental illusion into a living credo for the poverty-stricken millions. By demonstrating the basic equality of men, despite racial and cultural differences, and differing forms of development, anthropology was peculiarly well-suited to help effect a more democratic solution to the problems of men.

Above all, Stern was a scientist, concerned with the possibility of making the method of science a part of the common pool of experience. Only through the mechanism of science, its outlook and results, was it possible to reconstruct the basis of economy and culture. For Stern, socialism represented the first intelligent endeavor to harness the energies of science to responsible human goals. One can honor Stern's memory no better than by recalling his tribute to the great Franz Boas. "He will be remembered not only as a scientist pre-eminent in his field, but as one who courageously identified himself with the common-man in the struggle for a better society."

IRVING L. HOROWITZ

Shih-kai, the same general who had betrayed the 1898 reform movement to the Dowager Empress. "We could blame foreign imperialism for the abortion of the 1911 Revolution," Chu Teh told Miss Smedley, "yet the foreigners could have done nothing whatever had there not been Chinese willing to sell themselves and their country."

**T**HE fruits of the revolution dried up, and in 1913 Yuan Shih-kai secretly signed the scandalous Reorganization Loan with foreign bankers, and used some of the funds to equip armies which enabled him to foist his personal dictatorship upon the people. It was not to endure too long. By 1916, Yuan succumbed to the widespread revolt when revolutionary troops shattered a large part of his armies. "The government which replaced Yuan's was again a compromise with militarism and imperialism. Only in name was it a Republic. . . . Local militarist armies swarmed everywhere, ruling territory as their private property. Warlordism, sired and fed by foreign money, was Yuan Shih-kai's legacy to China."

The Student Movement of 1919 was the high point of the cultural renaissance whose starting point was Peking National University, where a galaxy of brilliant professors in 1915 challenged the old feudal culture and proclaimed the "New Tide," whose watchwords were democracy and modern science. On May 4, Peking professors and students led huge demonstrations against the local warlord and protested Allied betrayal of China at the Paris Peace Conference. The movement shook the whole country to its foundations. Two years later, at Dr. Sun's call, the Republican Parliament assembled in Canton, and in an attempt to revive its moribund movement and capitalize on the new revolutionary ferment, proclaimed a new national government.

For a quarter of a century, by this time, China had been striving mightily to break the chains that bound it to feudalism, disunity, foreign oppression and grinding poverty, and all its efforts had thus far come to nought. The 1898 movement had petered out; the Boxer Rebellion had been crushed; Dr. Sun's 1911 Republic produced Yang Shih-kai and warlordism. The Chinese middle classes, upon whom all these movements depended for leadership, couldn't master the situation, were unable to drive out the foreign marauders and create a modern Chinese state.

**A** NEW force now entered the arena, arising from the example of the 1917 Russian Revolution. In 1921 the Communist Party was organized and quickly became a sizable organization with large influence among the students, intellectuals and workers. While its founders were the leading figures of the May 4 student movement, it based its program on the workers and peasants. The same period saw the stormy organization of trade unions, strongly influenced in turn by the Communist development. Sun Yat-sen, disillusioned with his long years of fruitless courting of the West-

ern democratic statesmen, entered into an alliance with Russia in 1923, and upon his request, Soviet political and military advisers were dispatched to China.

The dramatic story of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, its tragic betrayal by Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang leaders, and the butchery of the flower of the proletariat, has been told many times, and has been enclosed in the pages of a literary masterpiece, "Man's Fate," by André Malraux. Chu Teh's guarded comments furnish additional evidence that the present Chinese Communist leadership has pondered deeply the lessons of this tragedy, and learned from the costly mistakes which the early Communist leaders committed. Miss Smedley reports Chu Teh as relating with bitterness how the Chinese Communist leaders "were trailing along under the leadership of the Kuomintang . . . insisted on asserting its own leadership on basic revolutionary issues. . . . [They] refused to allow the workers and peasants to be armed lest such an action split the united front with the Kuomintang."

This is in truth the rock on which the revolution was broken. The Communists deliberately held back the peasants from taking over the land and the workers from seizing power in the cities lest these actions antagonize their Kuomintang middle-class allies away from the revolution. The revolutionary forces consequently grew bewildered and demoralized; at the decisive moment, Chiang Kai-shek made a deal with the imperialists and started the White terror (which by 1931 accounted for 300,000 executions). But Chu Teh insists on putting all the blame for the bungling on the Chinese Communist leadership of that period. Miss Smedley reports him as saying: "What the policy of the Communist International was at the time he did not know."

Of course, this is diplomatic cant. The policies of Chinese Communism were furiously debated by the Comintern for over two years, they constituted one of the important planks of the Trotsky opposition, then inside the Comintern, and Communist literature of that period is literally saturated with these polemics. Chu Teh would have had to have been deaf, dumb and blind to have been unaware of the policy of Stalin and the Communist International in the 1925-27 revolution. But the Chinese leaders, like the Russians, have their own party mythology, whose laws are governed by diplomatic usages and needs, and not the objectivity of impartial scholarship. Actually, the main lines of Chinese Communist policy throughout the revolution were set by Stalin and Bukharin, the ruling Russian diumvirate of this period. Even Agnes Smedley, who generally echoes her hero, is moved to remark that "Chu apparently ignored the influence of the Russian advisers."

Huberman and Sweezy remark in their publisher's foreword: "It is sad but true that there is still no reasonably comprehensive and dependable book in English on the background and course of the Great Revolution of 1925-1927." Actually, there

is such a book: "The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution" by Harold R. Isaacs, first published in London by Secker and Warburg in 1938. Isaacs, who spent many years in China and is an authority on Chinese affairs, was under the influence of Trotsky when he wrote the book, and like many Marxists of other wings, he didn't appreciate the enormous significance of the peasant army organization after 1927 of Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh, and went even further awry in his evaluation of the Yen-an movement. But his description of the 1925-27 events is comprehensive and authoritative, and his basic analysis on this is very similar to the later conclusions of Mao Tse-tung and his associates.

**T**HE second half of Miss Smedley's book provides many dramatic passages and supplementary side-lights on the subsequent course of the revolution: The Autumn Harvest Uprisings, the organization of the Chinese Soviet Republic in the Kiangsi border area, the struggles within the Communist Party and the victory of the Mao Tse-tung leadership around 1933, the defeat of the Red Army in Chiang Kai-shek's fifth "annihilation" campaign, the unbelievable Long March and creation of the Yen-an Republic in the deep interior, the battles with the Japanese and the final civil war.

The second Chinese revolution is one of the major events of the Twentieth Century, and the publishers could have said with more justification that no all-round authoritative work exists in English of this revolution, although a big literature is accumulating on various aspects of it. When the historian—whoever he may prove to be—finally sits down to this formidable task, he will find "The Great Road" a valuable source book for his work.

B. C.

## *Slums and Minorities*

*FORBIDDEN NEIGHBORS: A STUDY OF PREJUDICE IN HOUSING, by Charles Abrams. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1955, \$5.00.*

**M**R. Abrams has two previous books and many articles on housing under his belt, not to mention his practical experience on the housing front on local and national levels. The result is a factual and readable study, which deserves the widest circulation. The book is addressed to everybody who is involved with the housing problem, and that comes about as close to everybody as anything can get. After all, the housing problem is dilapidation, high rents, small rooms, mortgages, five-floor walkups, chipped paint, neighborhood schools, and so on.

In his preface Mr. Abrams introduces us to what he is writing about. In the course of his work, he learned:

*Homeowners, home-builders, and mortgage-lenders seemed convinced that peo-*

ple should live only with their own kind, that the presence of a single minority family destroys property values and undermines social prestige and status. . . . Even the federal government was making racial exclusion and neighborhood homogeneity its official position.

The result is that in America the slum problem—and American slums are among the worst in the world—is largely a minority problem. Statistically, that means that of the nine million new dwellings built since 1935, less than one percent went to non-whites who comprise 10 percent of the population.

In the second half of 1951, the Miami area witnessed 20 actual or attempted dynamitings to keep Negroes and Jews in their place, which means someplace else. In New York it is estimated there are 2,500 cases of rat bite each year, mostly in the Harlem slums. Overcrowding for whites decreased in 1940-1950, while it increased for nonwhites by 11 percent. 1945 to 1954 saw nine riots in Chicago, not to mention bombings, fires and assaults, designed to keep Negroes out of certain communities.

The list can be extended indefinitely, although Abrams himself goes beyond the simple listing of incidents to analyze some of the most glaring anti-minority outbursts throughout the country. This includes Detroit, where there were riots in 1942 and 1943, the latter causing 35 deaths. The CIO could convince its members that the races could work side by side, but not that they could live side by side.

**T**HE most prevalent and effective ways for keeping homogeneous neighborhoods homogeneous and for seeing to it that mixed neighborhoods end up that way as well are economic and informal compulsions. These, after all, have the advantage over riots in that they are so casual that you hardly know what's happening. When a Negro is refused a mortgage loan it doesn't make the papers. There's no news in a group of realtors making a "gentleman's agreement" not to sell to Jews. Or a willing builder suddenly finds land is not for sale. Or a Negro in a "disapproved area" cannot get fire insurance.

Furthermore, although slum clearance and urban redevelopment sound like very fine things, they are all too often used to oust minorities from certain areas:

*The federal enabling statute provided that accommodations had to be available for the displaced families. In practice, if the tenants were forced out or scared out, bought off or crowded in with others, the condition was considered "complied with." Overcrowding, the worst aspect of slum life, has been intensified by urban redevelopment and the conditions of minorities were made still more unbearable.*

Mr. Abrams emphasizes the shocking fact that the Federal Housing Administration

has embraced the racist doctrine that "inharmonious races and classes" represent a threat to property values. "With FHA and other federal aids, it has become possible to build a whole city and to tenant it with a group of a single race or color." Not only is it possible but it has been done, e.g., Cicero, Ill. and the two Levittowns. For the first time in this sphere a federal agency openly encouraged segregation and enforced it with all the powers it could bring to bear. Segregation and discrimination in housing moved from personal to institutionalized practice under official sanction.

Mr. Abrams does much to dispel the myths and fallacies surrounding the "danger" of an alien moving into the neighborhood. He points out that until recently the usual pattern was mixed neighborhoods—rich living next to the poor, black and yellow next to the white. In fact even many Southern cities, like New Orleans, have a mixed living pattern. The key to the problem is the housing shortage itself which creates keen competition for shelter, as well as the further consequences of deception, fear, and hate.

**I**F any criticism is to be levelled against this book it is in the area of solutions. Mr. Abrams puts much faith in education, although he fails to suggest how the pervasive influence of the National Association of Real Estate Boards is to be overcome. Often dubbed the most dangerous lobby in Washington, it wields strategic power in federal agencies by co-writing legislation and pushing appointments of friendly administrators. Its views are shouted on the radio and exhorted in the press. "At least once a month the big wire services—AP, UP, INS—put the lobby's releases to real estate editors on the wires as if they were authoritative market comment." There is not one textbook on real estate in use in the country which has not been written by a person from—or in a viewpoint of—the NAREB. Needless to say, the NAREB has a marked racist slant.

The housing problem, although in its worst features a minority problem, transcends minority groups. The solution to the housing problem does not lie in race relations but in housing. That means that any program for action, including the one Abrams outlines, soon knocks its head against the capitalist wall wherever its operation runs counter to the system of private profit. Even appropriate national legislation (little chance it would have to come to the floor of the present Congress) is not the complete answer. It could be subtly circumvented if not openly bi-passed. Mr. Abrams knows this, because he writes ably about the flouting of the immigration laws to allow Mexican 'wetbacks' to cross the Rio Grande when it's orange-picking time in California. "It is more practical to violate the law than to comply with it."

In other words, the facts point out that it is necessary to alter the social setup so drastically that to violate the law becomes impractical.

R. R.

## When the Witch Hunt Hits

*A SEASON OF FEAR* by Abraham Polonsky. Cameron Associates, New York, 1956, \$3.50.

**C**HARLES Hare, an engineer in the water and power system of a great American city, has everything a man needs to make him happy. He has a good job, and is just about to be appointed chief engineer and general manager of the water department. He is healthy, strong, and handsome, and never carries less than one hundred dollars cash on his person. Married to his childhood sweetheart, he is also a highly successful consumer, possessing a solid house, two cars, and two boys. The epitome of the fortunate American, he even lives in Los Angeles, completing his state of grace.

But, as this story opens, a sinister crack appears on the surface of his life, in the form of a loyalty oath, a few old subversive books in a trunk in his cellar that used to belong to his wife's deceased young brother, and an informer-neighbor. Charlie doesn't meet the test very heroically, but in the end he gets back a bit of his own by doing less than he should to try to save the informer from drowning.

The book is written in the scenario form whose practitioners fill the shelves of our bookstores and drugstores with a wide selection of reading on a multiplicity of subjects. The key to this branch of the novel is of course *entertainment* rather than art in any degree. Some of its practitioners also manage to get across a good bit of worthwhile propaganda or amusing satire.

Mr. Polonsky has dressed up his narrative with all the standard appurtenances of incident and tension, seduction, danger and conflict. But he quite naturally remains too tautly conscious of his high purpose to relax into free-flowing entertainment. On the other hand, the slight scenario-form he writes in cannot possibly encompass any serious psychological insight into the personalities of individuals touched by the witch-hunt.

Mr. Polonsky's book could make a pretty good movie. Do we hear any studios bidding?

L. C.

### A Correction

A review of "The Boxer Catastrophe" in these pages erroneously stated that British General "Chinese" Gordon was killed in that uprising. Actually, Gordon was killed at Khartum in 1885. He had been in command of British forces fighting the earlier Taiping revolt in China during the 1860's.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Du Bois Debate

In your rather intemperate reply to Dr. Du Bois' article entitled "Socialism and Democracy" in the January issue of the *American Socialist*, in the course of which you scathingly denounce his interpretation of socialism as "new semantics," you would have done well to have consulted your dictionary:

"Socialism," reads the Oxford Dictionary, "a theory or policy of social organization which advocates the ownership and control of the means of production, capital, land, property, etc. by the community as a whole, and their administration or distribution in the interests of all." The definition in the Random House Dictionary is virtually identical.

By these definitions, which I believe you will find to be of world-wide dictionary acceptance, Dr. Du Bois is shown to have been absolutely correct in his thesis that socialism has been established in the Soviet Union. While it is laudable to hope, or even believe, that the freedoms of democracy as Thomas Jefferson envisaged them will eventually be enjoyed by the people of the Soviet Union, their existence or non-existence at the moment have no bearing on the thesis advanced by Dr. Du Bois.

You would do well to gracefully devour your words.

Rockwell Kent, *New York*

[We had not thought of consulting a dictionary. But we have looked at hundreds of statements by authoritative socialists down through the years, among them the "Communist Manifesto" of Marx and Engels which announced over a century ago, "... the first step in the workers' revolution is to make the proletariat the ruling class, to establish democracy." That, as we see it, is the socialist goal. Our words stand.—THE EDITORS]

## Winds of Freedom

I thought you held up your end very well in the debate with Du Bois. The Stalinist forces apparently have got their second wind and are returning to positions once thought untenable. Apparently they find the winds of freedom a bit too raw for their sheltered bureaucratic souls. It's easier to deal with human beings through the police.

H. O. *Chicago*

As one who sincerely desires a socialist society, I would like to comment on the debate between W. E. B. Du Bois and the editors. . . .

Those who spend their time defining such terms as "democracy" and "socialism" make me feel ill. Of course democracy is

necessary and desirable, but the first task is to get rid of this vampire that is sucking our life's blood. What sort of society will develop afterwards is something no one knows. We do know that with such an historical background as ours, we will not tolerate tyranny in any form. . . .

I am impressed by the arguments of Dr. Du Bois. He has a tremendous grasp of the problem in building a socialist society. He reveals a world of reality, and is not too impressed by arguments over how things *should be*, but is mightily conscious of things as they are. . . .

D. M. *Pasadena*

The reply to Du Bois was brilliant—a fine contribution to the discussion taking place on the Left. I think I have some criticisms of your comments on "neutrality"; at least the subject requires further elaboration.

M. R. *New York*

## Necessary for Survival

It seems to me that Dr. Du Bois has the better of the debate. His statement is mainly a recital of known facts. His claim is that the program Russia followed was necessary for survival. The Russian austerity that you condemn is part of the necessity, and for Hungary to escape from it would leave Russia with the added duty of defending Hungary against the West. It was to be expected that the Russian government would refuse consent, and suspect the revolvers of capitalist aspirations. . . .

A. C. *Penna.*

Your editorial reply to Dr. Du Bois in the January issue of the *American Socialist* showed the clearest thinking I have yet heard on the subject.

It is further testimony to your scholarly understanding of history, your practical ability to use it to interpret current events, and your knack for phrasing your thoughts in such a way as to be understood by the general public. Certainly, a farther circulation of the *American Socialist* should rank high among the practical contributions of your readers.

A. R. K. *Baltimore*

## Argentine Scene

I have just spent a couple of months on a trip to Argentina. For a quick impression of things political in that country, I would say that they are pretty much in a state of flux, with rather obvious and predominant military control still the order of life. The large and small capitalists are, as one might expect, in favor of the present situation, with all of its militarism. But the members of the working class and the

artisans—in fine, all those of the lower-income groups who benefited from the social program of the old regime—are definitely against the new regime, which they view as the oppressor of the working classes.

The workers are still subjected to searches for weapons, etc., and the border controls against arms-smuggling are very tight. It would seem that the fear of a revolution has not, as yet, ceased to disturb those in power. They have apparently good reason to look for continued animosity on the part of the working classes, as many of the social benefits have been curtailed.

Free lunches and free clothing at the schools have been discontinued. With respect to this last item, it is interesting to note that the viewpoint of the workers is that standardization of clothing led to equality between schoolchildren of all classes; while now, once again, the offspring of the rich can show their superiority, while the poorer children must again show themselves poorly clothed—a matter of pride, perhaps, but one which the Argentinian workers take very seriously.

In view of these sentiments, it seems doubtful that truly free elections will take place there as long as the government can avoid it. Hints of a "stabilization period" are definitely in the air, and the wealthier Argentines to whom I talked are definitely opposed to any immediate elections.

R. M. *Brazil*

I thought Harry Braverman's last article, "Prosperity on Easy Payments" [December 1956], was particularly well done. It was so clear, simple, precise, that even a child (like myself) could understand it.

J. F. *Seattle*

## Reorganize and Rebuild

In renewing my subscription, let me express my appreciation of your splendid paper. I agree with your general idea that we must reorganize and rebuild the American socialist movement and begin again the struggle for a socialist America.

Many mistakes have been made, both in this country and abroad. Stalin made socialism into a horrid mockery of its original objectives and the capitalist's press has been exploiting Russian mistakes. . . .

In this country, a political party is really an alliance of several somewhat similar factions, rather than a purely monolithic party. American parties are more like the coalitions of Europe than they are like the European parties.

In short, we must build a big, powerful, quarreling movement, rather than a devoted, studious group. As Norman Thomas put it in a brighter day, "A party, not a church."

Of course, there is no need for another liberal party besides the Democrats. A new party must be socialist.

Also, since there is no state church in America and many liberal churchmen, anticlericalism will hinder rather than help us, and we have enough hindrances as it is.

... J. U. *Tacoma, Wash.*

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