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New Century Publishers • 832 Broadway, New York 3

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

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Vol. XXXVII, No. 2

FEBRUARY, 1958

political affairs

A Theoretical and Political Magazine of Scientific Socialism

Editor: HERBERT APTHEKER

The Battle for Civil Rights Today

By William L. Patterson

ON NOVEMBER 17, 1957, President Eisenhower named the men he wanted on the Civil Rights Commission authorized by the legislation passed during the first session of the 85th Congress. On January 3, 1958, though the men had not yet been confirmed by the Senate, the President met with his six candidates. There was casual mention of the scope and nature of the Commission's work. Three of these men have held responsible positions in the South and have never accepted the principle of full and complete equality for Negroes. The metropolitan press conspicuously displayed the pictures of the three Republicans, two Democrats and one Independent whom the President had chosen. The fanfare had begun.

The issue of Negro rights has long been the major political football in this country. The game is played on state and national levels. The teams are the Republican and Democratic parties, and the tempo of the play is determined by the height of the struggle for Negro rights at a given moment.

Neither side is animated by principle. The ninety-year-old failure of successive governments to end the subversion of the Constitution by racists is proof. No love of constitutional government or respect for human dignity; no great concern for the moral and political prestige of this country abroad; no concern for the status of constitutional liberties and rights at home, motivate either team. The stakes are the Negro vote, and have been for more than seventy-five years.

Impelled by the demands of an approaching election campaign or fear that the sweep of the struggle of the Negro people for more than formal rights, for fundamental relief from the tensions, frustrations and suffering of ghetto life, for new housing free of Jim-Crow restrictions, for desegregated schools and places of public service; an end to Jim Crow on transportation facilities, greater security in and more opportunities for employment; the right to vote and relief from gerrymandering—under the impact of the Negro's struggle to attain these ends, the players increase the tempo of the game. The political, economic, and cultural status of the Negro is wantonly sacrificed, while the Negro is led to believe that his acceptance of this program of terror is proof of his love of country and is necessary for domestic tranquility. Acceptance is the direct opposite of both.

The demagogy surrounding this whole question is indicated in the comment of the *U. S. News and World Report* (Sept. 5, 1957). That periodical, by no means hostile to the Administration, wrote: "The hope of the Eisenhower Administration [in the Civil Rights maneuver] is that results can be obtained before the next year's Congressional elections," meaning the Congressional elections of 1958.

What kind of results do the Republicans seek? The President's Civil Rights Commission is neither a law-making nor a law-enforcing body. There is no possibility that such a commission will or could solve any of the issues raised by the denial of constitutional rights to Negroes or remove any of the fundamental contradictions between federal and state governments and the Negro people. The government is not coming forward with a nation-wide educational program against racism.

The ideology of racism and the racist practices that are now characteristic of the United States, while rooted in monopoly exploitation, are policies of state and federal governments in their relations to Negro citizens.

Are the results sought by the Administration a new set of illusions to disarm Negroes, a new cloak to conceal old tactics of discrimination? Or, does this Administration want the Negro people to believe that at long last a government of the United States is prepared to accept its responsibility for their rights, lives, and property under the Constitution? Does it want the world to believe that a U.S. government is ready to assume its larger responsibilities to Negroes and the peoples of the world under the Charter of the United Nations which opens with the solemn promise:

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

Are these the results the Administration seeks? What is it doing?

Nothing has been done to popularize the civil rights legislation, to indicate the far-flung historical need for its relentless application, to illustrate its meaning in terms of national morality and integrity. Nothing fundamental has been done to curb southern governors or legislatures. This inaction impels the conclusion that with the initiation and passage of this civil rights law, the first in more than seventy-five years, the federal government has not discarded its policy of racism. Nothing associated with the implementation of the desegregation decision of the Supreme Court or the momentary use of federal troops at Little Rock, Arkansas, could lead to the conclusion that it had.

The Negro people must not again permit themselves to be the victims of a monstrous hoax. They must not forget—they must remember—that in 1948, after a war for democracy against Nazi Germany and the savage racism and bigotry of Hitler, another President, a Democrat, Harry S. Truman, created a Civil Rights Committee to investigate the evils and causes of American racism. The appeasement of the racists must come to an end. Such appeasement only weakens

respect for law and order and constitutional government. The lessons of the Truman Committee are invaluable.

Truman's Committee found "serious civil rights violations in all sections of the country." It proclaimed that "The protection of civil rights is a national problem which affects everyone." It recommended: "The elimination of segregation, based on race, color, creed, or national origin from American life." It outlined the necessary steps as it saw them. These were recommended in the fields of "employment, education, housing, health services and public services." Sensing the degree to which racism has been injected into the bloodstream of white America, the Committee called for: "A long-term campaign of education to inform the people of the civil rights to which they are entitled and which they owe to one another."

Nothing came of this.

The trial of the Hitler monsters took place. Their anti-Semitism was condemned. Some of them were punished with death. But the "deadly parallel" between a Hitler of Nazi Germany and a Byrnes of South Carolina, a Tam-madge of Georgia, an Eastland of Mississippi, was not emphasized except by the Negro people, some liberals and the Communists. It is an interesting fact that the government of West Germany has paid the Jewish victims of Hitler more than a billion dollars, but no restitution has ever been made or offered to the tens of thousands of Negro refugees from the racist terror in the South.

The recommendations of the Truman Civil Rights Committee for struggle against racism were forgotten. The Truman crowd went out of office, propelled in part by the protest vote of outraged Negroes. The Republican Party came to power. It ignored the Truman Civil Rights Committee's report to the nation. Racism was rampant and flaunted itself in every branch of government. But the fact meant no more to Republicans than it had to Democrats.

Even before the Truman Committee filed its report, it was a crime:

1. For public officers to deprive any citizen of his right to vote in any federal, state, or local election on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude;
2. For two or more persons, whether public officers or private persons, to conspire to "injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate any citizen in the free exercise or enjoyment of the right to vote in any election for President, Senator, or Representative";
3. Or in any election in which federal officers are to be chosen.

Violation of (1) and (3) are punishable by a fine of one thousand dollars or not more than one year's imprisonment. Violation of (2) is punishable by a fine of not more than five thousand dollars or ten years' imprisonment, or both.

Two years ago 1,238,038 Negroes were registered in twelve southern states. This number represented twenty-five percent of the Negroes eligible to vote. Not all of these twenty-five percent were permitted to vote. The Department of Justice complains that it is almost impossible to convict white election officials.

Federal Grand Juries refuse to hand down indictments. In Louisiana, barratry laws make it a crime for anyone, non-profit organizations included, to institute or support a suit seeking punishment for those who have deprived others of their voting rights because of color or creed. This is American democracy in operation. Neither the threat of criminal prosecution, nor of private civil suit is effective in practice, to make secure the Negro's right to vote or his dignity as a human being. The extent of the failure to implement the desegregation of more than a very small minority of Negro students, is a sorry but illuminating commentary on the government's "hopes."

What is the history of the government's attitude toward Negroes since Reconstruction?

No Administrative branch of government, Republican or Democratic, has ever called upon the Attorney-General to seek enforcement of the laws mentioned. During elections, there have been reams of demagoguery concerning the need for remedial action. After elections, the Negro's vote is in the ballot box.

The judicial branch of government repeatedly enforced legislation destructive of Negro rights and subversive of constitutional guarantees. It slavishly followed the now condemned "separate-but-equal" racist doctrine from 1896 to 1954. The argument was that the judiciary was a law-interpreting body with no mandate to make social changes or to delve into sociological problems. But its constitutional interpretations favoring Big Business and the plantation landlord at the expense of Negro rights and constitutional government were classic examples of class and race interpretations of the Constitution.

Congressional reaction successfully fought remedial legislation dealing with the Negro people. It talked to death all such proposed legislation as reached the floor of the Senate. Life has shown, through failure to rigidly enforce the desegregation position of the Supreme Court, that coordinated and integrated action on the part of the three branches of government is needed to insure a democratic decision of any one branch.

It was during the period immediately following the war to save democracy from the bigotry, racism and savagery of Hitlerism that the UN came into being. One of America's representatives at the historic San Francisco gathering that gave birth to the UN was the notorious racist, the Hon. James F. Byrnes of South Carolina, adviser to the President, soon after to be Supreme Court Justice, and later Governor of his home state, a man who was to announce that Negroes' blood would flow before white children would sit in desegregated schools in "his" state. As an architect of the UN, this man voted for a charter for the family of nations which proclaimed equal rights for all, and challenged disrespect for human rights as barbaric.

Membership in the UN has brought no change in the attitude of the American rulers toward the Negro people. The government of the U.S.A. has refused even to ratify the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The National Negro Congress, NAACP, the Negro National Labor Council, and the Civil Rights Congress unsuccessfully attempted to place the issue of the Negro's status in the U.S. before the General Assembly in a series of peti-

tions. Through the petition of the Civil Rights Congress, entitled "We Charge Genocide, the Crime of Government Against the Negro People," the government's responsibility for the degraded status of the Negro people was fully portrayed and documented.

* * *

The present civil rights law, in its original form, was launched in May, 1956, when Herbert Brownell, the Attorney General, appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee to sponsor it. *The Reporter*, a liberal journal, held that "the sharp smell of politics had hung over the civil rights bill from that moment." Senator Hennings, Democrat from Missouri, asked Brownell, what had become of civil rights measures sent to the Department of Justice by Democrats? His questions were ignored.

During the debate before the Judiciary Committee on the Civil Rights legislation, William Rogers, then head of the civil rights section of the Department of Justice—now Attorney-General of the United States—was asked to provide legal assistance from his department to aid with the questioning of witnesses. Rogers decided that such a step would be "a breach of Constitutional separation of powers."

When Rogers was asked to give some statistics on the work of the civil rights section regarding complaints it had received and how these had been handled, he had an ingenious answer. "The task of going through the existing records to attempt to construct such data would be," he said, "too great to permit our completing it in time to be included in the record of your hearing and I doubt that the results which could be obtained would be of sufficient reliability to justify the time and expense."

Negroes and all progressive Americans can judge from this how valuable to them is such a section of the Justice Department under a Rogers. Now he has charge of the whole Department of Justice. Later, Mr. Rogers made an "offer . . . to provide speeches and briefs" on these questions, only to have Senator William Knowland, supposedly a champion of the Administration's civil rights measures, say he "did not want us to do any lobbying." As Douglas Carter said in the *Reporter* of September 5, 1957, "Whatever the cause of the Justice Department's behavior—Democratic explanations range from incompetence to sabotage—there was certainly a shortage of authoritative statistics about the situation the civil rights bill was meant to remedy."

As passed, the bill authorized the creation of a Commission to:

1. Investigate the voting rights of Negroes;
2. Collect information concerning the legal difficulties constituting a denial of equal protection of the law under the Constitution;
3. Appraise the laws and policies of the federal government with regard to equal protection of the laws.

The original bill was criticized by the majority of the metropolitan press, including the *New York Times*, not on principle but on the ground that any

drastic effort to end racism might well meet with violent opposition from the racists. It was necessary to sneak up, as it were, on these violators of the Constitution and then to say "boo!"

The bill was savagely attacked by Congressional reactionaries of both parties. in the leadership of whom was Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. In violation of his oath of office to uphold the Constitution, Eastland has openly declared that Negroes will never be beneficiaries of the Constitutional guarantees. He has assembled the terrorist White Citizens Councils to prevent it.

The President made no effort to rally the country to the support of his own legislation. Neither he nor any so-called liberal Republican or Democrat grasped the splendid opportunity to mount a nation-wide ideological campaign against the monstrous evils of racism and racist terror. Yet there had never been a more favorable moment in American history to rally millions of whites and Negroes, in a fight to end the restrictions imposed upon voting rights, the cultural development and the simple dignity of Negroes as human beings and to strengthen Constitutional government in the U.S.A. Proof of this fact is to be found in the numerous church and labor resolutions which supported the bill in its first form.

The destructive effects of racist propaganda and its accompanying terror upon national morality and integrity were becoming the subject of vigorous discussions, not only in church and union councils, but also in general middle-class organizations. At the same time, racism was being condemned by millions of Asians and Africans, who understood the vast and irreconcilable difference between the high moral preachments of the American colossus and its practices in connection with colored peoples. The Bandung Conference brought this fact forward in all its clarity.

The Soviet Union and the People's Democracies in the UN had constantly referred to the racial prejudices of the rulers of America, much to the embarrassment of their representatives in the General Assembly. American racism was becoming anathema throughout the world. Its continued existence bade fair to have dangerous effects upon the trade relations of American monopoly with Egypt, the Arabian countries, and other eastern lands.

Here in the United States, the struggles of the Negro people reached amazing proportion. These struggles merged ideologically with the anti-colonial, anti-racist struggle of the Asian-African peoples.

Fifty thousand Negroes entered the Montgomery Improvement Association struggle against the degrading nature of Jim Crow buses. Tens of thousands entered the ranks of the NAACP, the better to attack legally segregation in the schools. The potentialities of these struggles forced the administrative branch of the federal government to introduce its bill as a political gesture. The failure of President Eisenhower to give strong support to his own measure when it was under racist fire revealed the absence of any real principle in his actions or any concern for the bolstering of constitutional government around this issue. An emasculated bill was passed.

In the light of the world situation, had the President stood four-square

on this legislation, the struggle of the Negro people and their allies against the racist theories and practices so long prevalent in the U.S. might have reached the proportions of a political crisis. This, the Administration wished to forestall at all costs.

Had there been unified and courageous Left leadership ready, willing and able to coordinate, clarify and deepen the struggles of the Negro people around today's issues, these struggles might well have merged organically with those of the Asian-African colonial nations. The Negro people were ready for the fight for constitutional and human rights. What was, and remains, lacking is a leadership that will reveal the link between this struggle and that for world peace and the freedom of the colonial peoples.

The argument has been made that half a loaf is better than none. How true this is depends upon the objective situation. In this case, the objective conditions were such that the whole loaf could have been secured. Three things were needed.

The first was leadership, prepared to engage in militant struggle.

The second was the development of the broadest possible program of action which included all who want to make this fight.

The third was the unity of the people, in which two factors were of vital importance: the unity of the Negro people and the unity of progressive white America, particularly the trade-union movement, with the Negro people. For this latter, an alliance must be forged, in which each group would have equal rights, and a division of labor would be agreed upon.

It is not the voting rights of Negroes that need investigation. These rights flow from the fundamental laws of the land and are, at least formally, one with the rights of all Americans. They can be denied through discriminatory practices in individual states only with the sanction of the federal government.

What needs investigation is the indiscriminate and unrestricted denial of Negro rights in a number of states without intervention in their behalf by the Justice Department, without a serious Congressional attempt at the passage of federal laws correcting these evils, without the Supreme Court interpreting the constitutional rights of the American people, free from color blindness.

The treatment of its own nationals is the acid test of the moral and political integrity of a government. The attitude of the rulers of America toward Negro citizens is in violation of the Charter of the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the Constitution of the United States.

What western Europeans must seriously consider in measuring the value of an alliance with American racists is the fact that the inhuman treatment of Negroes is proof of the hypocrisy of the protestations of the Dulleses that America has a right to moral leadership, that it has respect for human dignity, that it will act as custodian for the freedom of humankind.

The use of troops in Little Rock in the implementation of the Supreme Court decision is proof that the administrative arm of government acts for minority

groups only when enormous pressure is applied. The power to act has always been there.

The responsibility for the gross violation of the rights of Negroes in the U.S. rests with its imperialist government and those who dictate the course that it follows. In the south, this government has permitted the doctrine of states' rights to supersede the Constitution of the U.S. The substitution of the states-rights doctrine for the Constitution is in flagrant violation of constitutional government and reacts, not only against the ruthlessly exploited Negroes, but the great mass of white Americans as well.

* * *

The composition of the Eisenhower Commission offers little hope that in the ensuing 20 months it will even produce a document comparable to that which the Truman Civil Rights Committee gave us.

Eisenhower appointed as chairman of his commission Stanley F. Reed of Kentucky, a former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. This "liberal" racist has declined the honor. Doyle Elan Carlton, former Governor of Florida, for half a century a racist, has been substituted. The Commission includes Dean Robert W. Storey, a Texan, Head of Southern Methodist Law School, a Jim Crow organization, Rev. Theodore T. M. Hesburgh, a Catholic representative of the Vatican to the International Atomic Energy Agency and President of the University of Notre Dame; John A. Battle, the attorney who represented the Virginia School Board in its fight against integration; John A. Hanah, President of Michigan State University; and J. Ernest Wilkins, a Negro, who has been regarded by the Eisenhower government as safe enough to be made Assistant Secretary of Labor.

The majority of selectees lean toward racism in one or another form, or are subservient to those who follow the policy under which racism flourishes. These men bring nothing distinctive to the colossal task they would confront if the elimination of racism were sought. The Commission will be used to assuage the indignation of the Negro people, to slow down their mounting will to struggle and to divert their attention to investigatory practices. In other words, it is an instrument for delaying action.

Not since the period of the Civil War have the Negro people faced a future so filled with possibilities for successful struggle for equality. On every side once oppressed colonial peoples have decided against the way of life imposed upon them by the western imperialist powers. On every side peoples of color, inspired by the advanced position of the Soviet Union, China, and the People's Democracies, are merging freedom efforts. This is the meaning of Bandung and of the growing unity of Asia and Africa.

The rulers of the United States seek to hold the Negro people to an acceptance of its racist foreign policy. American monopoly seeks to prevent an organic merger of the Negro people with those who usher in a new era of human relations.

American imperialism is moved by fear and uncertainty as to how far the

Negro will go in this fight to compel enforcement of the constitution and how far it must go by way of concessions in order to mollify influential sections of the Negro people.

The tasks delegated to the new Civil Rights Commission were long ago the responsibility of the executive branch of government, the Department of Justice, and the F.B.I. under existing Federal Civil Rights law. A new civil rights law is no more sacrosanct than the old. But a new world situation makes successful mass struggle possible. The fight must be intensified, with a program worked out and fixed by calendar. It must be made the property of all, and especially labor. It must put country and love of country above government.

If the Negro people are to be free, the struggle must be deepened and sharpened. A Five-Year Plan for the total elimination of Jim Crow and segregation in the United States can and must be formulated. Such a plan could be a unifier of all humane, justice-loving, democratic-minded people. A master Five-Year Plan with calendar fixed goals for the enjoyment of the civil rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution would mobilize tens of thousands of Americans. It would immeasurably strengthen the struggle for national morality and integrity. It would reach into every household, and city council, every State assembly, every institution of government in the United States. Without capitulation to a "gradualist" position, it would give recognition to the need for time to develop the struggle.

The struggle could be directed toward the removal of all segregation measures from all statute books and the ending by law of the evil practices that reflect and make for the perpetuation of racial and religious bias and bigotry in counties, cities, states and nation.

A nation-wide educational program sponsored by labor and the church might well be inaugurated. Its goal could be the crystallization of the alliance that should be basic to American life. The mounting of such a Five-Year Plan is not an impossibility.

The power to evade the law differs from the will to evade it. The power to evade lies only with those in authority. The will to evade can exist only through sufferances and where those in power sanction lawless action. Jim Crow and segregation are policies of government in open and notorious violation of the Constitution of the United States and the UN Charter.

The elimination of Jim Crow is necessary for the preservation of our country, and the peace of the world. It is the responsibility of the American people.

By the time this magazine reaches its readers, Paul Robeson's book, Here I Stand, will be available. We shall treat this historic volume fully in an early issue; meanwhile, we know many of our readers will want to own a copy. The book may be obtained from Othello Associates, Box 283, Manhattanville Station, New York 27, N. Y. The price, paperbound, is \$1.50; clothbound, \$2.50.

IDEAS IN OUR TIME

BY HERBERT APTHEKER

FROM THE lily-White House, as is customary each January, have come Messages on the State of the Union, on the Budget, on the Economic Situation, and on a Labor Program. The first Message says that on the one hand things are sound, but on the other, they are not; the second Message says that we are the greatest nation in the world when it comes to our devotion to human values and uplift, wherefore we will cut already inadequate provisions for the blind, the aged and the mentally ill and, since there is a particular crisis in the area of education, we will cut that most of all. To clinch the demonstration of our devotion to the nobler pursuits, we will increase our expenditures for weapons of total destruction; for this we will spend one hundred and ten million dollars a day for each of the 365 days in the year.

The third Message does not say we are in the midst of a recession; but it does not say we are not. In fact, its message is obscure; it seems to add up to two admonitions—chins up and belts in. It also urges that we not be greedy, and this advice the President hands out impartially, as befits his Office; that is, he tells the rich and the poor, alike, to please restrain themselves.

The fourth Message—announced as the number of totally unemployed climbs to five millions, the number working a short-week comes to over twice that, take-home pay continues to decline, speed-up gets ever worse, "right-to-work" laws spread, and prices keep rising—urges that from now on the Federal Government supervise trade-union finances and elections. Perhaps the candidates in these elections should have FBI approval?

But on one subject there comes from the Big White House a shattering silence. For the eighteen million Negro people, the President has not a Message, nor a line, nor a word.

The Associated Press (Jan. 7, 1958) in summarizing the likely areas of activity by the newly-assembled Congress, reported under "Civil Rights": "Republicans and most Democrats have by mutual consent decided to drop the subject for this year." This past Christmas, Mr. Eisenhower's new Attorney General, William Rogers, aimed a gift at the eighteen million Negro people, in the spirit of the Divine Agitator, when he announced that the Administration was planning no civil rights legislation in 1958 and desired "a cooling-off period" on that issue. Closing out 1957, the Attorney General said he favored "a go-slow" policy so far as segregation was concerned.

But how slow does the man want to go? Indeed, in which direction does he want to move? These questions are especially pointed because the Southern Education Reporting Service announced from Nashville (*N. Y. Times*, Jan. 7, 1958) that for 1957 there was:

Evidence of a slowdown in the public school desegregation program in the South and in the border states. . . . For the first time since 1954 there were no year-end reports of school desegregation anywhere in the seventeen state areas. . . .

Just how much has been done, that the Administration finds it necessary to call for a slow-down policy when it does speak, or to adopt at the President's level, a tactic of silence? Let us offer the data in the most-publicized area, that of school desegregation. We will use as a source the recent volume edited by Don Shoemaker, Director of the Southern Education Reporting Service, *With All Deliberate Speed* (Harper, \$3.50) which consists of illuminating reports from leading white newspapermen throughout the South. Robert Lasch, of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, states: "Almost all of the desegregation—685 districts [there are 3,008 in the South—H.A.]—that has taken place . . . has occurred in the border states of Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri and Oklahoma. . . . Even so, more than 1,000 bi-racial school districts in the border states were still segregated by the summer of 1957. . . ."

And when one analyzes these figures he finds that the actual accomplishment is even less than there indicated. For example, out of Delaware's 12,000 Negro school-children, a total of 5,000 are in what are called "integrated situations." Overall, as of June 30, 1957, out of a total enrollment in the South of 2,800,000 Negro children, 2,500,000 were in schools totally segregated. What this meant was that in eight states—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia—no move whatsoever had been made towards implementing the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, a full three years after it had been rendered. Moreover, two of the States where, for the record, compliance had been started, actually have the most brazen "token" approach possible: In Arkansas, out of over 100,000 Negro students, a total of 940, and in Tennessee, out of nearly 130,000 Negro students, a total of 344 are in "integrated situations."

Is this a record of such rapid desegregation that it justifies policies of "cooling-off" or discreet silence?

Moreover, one must bear in mind that concessions or reforms won in a class-exploitative society are *wrung* from the ruling class; this is particularly true in the area of Negro rights in the United States, classic example of a white supremacist society. The concessions are won in mass struggle against the desire of the dominant components within the ruling class. How meaningful they will be, how quickly and how fully implemented, and how permanent, basically depends upon how persistent and organized is the pressure from the mass which extracted the concession or reform in the first place. This does not mean that the gaining of the reform was not assisted by splits and differences among those on top—and in the area of Negro rights there are significant splits of this kind, originating in international pressures and considerations, and in differing compulsions of a domestic nature, both political and economic. But it does mean that advances in popular rights fundamentally derive *in spite* of ruling class opposition, and *because* of popular struggle. This

is especially true when one deals with the oppression of the Negro people, for this oppression historically has been a significant source of the rise of world capitalism, a most important force in the development and rapid growth of American capitalism, and in the appearance and maintenance of American imperialism.

The roots of Negro oppression lie deep in this history and in the present-day political and economic advantages derived therefrom by the ruling class; this is the source for the oppression and this is the reason for its maintenance. This is why the effort to dig out those roots must be a radical effort, for its purpose and meaning are revolutionary. This approach does not mean a simplification of the question; it is not simple, but infinitely complex. But it is explicable and does yield to scientific analysis. And it does have the basic material and historic roots I have indicated.

This means that any approach to the question of the struggle for Negro rights which limits itself to the good-will of the rich, or the enlightenment of segments of the ruling class is doomed to failure, and in fact helps to continue the oppression. There is a developing interest among elements within the bourgeoisie in the "American Negroes—A Wasted Resource," as an article by J. J. Morrow, of Pitney-Bowes, Inc., is called in a recent (Jan.-Feb. 1957) issue of the *Harvard Business Review*. And there is a growing literature reflecting this mounting interest, though neither the interest nor the literature is as new as some seem to believe.*

Certainly, there are possibilities of support here, and the Left should be more aware of this trend and its literature and more responsive to it than it has been in the past. But the danger exists, especially when the awareness is new, and particularly in a period of "prosperity" and of relative working-class passivity, that this evidence will not be seen for what it is—a split in the still dominantly racist and fundamentally imperialist ruling class—and will be accepted as the harbinger of that force which is to bring about the liberation of the Negro people.

Flowing from this comprehension, and understanding that concessions are *wrung* from the bourgeoisie, not *given* by them, one must see that, society never being static, the ruling class will always try and always has tried, first, to minimize the concession, second to hedge it about with delaying devices, third, to take back the concession and, finally, if possible, to turn their battle against the implementing of the concession into one that eventuates not only in cancelling it, but in pushing back the forces that extracted the concession to begin with.

* * *

The desegregation decisions of the Supreme Court, themselves, magnificent

* An early post-World War II instance is "The Price of Prejudice," by Dean Louis Wirth of the University of Chicago in the *Survey Graphic*, Jan. 1947. Bucklin Moon's book *The High Cost of Prejudice* was published in 1947. The argument was documented at length by a Negro business-man, Joseph T. Johnson, in *The Potential Negro Market* (N. Y., 1952), and underlies Eli Ginzberg, ed., *The Negro Potential* (Columbia University Press, 1956). Essentially similar arguments appeared before the Civil War, as a matter of fact.

opportunities as they are for advancing the battle for Negro freedom, are no more than opportunities. They contain significant hedging and delaying features; they represented a concession in the face of irresistible and mounting international and domestic pressures. But such pressures are subject to change; the ruling class itself is opposed to Negro liberation and therefore to all significant advances along the way. Which way the use of the decision would go, especially in the immediate future, depended and depends upon the nature of the organizational pressures brought for—and against—their prompt and fullest possible implementation.

It is important to bear in mind that the Supreme Court rendered two desegregation decisions; the first, in May, 1954, laid down—quoting the Court—"the fundamental principle that racial discrimination in public education is unconstitutional"; the second, in May, 1955, took up—again quoting the Court—"the manner in which the relief is to be accorded." It is the second decision which contains the directive, "with all deliberate speed" and this is preceded by the Court's concern about "varied local school problems," its directive that the local school authorities be in charge of "elucidating, assessing, and solving these problems"; its urging upon the local courts of "practical flexibility" and that they "may properly take into account the public interest in the elimination of such obstacles."

That the Court delayed a full year between answering the questions, *whether* and *how*, was most unusual, and itself stimulated obstructive tactics. There were, also, other legal procedural matters which furthered delay. As Professors Blaustein and Ferguson point out, in their extremely useful volume, *Desegregation and the Law* (Rutgers University Press, \$5.00):

Never before had the lower courts been given so much discretion in carrying out the enforcement mandate of the high tribunal. . . . This was not a case in which the rewards of a favorable judicial determination came quickly to the victorious litigants. Inherent in the mode of enforcement was a factor of delay—and it was a delay which could easily be multiplied manyfold by judges reluctant to give cooperation. And the delay was further augmented by a legal tug-of-war in which the leading lawyers of the South sought new approaches to legal doctrine in order to avoid desegregation.

These professors point out further that, "What has delayed desegregation perhaps even more is the fact that judicial enforcement is dependent upon someone initiating litigation." This task has fallen to the Southern Negro—the most disadvantaged group, legally speaking, in the South, so that the undertaking of the litigation is made very difficult and often quite dangerous. Because of this obvious consideration, the professors themselves urge that the Attorney General of the United States initiate the litigation—and they state that he has the legal power to do so. Else they fear that from this default alone—quite apart from other weighty considerations—the implementation of the desegregation decision of the Supreme Court will drag out interminably. And,

as we have seen, the Attorney General of the United States has not only refused to initiate this litigation; he has publicly declared that the policy of his Office on this whole question will be a do-nothing one. His chief, the President, has confirmed this, as we have also seen, by devastating silence.

In social fields where mores are deeply inbedded and laws have hitherto sustained such mores, it is particularly helpful when efforts at change receive full and open support from top-most sources. Dr. Kenneth Clark, professor of psychology at New York's City College—whose views on the impact of segregation were influential in gaining the 1954 Supreme Court decision—perceptively pointed out:

Strong affirmative official action on a high level is needed to put integration through. It requires authority, definiteness and leadership (*N. Y. Herald Tribune*, Sept. 15, 1957).

* * *

But what we—who want and demand an end to segregation, a prompt enforcement of the Constitution, and a swift implementation of the decisions of the United States Supreme Court—face is not only this effective delaying and negative tactic. We face, too, the fact of growing positive defiance of the law and the decisions, and mounting, organized and very powerful movements for a return to jim-crow “legality” and for a reversal of the Court.

What is the proof of this? The proof lies in the failure to make any advance on the desegregation front in 1957, as the Southern Education Reporting Service states. The proof lies in the increasing boldness and frequency with which extreme Right elements turn to violence now; as I write, the third cache of dynamite was discovered in the Central High School in Little Rock, a bomb was exploded in the home of a Negro in Tulsa, and a blast devastated a Negro school in Chattanooga (all in the *N. Y. Times*, Jan. 20, 1958). The proof lies in the failure of local authorities to apprehend or to prosecute the degenerates responsible for these outrages, and in the U.S. government's announcement that it would not prosecute the racist rioters arrested in Little Rock in the act of attacking Negro women and children. It lies in the ruling, December 27, of the New Orleans Federal District Court that the city of Dallas need not start the process of ending segregated education as of 1958—“a very wise thing,” Governor Faubus of Arkansas called the decision.

Proof lies in the fact that since 1954 there have been passed in Southern states “at least 136 new measures aimed at delaying, controlling or preventing desegregation of the schools,” as Patrick E. McCauley writes in the Shoemaker volume already cited. It lies in the nullification and “interposition” resolutions* already adopted by seven Southern state legislatures. It lies in the so-called Southern Manifesto introduced in Congress in 1956 and signed by 19 Senators and 82 representatives. These honorable gentlemen, sworn to uphold the

* Professor Mitchell Franklin, of the Law School in Tulane University in New Orleans, has proven “The Unconstitutionality of Interposition” in the *Lawyers Guild Review*, Summer, 1956.

Constitution, here formally asserted the Supreme Court decision to be “a clear abuse of judicial power”; they pledged themselves “to use all lawful means to bring about a reversal of this decision.” But, of course, when a Senator Eastland speaks of “lawful means” where the rights of the Negro is concerned, he has in mind justification for, if not incitement of, the means of barbarism and atrocity which he and other Southern rulers have employed for three centuries. On this point no guessing whatsoever is needed. The white Southern authors, Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely, in their splendid book of reportage and interpretation—*Neither Black Nor White* (Rinehart, \$5.00)—write:

“The worst features of that manifesto,” one Southern leader tells you months after its public presentation, “was that it said one thing but did another. While declaring for legal resistance to the Court, it created the very climate for illegal defiance. While condemning violence, it fostered the suspicion and frustration that breed violence.”

* * *

Perhaps most important, the ruling class has succeeded to a large degree, through its domination of the means of communication and information, in conveying one of two impressions to the white public generally—and often the two impressions reinforce each other. One is the impression that things in the South on this Negro business are more or less settled, or well on the way to being settled, or settled as well as they can be now, and it's time to forget about them and turn to more pressing questions, like missiles and “catching up with Russia.” Secondly, where the question is presented for consideration, the press generally gives the white people two alternatives: the Faubus plan or the Blossom plan.

The plan of Governor Faubus is well known, of course: to yield nothing of segregation and to protect it by all means, fair and foul. The plan of Virgil T. Blossom, superintendent of schools in Little Rock, is in his own words: “A minimum of integration in a maximum of time.”

The Blossom alternative offers some advance over that of Faubus, but it is far short of the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court which called for an end of segregation with all deliberate speed. Yet, the fact is that it has been the Negro press, almost alone, and the Negro organizations, almost alone, which have actually battled for and demanded the speediest implementation of the substantive content of the Court's finding. Just in terms of tactics—quite apart from considerations of humanity and of democratic political progress—how is one to hold off a victory for Faubus, if no alternative to the Left of Blossom is put forth with any real, nation-wide effectiveness and insistence? Here, as in a thousand other areas of American life, is a specific example of how desperately is needed today in our country a united, strong, numerous Left, and in the first place a dedicated, selfless, conscious, scientifically-grounded Communist

Party, to add depth and decisiveness to the struggle for Negro freedom—especially, but not exclusively, as this struggle needs the support of white people.

* * *

The present situation, then, in the battle for Negro liberation, shows a mounting offensive by reaction. There is every reason to think that this offensive will continue; if it does not meet serious resistance it will become steadily more bold, and will realize objectives important to itself and disastrous to our country.

This most certainly is not the time either for Eisenhower's policy of silence, nor his Attorney General's policy of going so slow as to go back. It is also no time for a policy of gradualism or eventualism or moderation, for this feeds reaction, as it, in fact, acquiesces in injustice.

Yet as a part of the general pattern of retreat there has been a resurgence in gradualistic and moderationist argument. An example is *An Epitaph for Dixie* (Norton, \$3.50) by Harry S. Ashmore, editor of the *Little Rock Gazette*. The *New York Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, the *Atlanta Constitution* hail this as "brilliant and balanced," as the epitome of the "reasonable" path, the "definitive work," as persuasively arguing the case for "eventual accommodation."

Ashmore misses the source of Negro oppression when he ascribes it to "willful and ignorant men"; he wanders from the road to freedom for the Negro and the South, when he depends upon the enlightened men of business to lead the way in their own self-interest. The best even he can see from this analysis is "eventual accommodation"; the needed aim is liberation in our time. His book ignores the fact of Wall Street ownership and control of the South—that the single largest landowner in the South is the Metropolitan Life Insurance Corporation, and the second largest is the Prudential Life Insurance Corporation. He ignores the fact that the railroads, banks, iron, coal, oil, lumber, sulphur, industry and credit of the South are possessed or dominated by finance capital, and that this possession and domination have been major features of the nature and strength of that nationally-dominant finance capital.

This truth is unpleasant; its iteration gains no plaudits from the *New York Times*; but that it is unpleasant and that the *New York Times* frowns upon its declaration, do not alter the fact that it is true.

More serious, as a hallmark of the growing influence of the movement to restrain desegregation, is the fact that Mrs. Agnes E. Meyer, well-known author and journalist, and holder of a citation for service from the NAACP, argues for a policy of moderation in the January, 1958, *Atlantic*. Here Mrs. Meyer condemns "ill-considered, hasty attempts at integration" and enters a plea "both to Northerners and Southerners for moderation in their attitudes toward this difficult problem and in the interpretation of those words, 'deliberate speed'."

Mrs. Meyer allows herself further to write:

I believe that the Negro leaders who are pressing for immediate and radical desegregation are too unaware of its effects upon the schools and of the tensions to which it exposes the Negro child. They are too indifferent to the human problem involved.

I believe Mrs. Meyer is too unaware of the devastating impact which segregation has had upon the American school system*; I believe she is not sufficiently aware of the devastating impact segregation has every minute and has had for generations upon the Negro child, and, in other ways, upon the white child. I believe Mrs. Meyer is much too indifferent to the appalling human problem involved in the existence for one second of jim crow.

I believe Mrs. Meyer has not understood that the Negro children are battering at the doors of our schools because their mothers and fathers—all of them, not just "leaders"—want to destroy jim crow so badly that they are willing not simply to offer themselves in the front ranks of the battle, as they have been doing for centuries, but they are willing now to put the bodies of their children in front with them. Mrs. Meyer should think some more about what this means before she accuses any Negro adult of insufficient sensitivity towards the feelings of a Negro child.

Mrs. Meyer is sure that the words, "deliberate speed" mean "make haste slowly," and she adds: "In a democracy, sound progress has never come any other way."

And she writes, as something she told a Negro:

Never forget that despite failures and injustices, Americans have done more for the Negro than any other nation on the face of the globe. We fought a civil war to establish his freedom. Since then thousands of whites, in high and low positions have exhibited an interest in the Negro's welfare and development never before shown by a dominant race. On the whole the treatment of the Negro in America constitutes not an indictment but one of the greatest achievements of a democratic nation.

The Negro to whom Mrs. Meyer said this was, as she writes, "my friend." Well, the Negro is intensely polite; no doubt in this particular case, this particular Negro kept his temper and remembered his manners—he's had long practice—and here is Mrs. Meyer with a lead article in *The Atlantic*!

Sound progress in the United States, and in human history, comes in leaps and requires vigilance to guard as it needs militancy to acquire. The hall-marks of sound progress here—I suppose Mrs. Meyer will agree—are the separation from Great Britain, and the enunciation of the Declaration of Independence. The first was the result of Revolution, and the second was that

* I say this while aware that her book, *Education For a New Morality* (Macmillan, \$2.50), though marred by a rejection of a materialist outlook, does say that "there is no acid more corrosive of our own characters" than racism. Apparently she has not pondered enough over her own remark.

Revolution's manifesto. Other hall-marks—the Bill of Rights, the extension of the suffrage, the elimination of slavery, the constitutional statement of an anti-racist position, the founding of trade unions, etc., etc.—required in every case the most militant mass struggle to carry the effort forward to the point where a leap was possible, and then required that the leap be taken, and the conquered ground zealously guarded.

Mrs. Meyer's strange separation between Americans and the Negro people is common but insufferable. Mrs. Meyer's ignorance concerning the sources of the Civil War and its conduct is widespread but profound. But shocking is Mrs. Meyer's failure to see that the three Amendments—the 13th, 14th and 15th—most directly applicable to the status of the Negro people were the results of Civil War, and that the bedrock of these, the 13th, which abolished slavery, confiscated at once and without compensation private property to the tune of about four billion dollars. There was precious little moderation here, and Lincoln's policy most certainly did not mean "make haste slowly."

Unfortunately, moderation did finally prevail in the Reconstruction effort, and people in the North got tired of the "Negro problem." The President then also adopted a policy of silence in the face of illegality and terror, and some liberals and reformists became confused and tired. Thus, *The Nation* of that day (Oct. 28, 1875) told its readers that with the Bourbon triumph in Mississippi, "peace and harmony reign there" and that "arrangements have been made by which fairness and a spirit of concord will prevail in the future," and Charles F. Adams was explaining—in *The Atlantic*, as well as elsewhere!—how his youthful fervor that had led him to the Abolitionist movement was misguided; that now he understood the need for stability and order, and patience.

Today, advice of moderation, in the face of continued segregation and a mounting offensive of reaction is especially monstrous because never has there been so good an opportunity as in our day to really smash jim crow. The Negro people are aroused as never before. The international pressures are at their highest point. The split in the camp of the bourgeoisie on this question is greater than before. The refutation of racism—in which the Left with Negro scholars were foremost—in history, psychology, anthropology, in science generally, is more firmly established and more widely understood and believed than ever before.* The rejection, or at least questioning, of white supremacy is more common in the South, among white people—especially the youth and the women—than ever before, and the moral revulsion against the excesses, if nothing else, of segregation has reached a much higher point, particularly in the churches,** than at any time in American history.

* It would require, and merit, a book to fully document the great change here. The work of Dykeman and Stokely mentioned earlier gives a little of this evidence.

** Much valuable material on this is in the work by W. D. Weatherford, distinguished Southern white scholar, in his *American Churches and the Negro* (Christopher Publishing House, Boston, \$3.50). Dr. Weatherford himself is unequivocal; thus, he writes (page 300): "The Church must enter the battle to destroy racism if it ever hopes to develop a full-fledged Christian experience in its members."

The sense of Negro-white unity, and the realization, often partial, of its necessity, in the interests of the trade-union movement and of the working class is not nearly as developed as it must be and should be. But this lack, while it should stimulate efforts to overcome it, must not blind one to the truth that in this respect the American labor movement is far advanced over what it was twenty, not to say forty years ago. In the Left, too, and particularly among Communists, the comprehension of the vital role of Negro-white unity, and the central nature of the Negro question, in all political and organizational work, is very much more profound than it was a generation ago.

Hence, to project the idea of the smashing of jim crow in our time—certainly in its institutional and legal forms—is realistic, and to project anything less, or settle for anything less, retards the movement all along the line.

* * *

On this February, 1958, on this Negro History Week, a generation after the late and beloved and sorely missed Dr. Carter G. Woodson first projected it, we who were inspired, guided, helped and befriended by him, think again with special warmth of his long, thin, strong frame, his proud bearing, quick smile and uncompromising eyes. Those eyes saw the future free of imperialism and chauvinism and racism, with his country cleansed of jim crow. He stood firm in the struggle, and he contributed to bringing the dawn closer. He knew, with Thoreau: "Only that day dawns to which we are awake." Dr. Woodson was one of the Great Awakeners, and everywhere "that day dawns."

You Never Had It So Good . . .

In the *N. Y. Post*, Jan. 22, 1958, on the same page carrying installment number 3 of Mr. John Gates' thrilling serial, "Why I Quit the Party," appeared the story of a 24-year old mother and five children living in a \$95-a-month "squalid, miced-infested Bronx flat," with the Welfare Department paying the rent. "I mop and mop, but it doesn't do any good. I complained to the landlord, but nothing happened. Last Friday the Fire Department ordered the electricity shut off because of a short. I was told not to cook because of a leak in the gas pipe. But when the ceiling fell in the baby's room I knew the children couldn't stay any longer. The mice are all over. I asked my Welfare worker, 'How can I stay in this place?' But he said nothing could be done." The mother distributed her children among relatives and now lives alone.

The Party and the Negro People

By Pettis Perry

IN THE Main Political Resolution adopted by the Communist Party at its 16th Convention, it is stated that the primary weakness of the Party in its work in the Negro-freedom struggle has been a relative isolation from that struggle. This has been due in part to the direct and heavy political attacks against the Party, and also to the general McCarthyite assaults upon all progressivism.

It has been due, also, to our own errors. The Party's work in this area has been hampered by doctrinaire concepts which resulted in outmoded practices and a sectarian style of work. Such errors stemmed from a failure to grasp fully the powerful new forces and level of struggle and the new possibilities of victory that have appeared in the Negro people's movement in the past decade.

The Resolution noted also that Negro and white Party members responded to the failures accompanying both sectarian and opportunist practices by recoiling from any significant participation in the Negro people's struggle, by abstentionism, and by deprecating any project which called for major Communist participation.

Thirdly, the Resolution quite correctly pointed out, as another source of our isolation in this field, the Party's failure to establish and sustain new norms of Negro-white unity, inside the Party. Such high standards of Negro-white unity in our Party must reflect and correspond to the new level of demands for full—not conditional or partial—equality being advanced by the Negro liberation movement itself.

In this connection it is imperative to bear in mind that the Preamble to our Party's Constitution states:

It regards the struggle to wipe out the system of jim-crowism and to win immediate and full citizenship and unconditional equality for the Negro people as basic to the fight for democracy.

* * *

In the light of this, certain questions are very much in order. First: How is the line of the Convention on the Negro question being fought for in all the districts? How many districts are giving really serious attention to the mass struggles of the Negro people? How are they tackling such burning questions as the scandalous housing situation in Philadelphia, Boston, Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles and New

York City?*

This situation is, of course, basically tied to the whole jim-crow question; it is also tied up with the crisis in education, and with atrocious health and sanitary conditions. Involved, too, are urgent questions of low-cost housing projects, provisions of jobs, etc.

What outlook does the Party have to the increasingly acute unemployment situation, notably in connection with the Negro, who always has been the last hired, the poorest paid, and the first laid-off? And who, even in the best days, has been more or less fully excluded from whole areas of employment—as, for example, in the operating crafts of railroads, brakemen, firemen, conductors, etc.—and in inter-state trucking work? Further, to give but another instance, it is notorious that in many communities there are Negro printers who are refused union affiliation because of jim-crowism; I hear many arguments—and they are good arguments, of course—why only union shops must be used in any printing work done by the Left, but I have seen precious little agitation in our movement against this racist exclusion policy in the printing trades.

What special attention is being given the urgent problems of Negro women in the fight for jobs and for up-grading? And what of the awful extra burdens of Negro

youth? Deprived in the largest percentage of professional and skilled training, barred in the majority from apprenticeship-training programs, and then facing the "normal" discrimination burdening any Negro job-seeker, the Negro youth starting out life and seeking work is facing heart-breaking obstacles. And this is true in "prosperous" times; it is a thousand times more true as the first hints of a break in the blue skies of "prosperity" begin to appear.

Another question in every Negro community in our country remains that of police brutality. This is increasing in seriousness in large areas of the South; it remains a grievance of terrible intensity in every Negro ghetto north of the Mason-Dixon line.

None of these questions are raised in terms of denying the real progress that has been made. The questions are raised in the knowledge that whatever progress has been made has come as the result of bitter and prolonged mass struggle, in which, in the past, the Left played an honorable and sometimes a leading role. The questions are raised, too, in terms of the fact that the progress has been made in the course of centuries, and increasingly the Negro masses are becoming impatient. Furthermore, the questions must be raised urgently because despite the progress, so very much still has to be done, and the level of the demands of the Negro people has

* The attention of readers is called to Martin Chancey's article, "The Housing Question: Cleveland," in the December, 1957 issue of this magazine.—Ed.

been raised. They want full freedom and want it now.

* * *

Today in the resolving of all these burning questions our Party has a distinctive and important role to play. Central to this matter is the democratizing of the South and here the analysis offered by Comrade Jackson* is a model of Marxist-Leninist theoretical leadership. This work deserves, in my opinion, the widest possible distribution and the most careful study and utilization.

Within the Party itself there remain as crucial questions the fullest participation in all levels, including the highest, of our Negro comrades, especially the women among them; and intensified opposition to every manifestation of racist thinking or practice.

That such problems remain within the Party shows that they are very tenacious and difficult of solution; it does not show that the Party has accomplished nothing on the Negro question—a view expressed by a number of comrades. It is true that the Party made some serious errors on many occasions in its fight for Negro rights, and as one who led the work for some time—as Secretary of the National Negro Commission—it must be said that I bore a major responsibility for these errors.

This must not blind us to the fact that the Party has a magnificent

* James E. Jackson, "The South's New Challenge," in *Political Affairs*, Dec. 1957; available in pamphlet form from New Century Publishers, 15c.—Ed.

record in the area of Negro struggle, which is unmatched by that of any other party. The fact is that there remains among the Negro people a real respect and admiration for the Communist Party. It is a fact, too, that in the very recent past, as for example in the 1957 Pilgrimage to Washington and in the effort to mobilize public opinion during the Little Rock crisis, the Party members and the Party organization did respond to a degree and in a positive fashion. That the response was not nearly as great nor as well organized as it might have been or should have been, does not negate the fact that, despite great internal and external difficulties, some effort and positive result were present.

Supplements on Little Rock to the number of almost 100,000 were issued by the *Worker* and the *People's World* and were distributed throughout the country. Thousands of copies of the statements on this matter by the National Administrative Committee were mimeographed in various Districts and also were put to good use.

These supplements and statements and their reprinting and wide distribution gained positive responses, especially from Negro people, in many parts of our land. The fact is that a considerable part of the American people welcomes our activity and wants to see more of it; certainly our members—especially, perhaps, our Negro members—are very anxious for mass work and ac-

tivity to be forthcoming from the Party. We must remember always that no matter how broad may be united front work, there exists the need for Marxist-Leninist education and agitation, and the need that the masses see our own organization as such, and hear its own distinctive voice.

The fact is that the Dixiecrats are strong and bold; by no means have they delivered their last blow on behalf of reaction. The curtain may go up at any moment upon some awful outbreak of violence or terror in Mississippi or Georgia or Alabama, etc. The Party must not be surprised should this happen—as many of us were by the Arkansas events—and we must be ready to respond in a more rounded manner and more quickly than we did earlier.

* * *

I would like to comment now on certain reactions that I have observed in the Left recently to mass movements and organizations. On the one hand there is the attitude which brushes aside all actions and statements coming from leaders of mass organizations as meaningless; this attitude insists that nothing really is being done or accomplished. Here one meets statements like: Nobody is assisting the Negro people; the Negro is always at the bottom of the agenda, etc.

The other approach is to catalogue statements by leaders or resolutions adopted by organizations; to insist

that the attitude of the American white masses is all one could desire, and to imply—if not state—that all we have to do is wait upon the masses and hail healthy statements or resolutions.

Both approaches are wrong. The first, Left-sectarian, fails to take account of the fact that there have been notable advances made and that certain organizations and leaders have made significant contributions. It is necessary that this be appreciated fully, else we will not know where we are, we will fail to understand the way forward and the existence of enormous possibilities for pushing forward. The second, Right-opportunist, assumes that we may indeed rely on existing organizations to reach levels that they do not even aim at, and probably do not comprehend; it depends too much upon spontaneity; it views our function as that of spectators, applauding and encouraging *others*, with the idea that such applause and encouragement will lead to what we see most clearly and understand best.

Communists do not rely on spontaneity. They support any movement that enhances the rights of the people; but it is our duty and function to help sustain such movement, to seek to give it a proper direction and to develop the political consciousness of those participating in that movement.

Specifically, today, in terms of the Negro movement, our job is to see

the class roots of Negro oppression, the relationship between the whole world-wide struggle against imperialism and the Negro liberation movement, the necessity for Negro-white unity and particularly a Negro-white labor alliance. Our job now is to help develop the widest possible unity—among the Negro people, among Negro and white people, and between the organized labor movement and the Negro freedom effort.

One of the results of a faulty approach to Communist work in the Negro people's movement is that which "explains" to Negro comrades how important it is for them to work in Negro mass organizations. One Negro woman comrade, speaking in August, 1957, in one of our districts, put the matter this way:

I did not join the Party to be told or asked to work in the NAACP; that I was doing long before I heard of the Party; that I am continuing to do. Nor did I join the Party to be told to work in churches. I have been in a church ever since I first went to Sunday School; I still attend church and I sing in the choir every Sunday.

What I want to know is what is *the Party* doing on this question; what is *its* program, what is *its* outlook. What kind of leadership is the District prepared to give to the fight for Negro rights, which includes giving sustained leadership to that section of the white people that the Party is in contact with, to bring it into alliance with the Negro people and their struggle?

What is the Party doing in the fight for jobs for the Negro people, and the fight around the very serious housing situation we have in the area?

During the past few years the Party has had serious losses among our Negro members, including some leading cadre. In the main, the Negro comrades who left our Party did not do so because of any revelations about Stalin, nor because of Hungary; they did not leave because of our approach to the USSR, nor because of our outlook on foreign affairs. Nor did they leave because the Convention left unanswered such basic theoretical questions as that involving self-determination. Some of these things played a part in the decisions of one or another comrade, but none of them nor all of them together constitute a basic explanation why so many Negro comrades have departed. The basic considerations are, I think, the questions raised earlier in this article, and especially the points made by the woman comrade we have quoted.

There is, actually, a deep and wide admiration for the Soviet Union among the American Negro people. Typical was the response of the Negro press to the great Soviet achievement of the Sputniks. Thus, the national edition of the *Baltimore Afro-American*, in an editorial on Nov. 16, 1957, said:

The big advantage the Russians enjoyed over us was that while we were clinging to the ancient myth of racial superiority, they were clever enough

to recognize that skin color has absolutely nothing to do with innate ability and that no one segment of the human family has a monopoly of brains.

Since everybody in the Party, presumably, agrees, with the Resolution on Negro Work, adopted at our 16th Convention, the questions raised by the Negro woman comrade surely are very pertinent. We must carry out the line of this Resolution, pending the development of an agreed-upon position on fundamental theoretical questions. We must tackle the question of overall political leadership, and develop intensively operative leadership in the field of Negro work. And we need much work to persuade the membership to actually turn their faces out towards the masses, Negro and white.

We have to examine with great care the actual Negro organizations participating in the liberation movement, and our relationship to them. The Party as a whole must concentrate on helping to develop actual Negro-white unity, so vital to the battle for peace, and democracy—and Negro rights.

We need a sustained struggle for Negro rights, carried on by our Party in its own name and working in unison with all other democratic and anti-racist organizations and individuals. I would specifically suggest the following for immediate work and concentration:

1. A serious study of the job situation facing Negroes in all areas; consideration should be given to re-raising the slogan of FEPC at the shop level, in the township, as well as at state and national levels.
2. The housing question.
3. The question of police brutality.
4. The question of Negro representation in government in every area.
5. Aid to the Southern masses. Work towards a democratic South, free of jim-crow.
6. A legislative program around the question of civil rights, and the '58 elections.

These proposals are practical and realizable and constitute, I think, a minimum for our Party right now. Such activity is necessary for our country, for the struggle to advance Negro freedom, and for the rebuilding of our own Party.

How Is YOUR Income Tax?

"William Keck, Superior Oil president, was listed by Fortune magazine among those with individual fortunes between \$100,000,000 and \$200,000,000. In 1953 and 1954, the Superior Oil Co. paid no income tax at all because of depletion allowances and exemptions, though it showed net incomes in excess of \$10,000,000 and \$12,500,000 respectively. In fact, it got from the Treasury credits of \$100,000 in 1953 and \$500,000 in 1954."

From the syndicated column of Thomas L. Stokes, Dec. 6, 1957

On the 12-Party Declaration

By Robert Thompson

In our December issue, we published the complete text of the Declaration adopted by representatives of Communist and Workers Parties in twelve Socialist countries, at a meeting held in Moscow, November 14-16, 1957. In our January issue appeared a Statement on this Declaration adopted December 22 by a majority vote (11 to 7; 2 absentions; 2 absences) of the National Executive Committee, CPUSA. On December 23, 1957, Comrade Bob Thompson, one of the seven opposed to the majority Statement, presented a report indicating the way in which he viewed the Declaration of the Twelve Parties. This report by Bob Thompson is printed in full below—Ed.

I am not of the opinion that there are any members of this National Executive Committee who need to be told by another member that we are dealing with very important events when we discuss the conference of the twelve leading parties of the Socialist world, exclusive of Yugoslavia, the sixty-four Party Conference and Peace Manifesto. In light of yesterday's discussion, it is clear, however, that at least initially we will have important differences in evaluating their importance for the American people and our Party.

In this connection, I would like to say at the outset that I have no illusions that my remarks represent in any way a definitive Party interpretation of these events. I should like them to be regarded for what they are: an introduction to the discussion, and in some measure, my contribution to its collective outcome.

Now, in introducing a similar discussion in the New York State Committee, I chose as my jumping off point the meaning of these events from the standpoint of the fight for peace. In view of yesterday's discussion, I would like to choose a somewhat different—but I think equally valid starting point—namely, the meaning of these events from the point of view of the competitive struggle between Socialism and Capitalism, which of course includes very centrally the struggle for peaceful co-existence.

This is a day when the competitive struggle between Capitalism and Socialism often finds expression in the form of dramatic contrasts. Sputnik Number One and Two go up, Flopnik Number One stays down. Through this contrast, a whole people almost overnight gain a new understanding of the relative achievements of Socialism and Capitalism in

science, education and technology.

A similar, although of course much more complex contrast is unfolding in the field of political relationships and politics.

In Moscow, we have a conference of the twelve leading Parties of the Socialist world, and they publish a basic policy Declaration. We have a conference of the sixty-four Communist Parties, and they publish a Peace Manifesto. In Paris, the leading imperialist powers meet, and with a great deal of fanfare publish their decisions to the world.

One event represents the face and the policies of Socialism. The other event represents the face and the policies of imperialism.

In one is mirrored the political relationships existing among Socialist nations and Communist Parties; in the other is mirrored the political relationships existing among imperialist nations and Parties.

One presents to the world the example of the Socialist way of life, a Socialist program and a policy of struggle for peaceful co-existence. The other presents an imperialist solution and a war solution to the problems of the world.

No force in American political life seriously interested in affecting the attitude of the American people towards Socialism—or towards Capitalism—can fail to deal publicly with these events and these contrasts. This is so because in these events and contrasts is the meaning of Socialism and Capitalism, their

meaning not so much as set forth in Webster's dictionary, but what they mean in terms of the political consciousness of living. Socialism and Capitalism are not abstractions—Socialism hasn't been an abstraction for forty years, and for all these forty years, the attitude of the American people towards Socialism has been shaped in the main not by the *idea* of Socialism but by the *reality* of Socialism. It has been shaped in the main by their understanding of the Soviet Union, of the way people live in the Soviet Union, by the actions of the Soviet Union as these actions affect big issues such as war and peace, in which the American people have a stake. For forty years in American political life it has been impossible to be a partisan of Socialism without being a partisan of Socialist reality as it exists on this planet. The Trotskyists, the Socialist Party and Socialist Labor Party are testimonials to this elementary political truth.

It is true that this is a changed and changing world. I'll quarrel with nobody that stands or even sits on this proposition. I will argue only on the question of the nature and the meaning of these changes. What is the nature of the change? What is the change in Socialist reality which is affecting the thinking and the outlook of the American people toward Socialism? Socialist reality is no longer a single country emerging out of a morass of economic and cultural backwardness,

but is today a whole system of Socialist states, encompassing one-third of mankind, the foremost of which, the Soviet Union, has achieved an advanced level of economy and a very rich Socialist culture and political life.

What we are witnessing here is a stage in the competitive struggle between Socialism and Capitalism in which certain new qualitative elements are entering into the picture. The hallmark of this new situation is that the superiority of Socialism over Capitalism is now finding expression in forms that large numbers of people can much more readily understand in terms of their own living standards, their own life experiences and their own current concepts.

Now, a development of this magnitude has had to be and is taken into account by the chief ideologists and spokesmen of the ruling circles. There is not one of the main spokesmen—Nixon, Sulzberger, or Lippmann or any of the others, who does not concede that the Soviet Union is a giant in the fields of production, science and technology. They insist on only one thing, and that is that the Soviet Union and the system of Socialist states be portrayed to the American people as a political monster and as a war threat. The peddling of this political caricature of the Soviet Union has the same central importance in the war plans and war preparations of American imperialism today as the peddling of

the myth of Soviet economic and military weakness had in the war plans of German imperialism during the thirties. The test of an advanced worker, and above all, of a Communist in this period does not lie in the saying of a few good things—in a sort of eclectic fashion—about the Soviet Union or other Socialist nations, on occasion. A lot of people do that. The test of an advanced worker and a Communist is the challenging head-on of the political misrepresentations, the political big lie about the Soviet Union and the Socialist countries—the challenging of the lie that they represent an inferior political system, an inferior democracy, a threat to peace.

How does all this square with the fervent desires expressed by some Comrades in yesterday's discussion that we should become a "respectable" force in American political life? Respectability is one of those funny words that can mean all things to all men. Everything hinges on the question of respectable to whom and for what.

Long, long ago Norman Thomas and a few other gentlemen did some pioneering work in this field of respectability. They discovered how to wear Socialist clothing and at the same time be tolerated darlings of Wall Street. The formula they developed is very simple and what is more—it has worked. Proclaim that you are for the ideas and ideals of Socialism out of one corner of your mouth; out of the other corner

slander the Soviet Union and in doing so make Socialism unpalatable to the American people. For forty years these gentlemen have lived comfortable lives—or, if you will, "respectable" lives—on the basis of the simple formula of simultaneously praising Marx and damning the Soviet Union. Of course with the passing of time the praising of Marx sort of dropped by the way-side.

Now it seems we have the phenomena of Johnny-come-lately in our ranks. They too are delving into the problem of respectability. They, too, are making great discoveries. It is not impossible to become buddies with Harry Schwartz; it is not so hard to win respectful treatment in the editorial columns of the *Times* and *Post*. All we need do is tread the well beaten path blazed forty years ago by the Norman Thomases. Adopt as your own the formula that the Soviet Union should be criticized when you can—and damned with faint praise when you must. Echo in some measure the main line of political slander of the ruling class against the Soviet Union and the nations of the Socialist camp and the *Times* will gladly put its stamp of respectability on your back-side.

We need this kind of respectability like we need a hole in the head. It is a sure-fire formula for making our Party as isolated and impotent a force in working-class affairs as Norman Thomas has been these past

forty years. The real meaning of this non-partisan, stand-offish, hypercritical attitude toward Socialist reality in the Soviet Union and elsewhere is the abandonment of all serious effort to promote Socialist consciousness in the working class of our country.

The 16th National Convention of our Party was correct when it said: "Socialism is strengthened, not weakened, by the fraternal criticism of Marxists of many lands." Fraternal Marxist criticism on occasion and when circumstances demand it is one thing. A drum-fire of criticism with the aim at disassociation from the world Socialist current is quite another thing. The first marks an advance in the understanding of our Party in the practice of working-class internationalism. The second marks a break with our proud tradition of international working-class solidarity and if not rejected will irreparably harm the cause of Socialism and the fight for peace in our country.

The Twelve Party Declaration defines the meaning of working-class internationalism in this period in the following way: "Today the vital interests of working people of all countries call for their support of the Soviet Union and all the Socialist countries who, pursuing a policy of preserving peace throughout the world, are the mainstay of peace and social progress." This basic proposition in the Document has the same importance for the Amer-

ican working-class and people as it does for the people of any other country. That is why the Document defines the main content of our epoch as being the transition from Capitalism to Socialism and states further that in this epoch world development is determined by the course and result of the competition of two diametrically opposed social systems.

Now, I said that no serious force in American political life interested in affecting the attitude and thinking of the American people in relation to Socialism or Capitalism could fail to speak out and act publicly on the American political scene in relation to developments such as the Twelve-Party Declaration and the Sixty-Four Party Peace Manifesto. And very few serious forces in American life have failed to act. Within three days after these events, Nixon gave his official ruling-class interpretation of these developments to the American people. Sulzberger has given his interpretation; Lippmann has given his; so has Max Lerner, as well as a host of editorial writers throughout the whole of the capitalist press. The Trotskyites and the Socialist Labor Party have given their interpretations. But the leadership of one Party has not spoken out in relation to these developments—that's the leadership of our Party. It has remained mute.

Now, muteness, of course, is a political position, but I leave it to the comrades that have imposed this

position on the leadership of our Party to defend its merits before our Party.

What is the reason for the silence of our Party as a Party—the leadership of our Party as a leadership—in relation to these developments? Well, a lot of reasons have been given. The reason has been given that it's a matter of procedure within our Party. Well, I don't want to brush aside the considerations of proper procedure within our Party. If it is true that the National Administrative Committee has been explicitly denied the right by a higher committee of the Party, such as the National Executive Committee, to speak out in relation to events of this kind, publicly, as political leaders—as a political body—well, that's a fact, if it's so—and the only thing that I can say about it is that I think that should be changed, and changed very quickly.* You can not have a political Party that acts as a political Party, and plays a role as a political Party in America without that Party having a leadership that can act as a daily political leadership in relation to developments of this kind. But I don't think that the main rea-

* The author here has reference to the fact that the National Administrative Committee, on December 3, 1957, sent a letter to all members of the National Committee positively assessing the 12-Party Declaration and recommending "that all party members and party organizations be encouraged to discuss and analyze the views embodied in the Declaration and to forward their opinions." This letter was adopted by the NAC, 4-3; voting for: Davis, Dennis, Jackson, Lumer; opposed: Fine, Gates, Stein. Subsequently, as already pointed out, the National Executive Committee, by majority vote, adopted a differing statement on this Declaration, published in our January issue.—Ed.

son why our Party has not reacted to this development lies in any reasons of technique, or proper procedures. I think that the main reason for this lies in the fact that, as a leadership, we do not as yet have a clearly defined position towards developments in the Socialist world. I think that our problem is that we have a considerable section of our leadership which interprets the 16th National Convention to mean that our Party is free to speak out whenever there is something negative in the Soviet Union or in any of the other Socialist countries that can be properly criticized, but that this does not provide the basis for our Party properly speaking out, and seizing on and utilizing the enormous positive developments in the Socialist world.

I think that one of the most important problems that is posed before our Party for definite settlement by these positive and very big developments such as the Twelve Party Conference and the Sixty Four Party Conference is the defining, on the basis of our 16th National Convention, of an attitude that enables our Party to properly utilize in its work such developments. I think that we should do that on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist approach which is set forth in this Twelve Party Declaration towards the problems of working-class internationalism in this period.

Now I think that there are some comrades who may perhaps say that

there is a contradiction in this. I don't think that there is any such contradiction. I don't think that there is any such contradiction because, in my opinion, generally, the Resolution of our 16th Convention laid a correct basis for our Party's work in relation to this problem of fighting in this period for working-class internationalism. And I would like to read the entire section of our Resolution dealing with this problem:

The Soviet Union, People's China and the Peoples' Democracies of Eastern Europe are Socialist countries. The system of capitalist exploitation has together with this, the cause of poverty, been abolished in these countries, and together with this, the cause of poverty, fascism, war, national oppression and race discrimination. From the beginning, the Communist Party has greeted and supported the efforts of the working people of these countries to build a new life for themselves on Socialist foundations. Big business tries to vilify these countries, to slander and defame them, to incite hostility against them. In the interests of the American people, the Communist Party is concerned with nailing these lies and exposing these slanders. The attitude of the Communist Party to these countries reflects its devotion to the great principle of working-class internationalism, which has deep roots in our country's history. This tradition of international solidarity is a proud one. The Communist Party continues it and considers it a badge of honor. At the

same time, the Communist Party recognizes that, over the years, it held certain wrong and over-simplified concepts of what its relation should be to other Marxist Parties. The Party tended to accept uncritically many views of Marxists of other countries. Not all these views were correct; some did not correspond to American conditions. The Party also viewed uncritically developments in the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries. It mistakenly thought that any public criticism of the views or policies of the Marxist parties of these countries would weaken the bonds of international working-class solidarity or bring comfort to the enemies of peace and Socialism.

And further, it says, "Socialism is strengthened, not weakened, by the fraternal and constructive criticism of Marxists of many lands." I think that is a sound basis for the work of our Party; it does not justify a negative and essentially hostile attitude towards Socialism in the world. On the contrary it lays the basis for a positive attitude towards developments in the socialist nations.

Now, I want to say a few words about certain other aspects of the general significance of the Twelve Party Conference and Declaration and the Sixty-Four Party Conference and Peace Manifesto. The large meaning of these events for the course of future world developments arises primarily from the fact that they testify to the establishment of

a new, advanced unity in the socialist camp and world communist movement. They mark the overcoming of the very difficult problems and sharp dissension within the Socialist camp that more than once during these past few years has made it vulnerable to imperialist attack. This unity, the new advanced unity established in the Socialist camp, and among the Communist Parties, is of a special quality, a quality quite different from the unity that imperialist circles find it possible to arrive at in a given moment. It is a unity solidly based on the bedrock of identity of interests of the nations and peoples of the Socialist world and of the working class of all countries.

It is a unity that is not based on the reconciling and compromising of conflicting tendencies in Communist ranks. It is a unity that grows out of a period of sharp ideological debate and struggle, in which powerful tendencies of a revisionist character, constituting the main danger in the world Communist movement, were isolated and defeated. Also, powerful tendencies of a dogmatist character were isolated and defeated. The unity that is represented in the Twelve Party Statement, and in the Peace Manifesto, is a unity that is based on the defeat of these tendencies, and not on the reconciling of them. This in itself contains a very important example and lesson for Communists everywhere, including in our country.

The idea has been expressed by Comrade Gates in some of our initial discussion that the Twelve Party Declaration marks a departure from the policy line adopted at the Twentieth Congress—that it marks a step backward in relation to the policies adopted at the Twentieth Congress. Reality is the exact opposite of this. The Policy Declaration is firmly based on the main line of the Twentieth Congress, on the main political estimates and theoretical concepts of the Twentieth Congress. In certain important respects, it advances this line and these concepts on the basis of the experience of the last two years—the big advance of the Soviet Union, of China, the great experiences of the national liberation movements in this period throughout the world, and the diverse and rich experience of all the participating parties in this period. The Policy Declaration does not in any way represent a departure from the Twentieth Congress, but it does lay a very firm basis in Communist ranks for putting a stop to some very free-wheeling interpretations of the meaning of the Twentieth Congress and of its decisions.

Now a few words with respect to a number of the political estimates and theoretical propositions set forth in the Declaration. Certainly our Party is not called on to endorse the Twelve Party Declaration, and it should not so endorse as its own that Declaration. But our Party certainly should adopt a clear-cut at-

titude towards these historic developments and vigorously explain to the American people their great significance in furthering the fight for peace and social progress. Furthermore, we should, as a Party leadership, formulate an evaluation of the main political estimates and the main theoretical concepts that are contained in this Declaration. We should do so with no misconception that this in some way substitutes for the political and theoretical initiative that must be displayed by American Marxists in relation to the problems that we confront in this country and the shaping of our own basic Party program of an American path towards Socialism. It does not in any way substitute for this task confronting us as a Party. But what it will do, in my opinion, is help provide us with a sharpened understanding of the main content of our theory, which must be the basis of our approach and of our program.

I would like to just indicate for the purpose of our discussion some of the important questions that I think should find a place in our thinking. I'd like to first call the attention of all the comrades to the estimate of the world situation contained in the Declaration, to the very profound analysis that the Declaration makes of the accelerating process of disintegration of the imperialist system, of the increasing and sharpening contradictions within the capitalist system, of the clear perspective that

is set forth there of mounting class and people's struggles. We can agree or disagree with the correctness of this estimate of the world situation as set forth in this document, but I think that we must recognize that there is no picture of a world imperialist system approaching a point where it will gain a new lease on life through a process of collaboration with the Socialist sectors of the world. There is no picture here of a new era opening up for imperialism.

I think that we should pay attention to the manner in which the Document, and the Peace Manifesto as well, estimates the prospects of the growing struggle of all peace forces imposing a prolonged period of peaceful co-existence on the imperialists. Within this context, it deals with the war danger not as something that belongs to a past period but as a war danger that is real and grave. However, war can be averted—given a heightened unity and activity of the peace forces.

I think that we should give attention to the central way in which the Declaration deals with the role of the national freedom and independence movements, and their meaning from the point of view of advancing the entire fight for peace and Socialism. We should note, I think, that the manner in which this is dealt with in the Declaration has an important meaning for our evaluation of the somewhat similar role in relation to the general problems

of the working class in this country that is being played by the unfolding struggle for integration and the development of the Negro people's movement in our country.

I think that the elaboration beyond that done by the Twentieth Congress of the possibilities and forms of a constitutional, non-civil war path to power by the working class in a number of countries also provides us with additional and very important theoretical assistance in the further elaboration of this same concept for our country that we began in 1949.

Further, I think that a very important place in our discussion should be occupied by the manner in which the Declaration sets forth that which is universal in the science of Marxism-Leninism, while at the same time giving due weight to the importance of national peculiarities. With respect to the universal aspects of Marxism-Leninism, the propositions that are universally valid, I would like to say a word with respect to one, and that is the question of proletarian dictatorship. Claude [Comrade Lightfoot], in the discussion yesterday, posed the question of whether a discussion of this makes a person a revisionist. I think that any such attitude would be just plain stupid on our part. Of course, we should discuss this concept and any other concept in our leadership. I know that in the State Committee in New York there were some very

stimulating discussions by George Watt, Blumberg and Blake and several other comrades with respect to the proposition that this question inevitably must be regarded in a somewhat different light by virtue of the fact that we are speaking of a transition in a different period. We are speaking of the possibility of the assumption of state power by the working class not by violent revolution and civil war, but due to the transforming of parliaments and other such bodies. We are speaking here of an assumption of power that involves not the violent smashing so to speak, of the bourgeois state apparatus and its complete destruction, but its being taken over and transformed by the working class from an organ of bourgeois power to an organ of working-class power. Now I think that there is much that is new and interesting in this general concept, but I think the comrades are wrong when they think that this in some way throws into question the validity and necessity of a state in which the working class is the dominant, ruling force, which is the essence, of course, of proletarian dictatorship. This has to do with the form in which the working class assumes this position of the leading force in the state. However it does not in any way, in my opinion, throw into question the necessity of any transition from capitalism to social-

ism being carried out under the leadership of the working class occupying a position of state power. I consider this, or any other question, a legitimate question for discussion and debate without any atmosphere of revisionist labels in the leadership of our Party. I think that we should also, in relation to this and other questions, give careful attention to the way in which the document lays stress on the fact that creative Marxism demands equally a recognition of both that which is new in any given period, and that which is fully valid from the past. Neither one without the other constitutes Marxism.

With respect to the manner in which the Declaration places the question of estimating the dangers of revisionism and dogmatism, well, that was the subject of our discussion yesterday, and I don't want to repeat it now. But I think that the placing of the question in the way that it is done, the necessity of concretely defining both the dogmatist and revisionist trends, and the placing of the necessity of the simultaneous, two-front struggle against these trends, while evaluating revisionism in this period as the main danger in the international working class movement, also represents—and will represent for our entire Party—a very helpful framework within which to approach the problems that confront us here.

Key Problems of Party Program

By Alexander Bittelman

WHAT KIND OF A PROGRAM does the Party need? The 16th Party Convention gave a clear answer. The program has "to define clearly and unequivocally the viewpoint of American Communists on all fundamental problems of the struggle for socialism in the United States."

Put in other words, the Program has to trace the American Road to Socialism, proceeding from the theoretical positions of Marxism-Leninism and with the aid of its scientific method.

From this it is obvious that the projected Party program cannot be a program of action designed for a particular situation or even period of time. Programs of action the Party needs and formulates from time to time as occasion demands. Nor can the projected Program be a mere statement of policy whether for a particular issue or for a complex of issues. This too the Party has to produce every now and then.

Finally, the program called for by the 16th Convention is something very much different from a statement of the Party's general line and tactical orientation. The Main Resolution of the Convention is that kind of a document; and as such, it contains certain programmatic aspects, but it is not the program.

Starting out from a Marxian analysis of American capitalism, with all its national peculiarities and characteristics, the program has to define the historic stage or stages on the American road to socialism; the specific objective tasks of each stage; and the corresponding programs of economic, political and social demands.

How urgent is the need for such a Party program? Extremely urgent and pressing, according to the 16th Convention. "The Convention feels that it is incorrect to continue to function without a comprehensive and basic written program," so speaks the Main Resolution. It should be obvious by now, eleven months after the Convention, that the very solution of the Party crisis depends in large measure upon our willingness and ability to produce the kind of program the Convention desired.

In what spirit shall we proceed to work on this program? Here too the Convention gave us a clear lead. It said: "Entirely new and unprecedented problems are emerging today which were never treated by Marx, Engels or Lenin. They arise from the new world situation and its impact on all countries." Very true, as life has convincingly demon-

strated. Hence, the Convention said: "The Communist Party will have to be bolder in re-examining certain Marxist-Leninist theories which, while valid in a past period, may have become outdated and rendered obsolete by new historical developments."

In any such serious undertaking, the danger *always* exists that revisionist tendencies may creep into the process of re-examination, and Marxists will *always* be on their guard. At the same time, the Convention also said that our main danger at this time is dogmatism and sectarianism. It pointed to something very crucial when it said:

The Marxist movement in our country has suffered historically from dogmatic application of Marxist theory to the American scene. The Communist Party inherited these weaknesses. Insufficient development of the independent theoretical work of our Party over the past decades has contributed towards our doctrinaire acceptance and mechanical application of many theoretical propositions.

This is the state of mind with which we must approach our work on the program.

Writing on the preparation of a program for the Russian Party in the latter half of 1899, Lenin said the following:

We do not regard Marxist theory as something completed and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it has only laid the cornerstone of

the science which Socialists *must* further advance in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life. We think that an *independent* elaboration of the Marxist theory is especially essential for Russian Socialists, for this theory provides only general *guiding* principles, which, *in particular*, are applied in England differently from France, in France differently from Germany, and in Germany different from Russia (*Marx-Engels Marxism*, page 126, Lenin's own emphases).

It is, of course, true that since these words were written, Marxist theory has made history-creating advances. It has been developed further by Lenin himself for the era of monopoly capitalism and imperialism, bringing into life Marxism-Leninism. This theory has been further enriched by the epoch-making experiences of socialist transformations in the Soviet Union, in China and in many countries of eastern and central Europe. The national liberation movements in large parts of the world, and the tremendous advances of the labor movement of the capitalist countries to influence in the affairs of their nations, have contributed mightily to the still further development and enrichment of Marxist theory—Marxism-Leninism.

But the development of Marxist theory never stops. It must never be allowed to stop if we wish "to keep pace with life," as Lenin said. And this is what the 16th ~~Cr-~~ ^{Convention} Main Resolution wanted us to do. Its ^{main} Resolution said: "To advance the struggle in the United States for peace, de-

mocracy, civil rights and socialism, the Communist Party must further develop its independent theoretical work."

In view of the foregoing, it is imperative to ask the following question: what is Comrade Foster's attitude to the decision of the 16th Convention that we begin work on the preparation of "a comprehensive and basic written program"? Why does he keep silent about the *program*? How did he manage to write a document of thousands upon thousands of words *without* explicitly discussing our new programmatic problems, *without* fully formulating any of them, without even saying that we *need* a program of the kind called for by the Convention? Shall we assume that Comrade Foster is *opposed* to the program decision of the Convention?

I am referring here to his article "The Party Crisis and the Way Out" (*Political Affairs*, Dec.-Jan.). This article, according to Foster, "indicates the chief means by which this crisis may be overcome." But one would look in vain among these chief means for the task of preparing a basic and comprehensive Party program. Comrade Foster simply ignores this task. The truth, however, is that one of the very key and chief means of bringing the Party out of the crisis is precisely the preparation of a basic and comprehensive Party program.

Comrade Foster speaks of "the earliest and most intensive cultivation of our mass work upon all

fronts" as one of the chief means out of the crisis. Very well. This we must try to do; but can this be done successfully *in the old way*? The Party has been trying for many years to do mass work but that did not prevent the crisis from arising nor did it bring the further development of the crisis to a stop. Obviously, the effort to do mass work in the old way does not work. The Party needs a *new way* of doing mass work. What is this new way? One of the reasons for the continuing Party crisis is precisely the fact Comrade Foster continues totally oblivious of this major fact in the Party's life.

New ways of doing mass work require a comprehensive and basic Party program of the kind called for by the 16th Convention; a new relationship between the Communist Party and the labor movement, the movement of our class; a new relationship between the Party and the Negro national liberation movement and all other progressive movements of the people; a new tactical orientation based upon this new relationship; and a perspective of a leading mass party of socialism—a united party of socialism—inspired by the teachings of Marx and Lenin.

This does not mean, of course, that no mass work of any kind is possible until all these requirements have been fully met. No, that is not the idea. But it does mean that successful mass work of a scope and

nature that will pull the Party out of the crisis will become possible only *in the process of meeting these basic requirements* for the new ways of doing mass work.

Comrade Foster's article shows no awareness of the crucial needs of these requirements.

He speaks of the need "to liquidate the continuing theoretical confusion in the Party." All right. **Wherein** lies the confusion? About **what** specific and concrete theoretical problems are we confused? Is it **enough** merely to restate Marxist-Leninist principles, and to restate them inadequately, "to liquidate the continuing theoretical confusion"? If that were enough, the confusion would be liquidated by now since we have had many and repeated "restatements" of fundamental principles. But Comrade Foster himself finds that the confusion is still here. Why?

Comrade Foster makes no effort to answer this question except to say of the confusion that it is "not only our traditional sectarianism and dogmatism, but also the Revisionism which has almost wrecked the Party." This only tells us that we suffer from both tendencies—dogmatism and revisionism. That is true. But it tells us nothing at all about the specific *problems* we are theoretically confused on and *wherein* the confusion lies. It is as though Comrade Foster was deliberately avoiding these questions; but they cannot be avoided. Life is seeing to that.

What we suffer from theoretically

is not just confusion; although, God knows, there is plenty of that in our midst, and also theoretical disorientation. But what is the chief source of all that? *It is the appearance and accumulation of a whole series of new and major problems, calling for fundamental programmatic and political answers, but which our Party has not yet found or even clearly and adequately formulated.* The accumulation of *unsolved* major theoretical problems and the protracted delay in arriving at a solution of these problems—this is the source of the theoretical confusion and disorientation in our midst. He who does not see that, sees nothing at all in the Party crisis.

Hence, "to liquidate the continuing theoretical confusion in the Party," we must begin to face and tackle the new and major theoretical problems confronting us. This means to formulate and solve a number of key problems of Party program, "entirely new and unprecedented problems," as the 16th Convention said. We must prepare a program that will "define clearly and unequivocally the viewpoint of American Communists on all fundamental problems of the struggle for socialism in the United States."

CAPITALISM IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE AMERICAN ROAD TO SOCIALISM

The social system existing now in the United States is capitalism. It

is governed by the same economic laws as the capitalist system in England, for example, or France, or any other capitalist country. It is governed by the economic laws discovered and formulated by Marx.

Our program must demonstrate the truth of this proposition and also of the Marxian conclusion that *socialism in the United States is inevitable*. This is the basic task of the program.

How do we propose to fulfill this task? What theoretical problems must we formulate and solve in order to realize this basic programmatic task?

A key problem facing us here is to define scientifically, in a Marxist-Leninist way, *the nature of the national peculiarities and characteristics of American capitalism*. It is unquestionable that capitalism in the United States, beginning with its very origin and continuing through its present highest stage, that of monopoly and imperialism, is displaying a number of distinct and important national peculiarities and characteristics. What are they? How important are they from the standpoint of struggle for socialism in the United States?

In other words: *are the national peculiarities and characteristics of capitalism in the United States of such a nature that they raise before our Party programmatic problems bearing on the American Road to Socialism?*

This is not only a basic theoretical

problem whose solution is the starting point for the preparation of the Party program. It is also a major political problem. The struggle against various bourgeois theories that capitalism in the United States is either no capitalism at all or is governed by entirely different economic laws than capitalism elsewhere is both a theoretical and political struggle. The exposure of the monopoly fraud of "People's Capitalism," which Comrade Foster unpardonably confuses with the aspirations of the American people and its labor movement towards a Welfare State, is also both theoretical and political.

To struggle effectively against all bourgeois theories that American capitalism is "exceptional," and to expose the monopoly fraud of "People's Capitalism," our program must define clearly *the nature* of the unquestionable national peculiarities of American capitalism. It must proceed from that to the necessary programmatic conclusions on whether these peculiarities have a bearing, and the kind of bearing, on the American road to socialism.

Comrade Foster speaks in his article about "national characteristics" but he continues to shy away from the programmatic problem facing us here. He refers to the fact that "the United States is the largest of all capitalist countries." In what respects? What, if any, programmatic conclusions must we draw from that? But we find no answer from

Foster, not even the recognition that an answer is called for.

Comrade Foster also speaks of "the particular qualities of U.S. monopolies." What are these particular qualities? Do we have to find out what they are and what their nature is from a theoretical and programmatic standpoint? No answer from Foster; not even an intimation of an answer. Had he taken the trouble of analyzing in a Marxist-Leninist way "the particular qualities of the U.S. monopolies," he might have discovered that the modern strivings of the American people towards a Welfare State, which he confuses with the monopoly fraud of "People's Capitalism," are promoted and stimulated by the irreconcilable conflict and contradiction between the monopolies and the mass of the American people. He might have learned that the full and far-reaching objective significance of this conflict stems from the fundamental contradiction *between the monopolies and the general capitalist environment of free competition and commodity production*.

This contradiction, as analyzed by Lenin, which he defines as "permanent and insoluble," is the attribute of monopoly capitalism and imperialism in all capitalist countries. But in the United States, as every thoughtful student of the American scene knows, this contradiction came to play an extraordinary role. Why? Comrade Foster does not even see this question, let alone answer it.

The answer is found in a study of the chief national characteristics in *the origin and development* of capitalism in the United States. Some say this is a historical approach. Of course, it is; this is a Marxist theory and method. If the problem as formulated is real, and if the way to the answer lies in the origin and development of American capitalism, then the approach has to be historical. Isn't that so?

American capitalism, as is well known to every student of the country's economic and general history, originated and developed in the process of conquering a continent, with a frontier in continual motion for many decades, not only the geographic frontier but also and especially the *economic* frontier. As a result, capitalism in the United States was developing in width and depth at the same time, *and still continues to do so*. It was developing extensively through the continual rise of new capitalist relations in new parts of the country; and it was developing intensively through the concentration and centralization of capital and the subsequent rise of monopoly and imperialism.

Important here is the role of the moving frontier (with which bourgeois historians have dealt much but one-sidedly), the simultaneous extensive and intensive development of the American economy, *and the continual reproduction of new capitalist relations as well as new monopoly groupings*. These factors,

which still operate though in new and changing ways, *tend to reproduce continually and in ever sharper form "the permanent and insoluble contradiction" (Lenin) between the American monopolies and the general capitalist environment of free competition and commodity production and the contradiction between the anti-democratic tendencies of the monopolies and the democratic tendencies of the American people.*

It is precisely here that we find the main explanation for the fact that the chief and basic contradiction of capitalism, the contradiction between the capitalist class and the working class, has found and continues to find its sharpest expression in the contradiction between the monopolies and the mass of the people. *Anti-capitalist sentiments and movements tend to assume an anti-monopoly edge and character.*

Lenin attached tremendous importance to the contradiction between monopoly and the general capitalist environment of free competition and commodity production. He wrote:

Kautsky's theoretical critique of imperialism has nothing in common with Marxism—precisely for the reason that it evades and obscures the very profound and radical contradictions of imperialism: the contradiction between monopoly and free competition that exists side by side with it, between the gigantic "operations" (and gigantic profits) of finance capital and

"honest" trade in the free market, the contradictions between cartels and trusts, on the one hand, and non-cartelized industry, on the other, etc. ("Imperialism," Vol. XIX, *Collected Works*, p. 1876).

It is painful to record that Comrade Foster and other American Communists have been and are trying "to evade and obscure the very profound and radical contradictions of imperialism" of which Lenin writes. As a result, they are arriving, or tend to arrive, at false conclusions on many important matters of theory and policy, including the Welfare State.

In combatting the bourgeois theories of the "exceptional" nature of capitalism in the United States, American Marxists must demonstrate, by convincing proof and not by mere assertion, that (1) American capitalism is governed by the same economic laws as capitalism in other countries; (2) that all general economic laws are modified in their working and operation by many circumstances (Marx); (3) that the national peculiarities in the origin and development of capitalism in the United States tend to give birth to popular illusions about the "exceptional" nature of American capitalism which the monopolies seek to exploit against the people by means of such fraudulent fictions as "People's Capitalism"; (4) but that these same national peculiarities are creating the objective conditions for a Welfare State, an anti-monopoly

form of democracy as a stage of social progress, and for a peaceful and constitutional transition from the Welfare State to the Socialist State in a revolutionary change from capitalism to socialism.

The foregoing four points are suggested as an answer to the key programmatic problem formulated above, namely, whether the national peculiarities of capitalism in the United States are of such a nature as to have a direct bearing on the American Road to Socialism.

It follows therefore that the American working class must accomplish a major historic task of radical economic and political change in the United States *before* it can proceed to head the advance of the American people to the socialist transformation of American society. It is the task of curbing the powers of the monopolies in the economy and government of the nation. It is the task of establishing an anti-monopoly form of democracy, within the confines of the capitalist mode of production and the existing bourgeois state system, in which the chief function of government will be the realization of the welfare clause of the Constitution and the full implementation of the democratic liberties of the Bill of Rights. It is the task of realizing fully the equal rights and national liberation of the Negro people, completing the process of bourgeois-democratic transformation in the South.

It is the historic task of establish-

ing the Welfare State. It is a historic task of a *general democratic nature* to be accomplished by an anti-monopoly coalition of labor, the farmers, the Negro people, the middle classes and sections of the non-monopoly bourgeois, a coalition of which labor is the backbone and driving force.

Viewed in the light of Marxist-Leninist theory, we can conclude as follows: the successful struggle for the fulfillment of the objective tasks of the Welfare State—curbing the economic and political powers of the monopolies—will create the conditions for the coming of the next stage of social progress—the peaceful and constitutional transition to socialism.

It follows from the above that (a) the peaceful and constitutional transition is not an automatic process but must be fought for; and (b) only the struggle for the Welfare State will create the conditions and realize the objective possibilities for the peaceful transition to socialism.

The emergence of two world systems—the socialist and capitalist—and the approach of the period of peaceful coexistence and competition are ushering in a new phase of the general crisis of capitalism. As a consequence, the reactionary imperialist and aggressive drives of the monopolies are bound to come into irreconcilable conflicts *with American national interests.* These will dictate a policy of peaceful coexistence and competition, the applica-

tion of the Bandung principles in relations with other nations, and policies of people's welfare and democracy at home.

Hence, in this emerging new period of the present historic epoch the people's struggles for curbing the powers of the monopolies in the economy and government of the nation are bound to rise to new heights of achievement. The advance to the Welfare State will gather power and momentum. The American people will reach a stage of historic progress in which conditions will mature for the democratic, peaceful and

constitutional transition from the Welfare State to the Socialist State.

These are only some of the key problems of Party program. They must be discussed freely, earnestly and objectively. They must be discussed in the same spirit in which Lenin invited the Russian Marxists to discuss the preparation of their own first program in 1899. He wrote: "We shall therefore gladly afford space in our paper for articles on theoretical questions as we invite all comrades openly to discuss controversial points" (*Marx-Engels Marxism*, p. 126).

From the Land of Barbarism . . .

"In no city in the world can one see so much Shakespeare, Ibsen, Wilde, Schiller, Ostrovsky, Chekhov, and so on, in one week as in Moscow."

Ossia Trilling, vice-president, International Association of Theatre Critics, in *The New York Times*, Jan. 26, 1958.

* * *

"The Russians have realized for some years the necessity of guiding every child as far along the educational path as he is qualified to go, of identifying talent early and cultivating it to the utmost, of rewarding scholarship and research, and making teaching a reputable, dignified profession."

Claude M. Fuess, former headmaster, Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., in *The Saturday Review*, Feb. 1, 1958.

Behind the Guatemalan Elections

By José Martínez

The article that follows reached us shortly before the Presidential elections held in Guatemala January 19. As we go to press the results of that election are not available; we are confident, however, that the material offered below will help readers gain a deeper insight into those results, and into the nature of the crisis through which the Guatemalan people are passing.—Ed.

THE RECENT STORMY EVENTS in Guatemala, with farce elections and Presidents and military juntas following each other, reveal the instability of the regime which the U.S. State Department and the United Fruit Company imposed by violence in June-July 1954.

Following the assassination on July 27 last of the quisling President Col. Carlos Castillo Armas, his henchmen chose Luis Arturo Gonzalez, wealthy lawyer for U.S. companies, as provisional President. The provisional Government announced new presidential and Congressional elections, with a notorious reactionary, Miguel Ortiz Passarelli, as candidate for chief executive, and various United Fruit payrollers running for Congress.

The elections, set for October 20, took place in the midst of a state of siege decreed after Castillo Armas's death and in an atmosphere of fascist terror. The date chosen was in violation of the Government's own reactionary constitution, which provides

a four-month period for the election campaign.

The participation of democratic parties was forbidden and leading oppositionists were imprisoned. The election was rigged to guarantee "victory" for the Government slate.

With troops and police occupying virtually the whole country, the party of Castillo Armas, the Democratic National Movement, whose voters comprise less than one-fifth of the registered electorate, was declared the winner and the Government hastened to recognize Passarelli as President-elect.

However, it appears that a majority of the votes had actually been won by General Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes, candidate of big landowning elements and part of the conservative bourgeoisie. Lacking a candidate of their own, the majority of the people had voted for Ydigoras Fuentes to express their repudiation of the Government.

The masses, rallied by the Ydigorista party, National Democratic Revo-

lutionary Party and the Workers' Party (Communists), as well as by the trade unions and students' organizations, poured into the streets and organized demonstrations at the National Palace to protest against the election fraud.

The police attacked the demonstrators, killing several, wounding others and dragging many off to jail. This had the effect of firing the people's resistance and bringing new thousands out into the streets. Thousands invaded the halls of Congress demanding nullification of the elections and lifting of the state of siege.

The railroad workers, one of the most important trade unions in the country, declared a strike. Municipal transport workers and workers in various factories followed suit.

Stores, markets, offices and Government buildings closed down. Thousands of Guatemalans marched in the streets, kept strike ranks unbroken, held neighborhood meetings and demanded the removal of the Government.

In other cities the masses also surged into the streets, demonstrated before Government buildings and in some cases took them over.

Faced with this tremendous opposition, the chief of the national police refused to continue sending his men against the people and was fired. The frightened troops were forced to retreat to their barracks. The Government, which has boasted of its "firmness" and promised to

restore "order" in a matter of hours, was coming apart at the seams, with many officials resigning and going into hiding.

In this situation the army high command—prompted by the American embassy—demanded the quashing of the fake elections and gave Gonzalez his walking papers. A military junta of three colonels, with a Cabinet consisting mostly of army officers, took over.

Nevertheless, the masses, despite the "anti-Communist" threats of the military chiefs and their efforts to sow confusion, remained firm and continued to hold the streets. The people compelled the junta to lift the state of siege, free many political prisoners, and finally to dissolve itself and turn over the provisional presidency to a retired army colonel, Guillermo Flores Avendano, second vice-president of Congress, who will serve till new elections.

In all these developments the Yankee imperialists intervened brazenly on the side of the most reactionary forces. News agencies spoke openly of American participation in the negotiations between the military junta and General Ydigoras Fuentes.

Part of the deal between the junta and the General was agreement to put an end to the activities of the people. Within a few hours troops fired on the striking railroad workers, killing one and wounding several.

The Guatemalan people have suc-

ceeded in ridding themselves of one of the most despotic and pro-imperialist Governments that has ever afflicted our country; that of Castillo Armas and his accomplices. That made-in-Washington regime used arms and money from the U.S. to murder many and imprison thousands, to abolish democratic liberties, rob the peasants of the land they had received under the Arbenz reform, liquidate the gains of the workers, deliver the wealth and natural resources of Guatemala to American monopolies, and engulf the country in misery and economic ruin.

The people of Guatemala also defeated the Yankee imperialist plans to impose a military junta in order to continue the despotic regime. And all this in less than a week of ardent struggle and without resort to violence.

But the battle is not over even though the reactionary forces have for the present succeeding in halting street actions and strikes. The big landowning elements, who are also servitors of U.S. imperialism, have tried to arrange matters as if the country's problems were merely constitutional. They have transferred the Presidency to Avendano, who was a collaborator of Castillo Armas even though he later broke with his clique.

The Guatemalan people seek fundamental changes in order to regain their national independence and restore the program of social reform

launched by the democratic government of ex-President Jacobo Arbenz whom Washington overthrew. Partial and limited though the recent victory over reaction was, it can help open the road to larger goals.

The present provisional Government has announced it will hold new elections, but has not yet set the date. In the forthcoming contest General Ydigoras will undoubtedly play an important role.

He is a reactionary of the old school and was a high official of the hated Ubico dictatorship which the Guatemalan people overthrew in 1944. General Ydigoras was a candidate for President in 1950—Guatemala's last democratic Presidential election. He was snowed under by Colonel Arbenz, 243,000 votes to 68,000.

The Revolutionary Party, which has now been virtually legalized, will also be an important factor in the elections. The party consists of supporters of the democratic ex-President Juan Jose Arevalo (1945-51), as well as a section of the national bourgeoisie, university students and a substantial number of workers and peasants.

The Guatemalan Workers' Party, still compelled to function underground, is striving to unite the working class as an independent force. The Guatemalan Communists are seeking to force a broad people's unity to restore democracy and free Guatemala from semi-feudal backwardness and the oppression of the U.S. trusts.

Africa and the United States

By John Pittman

"The African stands strong and erect, his brow furrowed with mixed determination and earnest questioning as he stares ahead into the distance. 'Who is on my side? Who?'"

THIS SYMBOLIC AFRICAN in William Alphaeus Hunton's recently published book* puts a number of questions to Americans. His questions concern all Americans, but Hunton directs them specifically to two sections of the American people for whom they have the most meaning. These are, first, the 16-million strong organized labor movement and an estimated 32-million unorganized workers who form the American working class, and second, the 18 million Negro Americans.

To the American working class, Hunton's African addresses a plea for solidarity and understanding:

The American companies in our land—they are your bosses and our bosses, too. That should mean something, shouldn't it? . . . We in Africa want to try to help end the Cold War; *we will not be used to fight it*. If you in the ranks of American labor will unite with us on this one thing, then you are in truth our allies.

To Negro Americans, the African says:

Are we not both in battle against the same kind of tyranny and for the same dignity and equality? . . . Why, then, do we not stand closer together? . . . Your united demand for your country to support

* *Decision in Africa*, 256 pp., International Publishers, N. Y., \$4.00.

our cause and stop aiding our enemies would be listened to. That is what we in Africa wait to hear. . . . I beg you not to let yourselves be silenced or intimidated or divided by false issues in your support of our fight—any more than in your own struggle for freedom. Let us stand together, brother. Let us walk together.

Not without cause does the African look to America. Does not the Declaration of Independence, the principles on which our government and institutions are founded, proclaim that "all men are created equal" and endowed with "certain inalienable rights" including the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Equality and his inalienable rights—the African seeks no more than these. Then should not the country founded on such principles be his natural ally?

Moreover, the United States as an ally dedicated to these founding principles could be a decisive force in the African's struggle to realize their application to his country. That the African will win them, soon or late and by dint of more or less blood and tears, is already written on the pages of tomorrow. But with America's help, he could win them sooner and at less cost. This is so, as Hunton says, because:

Even though Europe yet has much larger stakes in Africa than the United States, and even though the Africans' immediate and direct adversary is European overlordship, it is still nevertheless true that the United States holds the decisive responsibility for either blocking or promoting the rapid and peaceful liberation of Africa. This is so be-

cause of the dominating influence of the United States and its economic power in the Western alliance, in the policy-making capitals of Europe, and in settler-ruled countries such as Rhodesia and South Africa. The question is whether America's authority will make itself felt in these places and in the United Nations on the African's side, or whether it will continue to be directed toward serving American strategic and profit-making prerogatives in the continent, utilizing and supporting the European systems of control or shifting to a go-it-alone policy in some areas where Europeans are no longer in the saddle. (p. 237.)

This statement of fact by Hunton may seem unconvincing to a majority of Americans. The idea that the United States government pursues policies which can be described accurately only as "imperialist" has not yet been accepted by broad sections of the American people, despite mountains of evidence in history and present-day reality. The label of "Communist propaganda" has been applied so assiduously to every imputation of imperialism aims to U.S. foreign policy, and the government's own philanthropic demagoguery has been so voluminous and incessant, that the concept of American domination over African affairs and opposition to African liberation may seem false, if not preposterous, to many.

Nevertheless, no reader of Hunton's work, in my opinion, could remain unconvinced of the truth of his statement. This is easily the book's chief importance and value. It dispels all doubts that the U.S. government is today the main foe of African self-determination, and that the rich families of the United States and the great corporations they own and control rank with the worst exploiters of African labor and resources.

Hunton's book is unique in this respect. Dozens of books and articles have appeared, many within recent years and months, which view the Africans' struggle for freedom with sympathy, and which provide much data to document the charge of harsh exploitation and oppression. Among these may be mentioned *Inside Africa* by the well-known writer, John Gunther, and works by the British writer, Basil Davidson. But in these works the role of U.S. capital and policy is glossed over or depicted as insignificant in relation to that of the older imperialist powers. Gunther, for instance, conveys the impression that U.S. capital is somehow different from British, French, German or Portuguese capital, that it is inherently "liberating" and "democratic." It is not the dollar, but only the pound, the franc and the mark which are stained with blood!

Hunton, whose 15-year work as director of the former Council on African Affairs was marked by characteristically painstaking and meticulous regard for fact, brought this quality to the writing of *Decision in Africa*. The reader will find few assertions of opinion in his book, if any, which are not fully documented and bolstered by facts. So many details are supplied, in truth, that the book can serve equally well as a work of reference.

Ninety-two pages of Part Two of the book, entitled "African Aims and American Interests," unveil the sordid tale of the shameful looting of the African continent by American capital. Here is shown the real concern behind the State Department's growing interest in Ethiopia, the Congo, Liberia, South Africa, the Rhodesias, Uganda, Ghana and Nigeria, Tunisia and Mor-

occo. And for ready reference, Hunton has supplied tables showing the U.S. share in African exports and imports and direct private U.S. investments in Africa.

It is in this section that readers in our country will find the data with which to convince others of our responsibility in the African liberation movements. In view of the abysmal ignorance of most Americans concerning elementary realities of African life, Hunton has deemed it necessary to set forth much historical and economic and political material, in the first part of the book, entitled "Sources of Conflict."

The concluding part, "Issues and Prospects," exposes the basically imperialist aim in the manifold current programs of West European and United States governing circles. It asserts this aim will fail: "The fatal defect of the Eurafrika plans and calculations is that they under-estimate—if they do not entirely omit—the African." And it points to the African's alternative in seeking genuine allies and stringless aid today and tomorrow—"New Horizons: The Worlds of Bandung and Socialism." Much of this has been and is being said by others, including a few highly placed individuals in the U.S. government and the ranks of U.S. finance-capital. What they don't say is what Hunton says clearly and well: we Americans have a major responsibility for what has happened in Africa in the past, what is happening today and what will happen there tomorrow; because American capital and governmental policy are now the chief obstacle to Africa's liberation.

Perhaps it is enough if a book makes one point and makes it so effectively that it can change the thinking of

people. Perhaps it is too much to ask of an author that he strive not only to change false ideas and instill truth, but also to move men into action in order that the truth should prevail. I think, however, that the latter objective is required in a book which strives to present a case for Africa's liberation. And it is unfortunate, I believe, that Hunton has left off short of this objective.

The book makes clear to Americans our responsibility for helping the Africans' freedom struggle. But it fails to make clear our interest in giving this help. The matter of self-interest is involved. Hunton realizes this, and makes the point in the final sentence of the book: "If only for the sake of their own interests, Americans and their government are called upon to take their stand unequivocally along with the great majority of humanity on the side of African freedom."

But the point will not stand by its mere assertion. What "own best interests"? How little this is understood may be seen by the reaction of Americans to the week-long Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference in Cairo, Egypt, last December. More than 500 non-governmental representatives of 44 countries attended this successor to the historic Bandung Conference of April 1955. The countries represented by these delegates have a combined population of two-thirds of the world's total.

Resolutions adopted unanimously at this meeting were clear-cut condemnations of colonialism and the Cold War. These resolutions were saying, in so many words, the same things Hunton's

symbolic African said to the workers and Negro people of America. They were explicit and definitive on a special point of Hunton's, that the Cold War fosters colonialism and African oppression, and that an end to the Cold War would be a powerful step toward freedom for the colonial peoples.

What was America's reaction to this conference? We know, of course, how the State Department reacted, and how the conference was treated by the press and news agencies which support both the Cold War and the objectives of U.S. capital and companies operating in Africa. These sources labelled the meeting a "Communist-dominated" gathering, and the *New York Times* of January 3 dubbed the permanent secretariat—the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Council—which was established by the conference, a "little cominform." Certainly this reaction was not surprising, since the delegates included the United States among the "imperialist" states, and roundly denounced such pet projects of the U.S. government as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Baghdad Pact, South East Asia Treaty Organization, and the Eisenhower Doctrine of U.S. intervention in the Middle East.

But what was the reaction of the American people? Especially of the two sections to which the African people look for support—the working class and the Negro people? Was there an expression of solidarity with the Afro-Asian workers and farmers from any organization of these two oppressed yet potentially powerful sections of the American people? If there was one such greeting, it has escaped this reviewer's attention. Neither of the two organizations most influential in striv-

ing for the special interests of these two groupings, the AFL-CIO and the NAACP, gave any indication of their understanding of or sympathy for the principles espoused at the Cairo Conference.

True, the foreign policy resolution adopted at the recent AFL-CIO convention at Atlantic City speaks out against colonialism. And the NAACP conventions regularly adopt resolutions calling for U.S. support of the African struggles for freedom. But the test comes when the "chips are down," as the saying goes, and in this instance, the Cairo Conference found both the AFL-CIO and NAACP aligned, if not openly on the side of the State Department, at least in a position of passivity.

At this point, it is necessary to note the obvious fact that the approach of the AFL-CIO and the ranks of the white members of the American working class is not the same as that of the Negro people. Negro Americans are certainly sympathetic to the African struggle, and have greater understanding of its motivations and objectives. But among them, also, there is a lack of clarity as to their stake in African liberation. And in the absence of this understanding, there is a division of opinion as to the role Negroes should play in the fight for a change of U.S. foreign policy, which, as Hunton says, "is the main battleground where the fight for a constructive Western foreign policy must be won." For instance, some Negro spokesmen regard the Cold War as a boon, providing opportunities for Negroes to help in winning Africa for the West. "U.S. Losing Out in Asia, Africa and the Near East," announced a headline in

the *Baltimore Afro-American* of last December 28. And the story by Louis Lautier, a respected Negro Washington correspondent, declared as follows:

The Near East and South Asia exist in the constant shadow of their northern neighbors—the Soviet bloc and Communist China. Africa is marked as a primary target for future Communist penetration.

Yet the United States has made virtually no use of its colored citizens to win and hold the support of this area in building and maintaining a system of collective security.

Obviously, such an approach, which views the Cold War as a golden opportunity and only laments the fact that racism is preventing Negroes from taking advantage of it, has nothing in common with the African's need for ending the Cold War as a prerequisite for the achievement of freedom. Where does the Negro's self-interest lie—in the Cold War, or in African freedom? What is the relationship between Little Rock and the war of annihilation against the Kikuyu people of Kenya? Hunton hints at this relationship, but he fails to spell it out.

What is the bread-and-butter stake, the civil liberty stake, the trade-union rights' stake in the bus boycott of Africans in Johannesburg and the strike of copper miners in North Rhodesia? There is this self-interest, but *Decision in Africa* leaves it to the imagination. Its primary appeal is to the American worker's sense of justice and decency, to his indignation at crimes committed by those appointed and elected to represent him. Is this appeal sufficient? I do not think so.

Perhaps Hunton should not be held to account too strictly for failing to present convincing arguments directed

to the self-interest of the American worker and the Negro people. The task is one of the most difficult in the sphere of Marxist scholarship. One can see this in those classics of Marx, Engels and Lenin respecting the responsibility of the workers of an oppressor state to the freedom struggle of the oppressed peoples. After all these years, the English worker's sense of responsibility to the Irish proletariat is still wanting in a realization of his self-interest. Marx's observation about the common interest of labor in a white skin and labor in a black skin may be appreciated as acute and historically accurate, but inside the American labor movement the concept has taken hold only in a limited way, and among unorganized workers hardly at all. Granted, the task is prodigious, but this is all the more reason for taking it on.

But all this is not to say that Hunton's work is not of first-rate importance as a Marxist study of imperialism, and specifically of U.S. imperialism in Africa, and of the African peoples' resistance to it. It is, moreover, a book full of hope and inspiration. And this reviewer completely agrees with the characterization of Hunton made by Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, that most distinguished American champion of African liberation, in his foreword, that: "I know of no one today who has a more thorough knowledge and understanding of that continent," and that *Decision in Africa* "is a notable contribution to African freedom." I would hope, however, that this volume will be followed by another one, in which Hunton will tell American workers and the Negro people why Africa's struggle is theirs.

The Nakedness of Mr. Fast

By Phillip Bonosky

THERE IS A remarkable passage in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* where the various suitors, or more accurately, bidders for the hand of Nastasya Filippovna, are gathered in her home awaiting her decision. The truth of the relationship among them all, and toward her particularly, which is ostensibly love, she decides to put to the test with the severest of all acids: money. Rogozhin, in a transport of almost mad joy, has offered 100,000 rubles for her, and stands highest bidder at this moment. But Gavril Ilvolgin, Ganya, has had only "love" to offer her, but actually aches secretly for the fortune he hopes to get if Nastasya accepts him. Nastasya wants to know the truth. Then comes this scene:

Well, then, listen, Ganya, [she says] I want to see you as you really are for the last time. . . . You see this bundle of notes? There's hundred thousand in it, I'm going to throw it now on the fire before all of them—let them all be witnesses! As soon as the fire sets it ablaze, put your hands off first, with your bare hands, and turn up your sleeves, and pull it out of the fire. If you do, the hundred thousand are all yours! You'll only burn your fingers a little, but it's a hundred thousand—think of it! It won't take you long to pull it out. And I'll have a good look at you just as you are when crawling into the fire for my money! All are witnesses that the money will be yours. And if you don't, it'll burn. . . .

And she does throw the fortune in paper notes on the fire. All the guests there react in their various ways; but it is Ganya on whom all eyes rest. The

notes catch and begin to burn. Ganya undergoes the agonies of hell but does not stoop before them all to singe his fingers for the fortune he desperately longs to have. He faints finally from the unbearable tension. Nastasya Filippovna cries: "He didn't do it, after all. Stood his ground: so his vanity is even greater than his lust for money."

With the whole world watching, no man, regardless of the strength of his cupidity, can get down before that watching world and crawl before it for money. One is saved from that supreme humiliation only by a greater power—vanity. But the clash between the two is nevertheless fatal; the energy of the struggle generated in this clash between two great forces ends by destroying Ganya himself; all his spiritual resources are burnt up, and as is true in Dostoevsky's book, so it is true in life: such a man becomes a hollow man.

* * *

This book* would ordinarily not be worth reviewing. It's a Cold War document; it is also a clinical report, a restatement of vanity, a cry of infantile rage. In any case these curious and often pathetic notes which have been gathered between hard covers cannot seriously be considered as art, or political or literary criticism. True, the book burlesques the form of the great confessions which have enriched the world (Rousseau, Tolstoy, etc.);

* *The Naked God*, by Howard Fast, Praeger, N. Y., \$3.50.

but its tradition is an ignoble one. Fast's *The Naked God* takes its place with the long list of books written by renegades, informers, police spies and literary stoolpigeons with which our epoch has been harassed, and has gratefully forgotten.

Its only use for us and for all those who are seriously dedicated to socialism is that Fast, driven by a monstrous vanity, has played out to its logical end, and even bigger-than-life size, the whole petty bourgeois theoretical and political drama, which arose on a world scale but took a particularly virulent and dangerous form in the working-class movement of the United States.

For starting at a point where many others also found themselves, confused, disoriented and sincerely dismayed, Fast has moved rapidly from that position of an injured but still sincere socialist to an open enemy of the working class movement everywhere, and a noisy propagandist for war against the Soviet Union.

It is important for all those who found themselves going along the road with this man part of the way to know where the road ended, and why it inevitably ended there. It is important, in connection with Fast's career inside the Communist Party, to understand the origins of that monstrous opportunism which characterized him, the role it played, the form it assumed and its inevitable outcome. That Fast spells out clearly and unmistakably this whole direction in his book is the last service he has rendered to the Communist Party members of this country.

The book itself is confused, often incoherent, and almost constantly self-contradictory. Fast feels impelled at

times to deny certain outrageous lies about the Communist Party but only so that, by doing so, he might thus "earn" the moral right to promote his own even more outrageous lies. His anecdotes are made up of invention plus quarter-truths. His pages are a farrago of spite, hysteria, peevishness, unconscious buffoonery, the petty settling of old accounts—all of this ending finally on the anti-climactic and hilarious complaint that "Life is just not simple!"

But through all the hysteria, rage, spite, envy, one theme, one cry, like the shriek of a modern Cato, comes clear: Communism must be destroyed!

With this aim he boasts that, soon after the Twentieth Congress, "many of us then believed that if we moved quickly and decisively, we could seize control of the entire Party, find new leadership of decent, honest and humane people, form a democratic, humanistic movement for socialism—and perhaps light a spark that would fire the imagination of the entire world Communist movement."

This plan for a palace revolution, for a *putsch*, failed, for the rank-and-file Communists of this country would have none of it, and Fast himself openly deserted to carry on his criminal aims now with the assistance of the State Department and any other renegades and turn-coats he is able to influence.

His main thesis, which is also the thesis of the State Department and represented the tactic which it applied, or tried to apply, in the Hungarian events, is that socialism, though good in itself, cannot grow and develop under the leadership of the Communist Parties (though it was these same par-

ties which brought it into existence). Communist Party rule is deadly first, he maintains, to artists, particularly writers, everywhere; it destroys democracy and other virtues which Fast highly regards and indeed should be highly regarded; and all this being so, and since "honorable" men must be opposed to it, if they cannot be Brutuses they can certainly be allies of Allen Dulles.

If Fast is obliged to back and fill constantly, and cannot quite bear to put himself down for a villain and a rogue, and so even now in the middle of his jeremiah, he finds it necessary to reassert certain truths about Party members, he does so at the risk of alienating those new-found friends and applauders whose demand on him is absolute and who will not countenance the luxury of tactical maneuvers. They want Fast to say outright that Communists are traitors, that war is absolutely necessary, and that he was completely betrayed by the Communists. Fast, who still wants to influence Communists, cannot quite do so in their terms: and so from Harry Schwartz, the *New York Times* "expert" on the Soviet Union, and who to some extent midwifed this book, comes the grudging words: "It is still true," he points out in his review in the *Times* "that the disjointed organization of the book will bother some readers." Nevertheless, Fast's defection was "one of the biggest propaganda defeats Moscow received in 1957." Why Moscow? Because in this country Fast's "public defection from the Communist Party . . . received relatively scant notice . . . because his public reputation had been tarnished by his Communist position, and a new generation had forgotten the

popularity a decade and more ago of books like 'Citizen Paine' . . . Nevertheless, the "important point is that Mr. Fast discovered the real meaning of freedom."

Freedom? When the Cold War began in earnest in this country, Fast was one of the first writers who was victimized. With a speed and unanimity that would have done credit to any "totalitarian" organization, all the publishers in the country who were clamoring for his books only the day before shut the door on him. Another publisher who had brought out pocket-book editions of several of Fast's books decided to burn them all, and was only barely persuaded to sell them to Mr. Fast. All book stores boycotted his works. He was sent to jail. His name was even stripped from the movies based on his stories. His books were taken from the shelves of school and public libraries. He was forced to publish his books himself, and the universal boycott by reviewers—and first of all the *Times*' Schwartz—bankrupted him.

So he was "forgotten"! But even so there is no joy for a writer in being so "forgotten" in his own land; there is no happiness in this exile at home, and the vastness of his foreign audience was no completely satisfying compensation. Along with the loss of an American audience there was also the loss of a fortune.

The price which the bourgeoisie places upon the integrity of the writer in the United States is almost unendurable. Fast, of course, could not openly capitulate to his enemies because they were impoverishing him. But even those who reject with contempt open bribery nevertheless are

placed under the inhuman weight of having their virtue constantly and publicly priced. The compensation for that, of those intellectuals who, in Fast's words, "made great sacrifices, accepted war and prison and poverty . . . brilliant careers were given up, success and wealth bypassed by some, respect and honor by others. . . ." was the "splendid dream of brotherhood and justice."

And if that "dream," which must be flawless, is, or seems to be, destroyed, what then can such men who have "sacrificed" so much do except turn with rage against the supposed killers of the dream?

Anyone who joins the working-class movement with a consciousness of having "sacrificed" anything whatsoever already contains in himself the seeds of an eventual "disillusionment" and the bitter feeling of having been betrayed. It is a petty-bourgeois notion, pure and simple. It is opportunist in its very nature; it is "idealist" philosophically, for it demands of history a bargain which cannot be made.

If from the point of view of a petty-bourgeois such a dream of brotherhood is unhistoric and untrue, from the point of view of the working class that dream remains true, realizable and in every sense glorious.

Fast inveighs against the Communist Party for its alleged abuses against writers. But characteristically he blames the Party now for precisely those arrogant pronouncements on literary matters which Fast was most egregiously guilty of himself, and if one remembers his swashbuckling tour through literature in the book *Literature and Reality*, then it would seem

no further evidence to convict is necessary.

He declares unequivocally that Communism *must* destroy the writer, and that by the same token the writer must find himself inevitably an enemy of Communism. And yet he himself admits that it was not the Communist Party that destroyed him as a writer but it was official reaction—those who have now claimed his body—that did it. Can the following words be plainer? "During this period [McCarthyism] I found my own destruction as a writer who had full and normal access to the American public. Bit by bit, that access was pared away; reviewers began to read Communist propaganda into things I had written; bookstores were reluctant to order books. . . . I had come to the point (on the publication of *Spartacus*) where my destruction as a practicing writer was more or less complete. . . ."

If he managed to get to readers at all, it was due to the devoted and selfless efforts by numerous rank and file Communists who took his books from door to door and sold them.

The sensitivity and high moral quality of poets and great artists is, in Fast's notion, unreconcilable with commitment to a revolutionary cause led by Communists. But life proves the opposite. In fact, no other cause in all history has rallied to it on so gigantic a scale the pens and hearts of great artists. Mention Romain Rolland, Anatole France, Henri Barbusse, Martin Anderson Nexo, Maxim Gorky, Sean O'Casey, Theodore Dreiser, Arnold Zweig, Pablo Picasso, Pablo Neruda, Diego Rivera . . . and so on and on, the list is endless! And mention those who made their reputations when they

were Communists or significantly influenced by Communism, and compare the work they did *after* they left the movement with the work they did while under its influence and inspiration: Ignazio Silone, John Steinbeck, Richard Wright, James T. Farrell, Dos Passos, Andre Malraux . . . and Howard Fast!

Fast piously states that he yearned for real criticism from Marxists but all he got was either flattery or hard knocks. And yet this is scarcely candid, for even in this book, with persisting arrogance, he dictates how critics and readers are to regard his works and his reputation. *The Proud and the Free* was "one of the great novels of the American Revolution. . . ." *Freedom Road* . . . "was taken to the hearts of the Negro people as was no other novel of our time," etc.

Furthermore, the fact is that Fast's works were criticized—no doubt with excessive kindness—in print, in letters to him and in statements from public platforms. Would that he had been able to heed such criticism!

So much for modesty and the desire for criticism. And as for his noble desire for freedom of expression, restrained by the Communist ogres, Fast writes:

Within the Party, and particularly on the *Daily Worker*, the reports of the Twentieth Congress [of the CPSU] had come as an explosive force of mental liberation. . . . It was little, but it was enough for us on the *Daily Worker* to seize sledges and break the cursed images with the zest of a drowning man gulping air. [Fast manages to do the impossible in his drowning zest to break

images with a sledge-hammer!] Everyone on the staff joined to one extent or another. Myself, I struck out in every direction with a joy I had not known for years.

And what were the things he wanted to shout to the world? "A whole group of us in the Party had been secret believers in psychiatry. . . ." He could now openly "curse capital punishment." Now, openly and with full concern for responsibility and truth he could "charge that the Jewish people were prisoners within the Soviet Union"; and that the USSR was playing an imperialist game for oil in the Middle East; also that the USSR was provoking force in the attempt to start a war on the Suez question. On the level of a sober clown, in another context, Fast also found himself so liberated by the 20th Congress that he could make a fervent speech in favor of bubble gum!

"But what a time," he exults, "that was for us! What freedom! What glory!"

What glory indeed! Today, as a confirmed enemy of socialism, he is bound to a devilish wheel of hatred, and like some figure in Dante's Hell, he must pray and scheme for the failure of socialism in the world. He must hope for the destruction of the Soviet Union. He must be tormented by its successes. He must rejoice when there are setbacks. And, like all others who have taken this road, in the end he must be driven by desperation to demand the entire destruction of that "dream" which now, a more glorious dream than ever, haunts him like a nightmare!

Letters from Readers

Round Top, N. Y.

Regardless of generic causes, the relative weight of objective and subjective factors, the present situation in our Party is currently sustained, I believe, primarily by subjective elements. Chief among the latter seem to me to be on the one hand Right-revisionism and on the other tolerance of this same revisionism. Such a combination, if continued much longer, can completely destroy the Party, making necessary a new beginning.

The history of Communist Parties throughout the world is in large part the history of struggles against revisionism. Mainly through such struggles have the various national Parties, in the first place the CPSU, been able to maintain and deepen theory and shape correct strategic and tactical objectives, plans and policies.

Our Party has been torn but never before decimated by revisionism, due to the fact of sharp and timely struggle against the Lovestones and Browders with the outcome that we emerged clearer and more effective than before. The deadliest danger lies in the failure to carry on such struggles, in attempts to conceal and patch-up and to follow a policy of live-and-let-live co-existence with revisionism. These constitute the fatal combination of revisionism and the tolerance of revisionism.

As the term "revisionism" is used in the Communist movement it has a meaning distinct from the general significance of the term "to revise." The latter means to "look over again in order to correct or improve or bring up to date," while "revisionism" denotes an attempt to annul or transform into their opposite one or more of the fundamental principles or laws of the science of Marxism-Leninism. Naturally revisionism is always disguised as a most sincere effort to revise and strengthen Marxism, to bring it up to date and apply it to national circumstances. No revisionism comes labeled as such.

If we apply the test to the current "attempt to revise," we see that it is as sweeping and gross a form of Right revisionism as has ever been witnessed in the international Communist movement. Far from being an attempt to "improve, bring up to date and adapt," it would annul and transform into their opposite entire sections of Marxist-Leninist science. For example: The principles of the vanguard role and democratic centralism are repudiated and transformed into liquidation of the Party; proletarian internationalism and socialist solidarity in the face of the imperialist onslaught and encirclement are annulled and transformed into nationalism and anti-Soviet attacks; the struggle against American exceptionalism is annulled and is transformed into a doctrine of struggle for an exception in the case of America; criticism and self-criticism are annulled and transformed into breast-beating, grovelling self-abasement, anti-party and anti-socialist broadsides amounting to collective suicide; the dictator-

ship of the proletariat in all forms is repudiated and is transformed into a starry-eyed glorification of bourgeois democracy; an entire section of the science of political economy is annulled and a perspective of a new kind of capitalism espoused.

Any one of these "revisions" would be sufficient to substantiate the characterization of revisionism. Taken together they constitute undeniable evidence of an unparalleled anti-Party, anti-socialist trend that must, for the simple sake of survival, be quickly and effectively eradicated.

We have a history of which to be proud, as well as errors from which to learn. We have a future of not a hundred-thousand member Party, but hundreds of thousands and millions. As Lenin long ago pointed out, the American working class and its allies move forward in great leaps during times of stress, making up for time lost in periods of relative prosperity. We had better be ready, or we will be running at the tail, hard-pressed to catch up. The times are opening wide. The crucial struggles against imperialist war and for peace and against depression and for a land and a world of plenty, a socialist United States, and a socialist planet, are, historically speaking, immediately before us.

Only through elimination of revisionism, can we put ourselves in a position to solve our problems, hammer out correct policies, and take our rightful place in the great events of the coming month and years.

Let's begin by having confidence in our basic membership. I am convinced that leadership today is lagging behind the rank and file temper. A call for an open, uncompromising struggle to expose and eliminate revisionism in high and low places will clear the air, restore confidence and pride and will have an electrifying effect which will revitalize the Party.

HARRY K. WELLS

San Francisco

I must take the strongest exception to Comrade W. Z. Foster's reference, in the December, 1957 issue, to "the tragic fate of . . . the *Daily People's World* . . . which perished under the Right offensive" and "crumbled under the liquidationism of the Revisionists."

First of all, the statement is factually misleading. The *People's World* exists and fights. It was compelled last February to convert from daily to weekly publication, but no one here on the Pacific Coast would say that it either crumbled or perished.

Second, I have been unable to find any responsible member of the paper's staff or any responsible Communist Party leader in California with whom Comrade Foster discussed the circumstances attending the transition of the *People's World* from a daily to a weekly. There is no evidence of any serious investigation by him of the problem that faced the paper. Off the cuff judgments, based on an apothecary's weight of concrete fact and a ton of preconceived notion, have too often been a curse of our Party, and under the present difficult circumstances they do more mischief than ever.

Third, and most important of all, "the tragic fate" about which Comrade

Foster speaks has not overtaken the *People's World*, but his characterization is designed objectively to hasten it. The fight to maintain the *People's World* on the Pacific Coast has been a valiant one, and it has succeeded thus far through the joint effort of Communists and non-Communists. It is a poor service to disparage those efforts, or to undermine them by the promiscuous use of labels as a substitute for "the concrete analysis of concrete conditions," which Lenin defined as "the living soul of Marxism."

AL RICHMOND

Lansing, Mich.

I am happy to renew my sub. I enjoyed Foster's article in the December issue and am looking forward to its conclusion in the January number. I believe his thoughts merit very serious attention.

I think if Foster's suggestions were honored in practice, we would be back on the road to effective work as a real vanguard Party. No storm can blow forever; this one also will subside. I hope our boat can be set again on a true Marxist-Leninist course to show the way to the workers towards the socialist shores.

I think P. A. is a good magazine; may its reading public be enlarged.

E. S.

Philadelphia

We are writing in order to register our strong exception to a number of statements by W. Z. Foster in his article on Djilas in the November issue.

We refer particularly to the following statement: "The Djilas book is already widely popular among the Right-revisionist trend that has sprung up recently in a number of Communist Parties. It is just what the Doctor ordered for such ex-Communists as Howard Fast, Joseph Starobin, and Joseph Clark. These people still talk about being Marxists and favoring a socialist perspective, but consciously or unconsciously they are supporters of People's Capitalism which is alien to Socialism. This is the substance of what they have been advocating in and around the Party for the past two years."

We find this view unsound and unwise on several grounds:

1) We know of no evidence that this book is popular among any trend in the American Communist Party, not to mention any other CP, and Foster cites no such evidence.

2) We are unaware that this book has been endorsed by Fast, Starobin, or Clark. It is completely unlikely that it will be endorsed by them,* in our opinion, and Clark's article in the November *Monthly Review* on the Soviet Union indicates clearly a position different from and antagonistic to the main thesis of the Djilas book.

3) We feel it is inaccurate to group Fast with Starobin and Clark, the latter two having been active in the American Forum for Socialist Education, a political development we view very favorably.

* Howard Fast has publicly endorsed the Djilas volume, via radio and TV appearances.—Ed.

4) We feel it is inexcusable to say of Starobin and Clark that "consciously or unconsciously they are supporters of People's Capitalism which is alien to Socialism." Foster presents no evidence to support his view. . . .

5) We also object to the cavalier manner in which Foster dismisses the slogan of the "Welfare State."

It is our opinion that despite these serious weaknesses this article does have value by virtue of its refutation of Djilas' reactionary views of Socialism. . . .

FIVE CP MEMBERS

New York City

W. Z. Foster, in his December article on the Party crisis touches on one thing that no one else has touched upon and which, I think, is the main cause of our recent losses. He writes: "In the Party's difficult situation, the Revisionist campaign of liquidation did very great harm. This in fact is what immediately precipitated the Party into crisis. The most profound confusion and pessimism penetrated the ranks of the Party." That is a most vital point.

At the time of the 20th Congress of the CPSU and the Khrushchev speech, I was a member of the "Marxist Institute" at the Jefferson School. The class was composed of both Party and non-Party people, and 12 out of its 13 members were young people. When the speech first came out we discussed it for several sessions and though we were shocked at some of the things revealed, no one became dispirited.

Then slowly from the top confusion began to spread. One of the students who had some contact with the State leadership began to bring back reports of utter confusion and of the rejection of vital Marxist concepts which we, after long and careful discussion, had agreed to.

Though we had discussed at length all the implications of the speech, a special teacher was sent into our class to lead us in a new discussion of the speech. This teacher also injected into the class the idea that the School had been rigid and dogmatic, and after his discussion when no one spoke up to agree with his remarks, he proceeded to tongue-lash us for "not thinking."

We young people, who had all come to our Marxist-Leninist views out of experience, study and life itself, were all told that what we felt sure was true was in fact false. This coupled with the three major revisionistic lectures held in the School (at one of which Comrade Gates spoke) began to tell. One after another the young people began to announce their doubts concerning the Party and Marxism and to stop coming to our class. Then another member of the class said to me: "Look, everybody is saying the last ten years were wasted, so I'm not going to waste my time in this movement."

By the end of the term this group of people who had been firm and well-knit and who had a goal, became confused, disturbed and apathetic. Since that time I have lost contact with several of them; very few are active in any way in the Left and most have lost a Marxist perspective.

Three weeks ago I called up one of these people and asked him to sign the Friends' anti-H-Bomb petition. He, who once was in the Party, said: "I

don't sign anything anymore. Furthermore, I don't think there is any danger in H-Bomb tests."

This is a real memorial for the revisionist-defectors, who educated this once sterling fighter for progress by convincing him not only that Marxism was not valid, but that humanism was a fake, and that politics should be avoided.

A Youth Struggling to be a Marxist-Leninist

Indianapolis, Ind.

Committees all around here are going from door to door begging for money for the Community Chest (to help needy neighbors). . . . Things are getting more and more tough here, and increasingly people are seeking for an effective economic program. The need for an aggressive Left is growing all the time; we must come out of our shell and offer real leadership. I know increasing numbers of people are seeking it, and asking new and real questions.

C. D.

New York City

Eugene Dennis in the November issue of *P. A.* speaks of "The necessity and inevitability of establishing the political power and rule of the working class and the leading role of its vanguard, the Communist Party."

Did not the 16th National Convention vote overwhelmingly to break away from the old concept that the American path to socialism would of necessity be the same as that of the Soviet Union, with the Communist Party in the "inevitable" leading role? It seems to me if the convention did not do this, it did nothing.

This is in no way to run down the great contribution of the American Communist Party of our land in the past, and the possibilities of further major contributions along the road to a socialist democracy. But the convention went on record against the rigid, automatic, inevitable concept of a predetermined leading role.

Dennis' words appear in direct contradiction to these sections from the main political resolution:

"The new developments point to a certain revitalization and growth of socialist-oriented and pro-Marxist currents and groupings. In the past we tended to assume that all that was worth while in other socialist currents and groupings would inevitably flow into our own organization. This assumption was always incorrect and should be replaced by serious and painstaking efforts to assist in the eventual development of the broadest possible unity of all socialist-minded elements."

And

"Our position on the possibility of socialism being achieved through the cooperation of a number of workers' and other democratic peoples parties, as well as the continuance of a multi-party system under socialism, so long as the people desire this, is another major step in the direction of cooperation of all Marxist and socialist-oriented forces NOW and towards the ultimate creation of a broader united Marxist party."

It goes without saying that Dennis has every right to state his own opinion on this question of our country's path to socialism. But should he not state that he has changed his mind about a key section of the main political resolution of the convention, and now opposes it?

I submit that it is exactly this attempt to hold back the unfolding of the line voted by the convention, or, more exactly, the attempt to reverse that line, which is still paralyzing the Party and still driving disheartened members from its ranks.

LESTER RODNEY

A REPLY

I wish to make the following comments on Lester Rodney's letter.

Most assuredly, the 16th national convention did *not* contend that "the American path to socialism would of necessity be the same as that of the Soviet Union. . . ." Our convention emphasized, for instance, that in the USA the possibility exists for a "peaceful and constitutional transition to socialism."

But from this it is wrong and dangerous to negate the historic mission and liberating role of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist vanguard, as Rodney implies. How socialism can now be attained and the forms it may take will vary from country to country; yet everywhere the victory of socialism is impossible without the working class and its Marxist vanguard exercising *the leading role*.

Apropos of this, the main resolution of the 16th convention states, as does my keynote address to that convention:

"This concept of our advocacy of, and endeavor to, chart a peaceful, democratic and constitutional road to socialism in America expresses what we Communists strive for. It is a further development of our established position. It embodies our basic view that socialism can be established only through a radical and fundamental extension of American democracy and a revolutionary transformation of all property relations. It emphasizes that *all* roads to socialism are roads of mass struggle, *waged under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist vanguard* [emphasis mine—E. D.]. But now this concept takes on a new meaning in light of the profoundly new and favorable changes in our own country and in world relationships." (Page 305, Convention Proceedings)

In respect to the two isolated quotations from the convention resolutions which Rodney relies on to justify his allegations: the first appears on page 308 of the convention proceedings. But in the interests of Marxist clarity it would have been better if Rodney had seen fit to add the very next paragraph from the resolution, namely:

"The perspective of an eventual united socialist movement or party must be viewed as *the climax of a series of struggles and developments* [emphasis mine—E. D.]. It is not a quick and easy solution to the common problems of all socialist groupings, or to the specific problems of our own Party. Such an approach would both weaken our party and distort this perspective. Least of all could this objective be advanced by any tendency to weaken or

dissolve the Communist Party. On the contrary, it is essential that the Communist Party strengthen in every way its organizations, mass work and influence."

It is true that our convention corrected certain mistaken views of the past which equate the vanguard role of the party with the assumption that the party is already the leader of the working class. However, in referring to this, Rodney glosses over that section of the main resolution which clarifies and underscores the *indispensable vanguard role* that our party strives to fulfill:

"Our efforts to advance these objectives [immediate and ultimate aims of the party—E. D.] require that we retain the fundamental concept of our organization as a vanguard organization. . . . Socialist consciousness must be brought into the working class movement by a party which is based on an advanced theory, scientific socialism. Only such a party can help make the working class conscious of itself as a class. . . . The Party of Communists always places uppermost the interests of the entire working class and all the oppressed people. It dedicates itself to helping the working class and its allies gain, step by step, ever greater victories leading towards their historical goal of ending class exploitation. This is the essence of the concept 'vanguard role' which we seek to fulfill." (Page 323—Convention Proceedings)

As to Rodney's second quotation (which is excerpted from the resolution on Social Democracy, page 332 of the convention proceedings), it would have been more illuminating if he had included the fact that this resolution—on the same and on the following page—also points out:

"The ideological differences that divide the Social Democrats from the Communists remain fundamental and numerous. . . . These differences include . . . [among other things—E. D.] role of the working class, role of the Marxist party of the working class and the allies of the working class . . . our conception of the peaceful and constitutional road to socialism is not identical with the classic 'parliamentary road' put forward by the Social Democrats and which has as yet nowhere led to the establishment of socialism."

The resolution emphasizes further:

"Our new approach [to Social Democracy—E. D.] is dictated by new possibilities and paramount needs, despite these differences. . . . It is on the basis of the vital issues now confronting the workers and their allies that we must strive to find the basis for unity. . . . Such cooperation will be beneficial to all who participate and to the working class as a whole."

What is really involved here is not an academic battle over quotations from resolutions. The real issue is whether our Party shall apply the generally sound political orientation of the 16th convention scientifically, not dogmatically, in a rounded-out and not in a one-sided way. It is whether our party shall be converted into an impotent, debating society embracing Marxists, non-Marxists, and anti-Marxists, as Gates advocates—or whether our party shall be revitalized and strengthened as a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party of the American working class.

EUGENE DENNIS

ON THE 90th BIRTHDAY OF DR. W. E. B. DU BOIS

February 23, 1868 is the day of Dr. Du Bois' birth. It is fitting that his birth-month is that of Washington, Lincoln and Douglass. The lives of these four men span that of our country, from its origins to its present; in their efforts, plans and deeds may be found much of that which has adorned the United States. On this momentous occasion, let our readers ponder the Credo written by Dr. Du Bois back in 1904. As you read, remember that you are reading words that first saw print more than half a century ago; they conjure up the whole mood and spirit of the present Negro liberation movement, and lay out goals yet to be achieved. They are the words of a True Prophet among us, a man slandered and feared by the Lords of Greed, and immortalized in the hearts of all humanity.—Editor.

I believe in God who made of one blood all races that dwell on earth. I believe that all men, black and brown, and white, are brothers, varying through Time and Opportunity, in form and gift and feature, but differing in no essential particular, and alike in soul and in the possibility of infinite development.

Especially do I believe in the Negro Race; in the beauty of its genius, the sweetness of its soul, and its strength in that meekness which shall inherit this turbulent earth.

I believe in pride of race and lineage itself; in pride of self so deep as to scorn injustice to other selves; in pride of lineage so great as to despise no man's father; in pride of race so chivalrous as neither to offer bastardy to the weak nor beg wedlock of the strong, knowing that men may be brothers in Christ, even though they be not brothers-in-law.

I believe in Service—humble reverent service, from the blackening of boots to the whitening of souls; for Work is Heaven, Idleness Hell, and Wages is the "Well Done!" of the Master who summoned all them that labor and are heavy laden, making no distinction between the black sweating cotton-hands of Georgia and the First Families of Virginia, since all distinction not based on deed is devilish and not divine.

I believe in the Devil and his angels, who wantonly work to narrow the opportunity of struggling human beings, especially if they be black; who spit in the faces of the fallen, strike them that cannot strike again, believe the worst and work to prove it, hating the image which their Maker stamped on a brother's soul.

I believe in the Prince of Peace. I believe that War is murder. I believe that armies and navies are at bottom the tinsel and braggadacio of oppression and wrong; and I believe that the wicked conquest of weaker and darker nations by nations white and stronger but foreshadows the death of that strength.

I believe in Liberty for all men; the space to stretch their arms and their souls; the right to breathe and the right to vote, the freedom to choose their friends, enjoy the sunshine and ride on the railroads, uncursed by color; thinking, dreaming, working as they will in a kingdom of God and love.

I believe in the training of children black even as white; the leading out of little souls into the green pastures and beside the still waters, not for pelf or profit, but for Life lit by some large vision of beauty and goodness and truth; lest we forget, and the sons of the fathers, like Esau, for mere meat barter their birthright in a mighty nation.

Finally, I believe in Patience—patience with the weakness of the Weak and the strength of the Strong, the prejudice of the Ignorant and the ignorance of the Blind; patience with the tardy triumph of Joy and the mad chastening of Sorrow—patience with God.

Just Published!

THE DAY IS COMING!

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