

THE

AMERICAN

Socialist

APRIL 1954

25 CENTS

The **FACTS** About

- **INDO-CHINA**
- **GUATEMALA**
- **PUERTO RICO**

**McCarthy's
'Kampf' —
A Warning
Signal**



Negro Labor Fights for a Square Deal

CLIPPINGS

THE MICHIGAN Citizens' Committee Against the Trucks Law hailed the agreement signed in circuit court between Attorney General Millard of the State of Michigan and attorneys for the Socialist Workers Party which stipulated that the organization was neither "communist" nor "subversive" within the meaning of the act. A statement released by the Committee chairman, Rev. I. Paul Taylor, and secretary-treasurer, Ernest Mazey, stated that the attorney general's retreat on this issue "represents a considerable victory." The Committee pointed out that while the circuit court agreement narrows the field of the law's application, the law itself remains as a constant threat to civil liberties, and pledged to continue the fight until the law is stricken from the statute books.

NORMAN THOMAS released the text of a cablegram that he and twenty other signers sent to Spanish Dictator Franco protesting the trying of civilians accused of political offenses before military courts. Max Ascoli, editor of the Reporter, Victor Reuther, assistant to the CIO president, Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr of Union Theological Seminary, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., vice chairman of ADA, and Toni Sender, UN representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, were among the signers of the protest.

The American press has suppressed the news of a military court martial, which on Feb. 13 sentenced ten civilians to jail terms ranging up to ten years. According to the information received by Thomas, the defendants were convicted of "military insurrection," although a search uncovered no arms, and the chief evidence against them at the trial was that they had taken part in a social study circle. One of the main defendants, Manuel Grandizo (Munis), who was sentenced to ten years imprisonment, was formerly associated with Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International.

This is another of the "free nations" that Washington is subsidizing and arming!

THERE IS a real chance that 31 unions representing over 200,000 workers in the oil and chemical industries are going to unite into one industrial union. Representatives of the unions met in Philadelphia this past month and agreed to merge their forces into one union to be called the Oil and Chemical Workers International Union. All unions concerned still have to ratify the agreement to make it operative. Once the merger takes place, the new organization will decide whether to go AFL, CIO or independent. The largest group involved in the present merger proposal is the CIO Oil Workers International Union.

SOARING COFFEE PRICES were denounced by Lee Metcalf, Democratic Representative of Montana, as due to "a multimillion dollar shakedown." In a letter to his constituents, Metcalf carefully traced the coffee

crisis, and showed that there is no need for a new investigation of the coffee trade, but for action to carry out the recommendations of the Gillette Senatorial investigation of 1949, as the picture is exactly the same as it was four years ago. The Gillette report—whose recommendations have been cubbyholed—flatly stated that "all evidence indicates that those gains went almost exclusively to traders and to parasite speculation interests . . . who profited by the rise in coffee prices . . . Admittedly there has been no shortage of coffee in the United States or the world at large at any time in the past fifty years."

WE ARE INDEBTED to Corliss Lamont for telling the full story (I. F. Stone's Weekly, March 1) of the attempt of a McCarthyite-minded National Board of the American Civil Liberties Union to stage a coup in the organization and convert it into a "civil-libertarian" adjunct of the witch-hunters. Fortunately the affiliates, meeting in biennial conference, reacted in time and frustrated the attempt—at least temporarily.

The Board of Directors proposed to vitiate the protection offered under the Fifth Amendment. Another proposal disregarded recommendations of the ACLU's academic freedom committee to defend teachers who refuse to cooperate with Congressional inquisitions. Another was to reject Roger Baldwin's protest against investigations into the political beliefs and associations of American members of the UN staff. Another statement virtually accepted the McCarran law premise

for the prosecution of communists under the "internal security" act. The coup, spearheaded from within by hysterical anti-communists like Norman Thomas, was spurred on by the red-baiters of the New Leader, the Hearst and Scripps-Howard papers. Fortunately, the position of the Board was unanimously rejected by the conference.

But the victory was not achieved without a bitter knock-down struggle that lasted six months and demoralized the organization. The anti-communists stopped at nothing, including steam-roller methods, setting aside of membership rights, and forcing Corliss Lamont to resign his 21-year position as a member of the Board of Directors. It was due in large part to an uncompromising fight on his part that the attack was turned back.

Unfortunately the composition of the new Board of Directors gives little promise of real defense of the forthright civil liberties position adopted by the conference.

"ENDING THE HORSETHIEF MENACE"—that is the title of a significant article by Edwin Rothschild, appearing in the Saturday Review of Literature. The author advocates that the definition of a "horsethief" should be expanded to include anyone who "advocates, abets, advises or teaches (horsethievry), or who is a member of, or affiliated with any horsethief front organization." Rothschild points out that under this section no one will be able to deny that he is a horsethief on the questionable ground that he has never stolen a horse. Rothschild further urges that as a means of controlling horsethievry, employment should be denied the "crypto-horsethief," whom he defines as "one, who, if he had seen a horse and could have stolen it, would have liked to."

The American Socialist

APRIL 1954 - VOL. 1, No. 4

Published monthly by American Socialist Publications, 863 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y. Tel.: WAtkins 9-7739. Subscription rates: \$2.50 for one year; \$1.25 for six months. By first class mail: \$3.75 for one year; \$2.00 for six months. Foreign rates: \$3.00 for one year; \$1.75 for six months. Single copy, 25 cents. Application for entry as second class matter is pending.

EDITORIAL BOARD: Bert Cochran, George Clarke, Harry Braverman
BUSINESS MANAGER: Jules Geller

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| CLIPPINGS | 2 |
| MCCARTHY'S 'KAMPF'—A WARNING SIGNAL | 3 |
| THE NEW UNION-BUSTING: "SECURITY" FIRINGS | 5 |
| WILL INDO-CHINA BE A NEW KOREA? by George Clarke | 6 |
| NEGRO LABOR FIGHTS FOR A SQUARE DEAL by Bert Cochran | 10 |
| REVOLUTION IN GUATEMALA: 1944-1954 by Harry Braverman | 14 |
| ANTI-LABOR THUGS STILL IN BUSINESS | 19 |
| IT'S GOOD FOR GM—BUT IS IT GOOD FOR THE COUNTRY? by Frank Anders | 22 |
| JOBLESS CRISIS FOR UNION ACTION | 23 |
| PUERTO RICO IS NOT FREE by Jules Geller | 25 |
| BOOK REVIEW | 28 |
| LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | 31 |

McCarthy's 'Kampf'— A Warning Signal

WE ARE face to face with a terrifying convulsion of the traditional democratic system in America. We are witnessing the sinister progress of American capitalism toward dictatorship. We are thrust into a crucial period of decision to determine whether the people of America will mobilize to repulse reaction, or whether this country is doomed to be ground under the tyrant's heel.

McCarthyism, which was an unknown term several years ago, has mushroomed into a diabolical force with tremendous financial backing, big mass support, extensive ramifications of power, reaching out for domination of the Republican Party itself. With one audacious hammer stroke after another, McCarthy has terrorized the leaders of the Eisenhower administration, until he had the President on the ropes. After Eisenhower's ignominious capitulation in the Stevens affair, there was no longer room for further retreat, and the administration was forced to strike back to save itself. But let there be no misplaced hosannahs over the Eisenhower counter-attack. The serpent has not been crushed. The forces of evil have not been dispersed. The freedom of the people has not been regained, or made secure. Because the battle inside the Republican Party is not over principle, not a contest between progress and reaction, nor a struggle between democracy and dictatorship. It is rather a conflict over two different techniques of throwing the noose of dictatorship around the necks of the people.

WHO ARE the two contenders?

The Eisenhower-Dewey crowd, representing the Eastern millionaire banking and industrial interests, and the old Taft machine, which has a new spokesman in McCarthy, representing a motley horde of sectional industrial and commercial barons.

The repeated administration backing of McCarthy and his infamous inquisition, the recent inflammatory speeches of Dewey and Brownell, tell

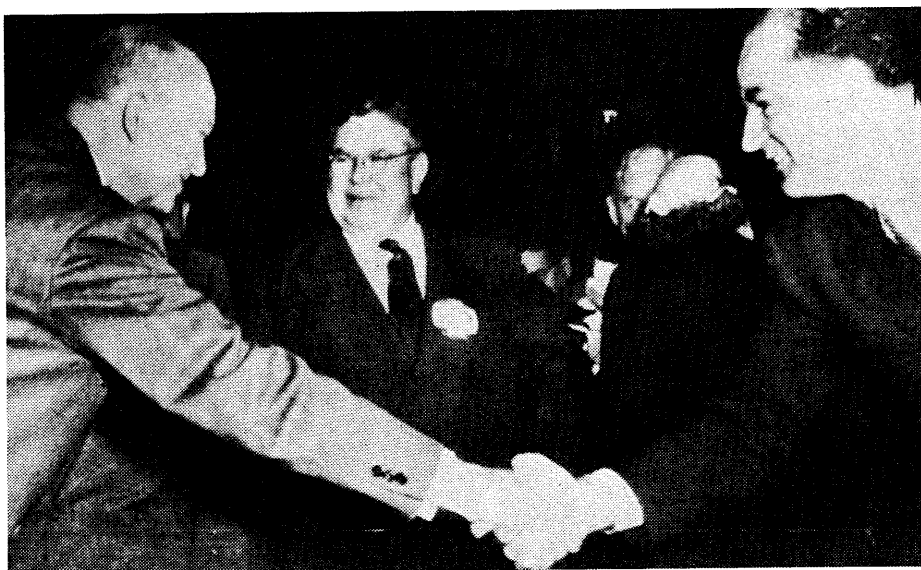
the plain story that the Eastern millionaires have taken the cold-blooded decision to terrorize the American people, to annihilate all opposition, to hound and jail all dissidents—all part of a carefully contrived conspiracy to fasten a police dictatorship over the country. Big Business was impelled to take this fateful step to reverse the political character of American government by the grim requirements of the cold war against communism, which made it increasingly impossible to prosecute its projects and plans under conditions of democracy at home. Not that there exists any threatening opposition in the United States. The Democratic Party cannot even qualify as a milk-and-water liberal opposition, dominated as it is by its reactionary wing. The labor unions are led by docile and obedient supporters of State Department cold war policies. The radical Left is insignificant in influence.

The danger, as the plutocracy sees it, is that its war program—especially the economic and human consequences of it—is liable to raise such an outcry of opposition, that even the free play of capitalist politics looms as hazardous. It is bitter truth, therefore, and not the excitement of the moment, which leads us to conclude that the money oligarchy has determined to take the road of dictatorship.

But they have in mind a special type of dictatorship, one run by their responsible political and military henchmen, who have a history of loyalty to the plutocracy. That explains why they have been working through the instrumentality of the Republican

Party, and the regular political institutions of the country. They do not want to wreck the existing bureaucracy, or to disrupt the long-standing, intimate ties that connect the Washington government offices to the Wall Street counting houses, and make possible the easy manipulation of government in the interests of the plutocracy.

MCCARTHY does not fall into this category. That does not mean the plutocracy is opposed to him. On the contrary. They created him. They built him up. They gave him the spotlight, the publicity, the political help, the financial encouragement, to make him the national power that he is. But now, with an independent machine of his own, with big mass support, with the active backing of Texas oil tycoons and other political vigilante types, and with the benign neutrality of a large section of Republicans, McCarthy is rapidly striking out to take over the Republican Party and thrust out of the way the traditional political servitors of American capitalism. The Big Boys are alarmed and have given the signal to stay his hand. Because McCarthy, with his machine and backers, could not take over the Republican Party without transforming it into a know-nothing outfit run by political hoodlums. Under McCarthy, the Republican Party would not be the present party, but a different one, both in personnel and methods, and could become the spearhead, when unemployment and mass unrest develop, of a broad fascist movement. And a mass fascist movement in America will not be built without turning to radical demagoguery,



CONGRATULATIONS: McCarthy clasps Eisenhower's hand after his 1952 Milwaukee speech.

as did Huey Long in the Thirties, and Hitler in Germany, and without organizing the storm troop riff-raff in order to soften up labor and liberal opponents for the kill.

Now, the basic policy-makers of American capitalism, the group that shoved Willkie down the Republican politicians' throats in 1940, and Dewey in 1944, and Eisenhower in 1952, this financial oligarchy that makes the big policy decisions, does not see any necessity *at present* for fascism. As the Hitler experience showed, fascism is a costly medicine which is only to be used in dire crisis. Fascism saves capitalism, alright. But it exacts a high price for its services. To preserve the system as a whole, it kicks a lot of individual capitalists in the teeth, it sets up a costly government which has to feed a swollen army of hungry office-seekers, it shoves the capitalists out of the seats of governmental power. It rules on their behalf and in their interests, but it rules through an all-powerful *fuehrer*, and an uncontrolled, arrogant bureaucracy. That is why big capitalists never resort to fascism if they think they can rule without it. And since, in the United States, capitalism is not now threatened with communism, socialism, or even laborism, Wall Street sees no immediate need in entrusting its fate to a McCarthy.

BUT WHETHER McCarthy has to beat a tactical retreat for a while, or is able to continue his drive for

power, the prospects are menacing to the American people. They confront the danger that the spreading witch-hunt can flower into a full-blown police dictatorship, which will clamp down on their liberties and rights, illegalize the unions, snuff out all democracy, and herd all oppositionists, active trade unionists, and outspoken liberals into concentration camps. They face the further danger that McCarthy and his backers have the capability to utilize coming economic dislocation and growing dissatisfaction to organize a mass fascist movement along Hitler's lines, and proceed to a head-on assault on labor and democracy.

It must be admitted that the American labor movement is not well-prepared for this kind of a battle. But labor had better get itself prepared in a big hurry, as fate is knocking on the door. Labor had better grow up politically on the double, or it may find itself overwhelmed before it can even properly square off for fighting. It's not a matter of realizing how terrible McCarthyism is, and that it must be destroyed. That is not the problem in America. All liberal circles know this. Tremendous sections of the labor movement understand it as well. The big lack is knowing what to do about it; how to destroy McCarthyism; how to halt encroaching reaction.

THE MOST widely held theory is that the way to stop reaction is to get a Democratic administration. It is difficult to understand how such a

misconception can still prevail when one considers that it was precisely under the Truman administration that the so-called subversive lists were drawn up, that communists were jailed under the Smith "Gag" Act, that the witch-hunt began to spread far and wide. It is difficult to understand when one considers that the Democratic Party is dominated by the Dixiecrats and reactionaries who continually block with the Republicans. It is difficult to understand when one considers that the Democrats in both the Senate and House voted unanimously, but for one honorable exception in each case, to supply funds to McCarthy's committee. Even if the political atmosphere improved slightly in the first flush of a Democratic victory, McCarthyism, Deweyism, Brownellism would soon come back stronger than ever, just as occurred under Truman.

All can be lost unless the organized labor movement—the only mass force in the country that has the necessary power—stops depending on old-line capitalist politicians, and determines that *it* has the responsibility to stop the menace, that *it* must provide the leadership to organize a counter-force. All can be lost unless the organized labor movement begins to defend without any qualification *all* victims of the witch-hunt, whether they be communists or otherwise, because only by breaking out of the vicious McCarthyite circle of anti-communism can the damnable campaign to isolate victims one at a time be stopped. It is high time to realize that the danger facing America and the labor movement is dictatorship.

The picture would literally change overnight if the labor movement took the lead in calling an all-national congress of labor, liberal and minority groups to launch a great counter-offensive to smash McCarthyism, Brownellism, Deweyism. Such a congress would attract thousands upon thousands to its sessions, and give heart to millions throughout the country that the tide is being turned. Such a congress, calling for militant methods and mass action to stop the witch-hunt, would reverse the present ominous trend. Now is the time for action, while there is life and strength in the labor movement.

The New Union-Busting: "Security" Firings

THUS FAR McCarthy has played it safe so far as the unions are concerned. He hasn't summoned any of the big wheels of the labor movement to face inquisition before his committee; he hasn't (yet) put the brand of "treason" and "softness to communism" on the CIO or AFL the way he has on the Democratic Party. That will come in time, for, in the final analysis, the trade union movement is the real target of reaction.

The truth is that moves in this attack have already started; the ground for McCarthy is being prepared in the unions as it was in the government when Truman promulgated his "loyalty order" and "subversive list." The attack now takes the insidious form of "security firings." Companies working on military orders are notified by the army or the navy that this or that employee is a security risk. Regardless of the fact that the worker may already have been removed from "sensitive areas," the company gives him immediate notification of termination of employment. All collective bargaining procedure is bypassed; the union has no rights in the matter. The worker has no other recourse except to submit to a kangaroo court hearing of a security board which operates on such a sweeping scope that only a miracle—or a stool-pigeon "confession"—can get him cleared.

Obviously, these security firings, if unchecked, can have a crippling effect on the unions, undermining job control, making every militant unionist a potential victim of company-government collusion. It is true that the security board regulations forbid discharges on the grounds of union activity, but what is to prevent the FBI or company informers from inventing the needed "subversive" information?

THESE security firings have begun to sweep like a plague in the electrical industry. The axe fell first some two months ago in the General Electric plant in Lynn, Mass. Seven workers, exercising their rights under

the Fifth Amendment, refused to provide testimony to the McCarthy commission in Boston. All of them were members of the CIO International Union of Electrical Workers, all of them had long seniority in the plant. They were nevertheless notified at once by the company that unless they changed their minds about testifying, their 90-day suspension would become a discharge. General Electric issued a statement making this procedure company policy.

Towards the end of February, seven workers were fired from the General Electric plant in Schenectady under similar circumstances as those in Lynn.

In the meantime, a less dramatic but even more flagrant violation of workers' rights was occurring in the Sperry Gyroscope plant on Long Island. 19 workers were turned out of the plant as "security risks" between the end of January and February 19. Of these, 9 had held union posts from shop steward to vice-president, most were members of the IUE. They were fired by the company after receiving notification by the navy refusing to grant them clearance. The navy letter specified: "Any action in

relation to your continued employment is a matter for decision for, and residing in Sperry Gyroscope only."

Up to the Sperry incident, the union attitude was a revolting mixture of cowardice and complicity with the witch-hunters. In Lynn, the International did nothing. But the local leadership called a membership meeting to expel McCarthy's victims from the union. When the membership rejected the proposal, the Executive Board was summoned. With only half its members present, the union constitution was ordered suspended so that the motion to expel could carry "legally."

In Schenectady, the IUE exploited the fears aroused among the workers by the McCarthy hearing in order to wrest jurisdiction away from its union rival, the UE.

A PARTIAL CHANGE came in the Sperry firings. Under pressure of some of the discharged workers, the union requested that these cases go through the regular bargaining procedure. Beyond that it did little to rally the workers. It offered to provide the discharged workers with a union attorney to process their cases through the security board, provided the victims themselves paid the legal fees. Since then, the International Executive Board has taken a further step in a decision to make security firings a trade union issue. The decision was a step forward, even though it was marred by approval of the methods of jurisdictional warfare used against the UE.

But how far will the union go? Will it fight if the courts, for instance, grant the injunction being demanded by Sperry to stop collective bargaining in security cases? Will it stand up if the navy threatens to withdraw its contracts unless the security firings stand?

There is a big struggle ahead that needs the joint strength of all the unions and the support of all the workers. But unless it is relentlessly carried through, these McCarthyite flank attacks will so weaken the unions internally as to leave them helpless to face a frontal assault by the union busters later on. The IUE stand can mark a beginning of labor's resistance—provided it doesn't remain a resolution for the record.



Eight-year war against people of Indo-China has bled France white. Now almost everyone wants the war ended, but U. S. insists that war must go on. Danger is that Indo-China will be used as trigger for World War III.



Will Indo-China Be A New Korea?

by George Clarke

INDO-CHINA is a long way off, at the other end of the world so far as most Americans are concerned. If not for the romantic Hollywood films where the swashbuckling hero meets his lady love in an Annamite pagoda, few would even know what a Vietnamese looks like. Yet at this very moment, American boys from Kokomo, Ind., and Little Rock, Ark., face the danger of making the sudden acquaintance of Indo-China the same way they learned about Korea only a few years ago. Each day the news begins to take the same kind of sinister ring it had in the days before the guns went off in June 1950.

The French, who have fought in vain for eight years to reconquer their Indo-Chinese colony, would like to call the war off. A conference is soon to be held at Geneva to see whether a truce or peace can be arranged. But ominous words come from Washington. High government officials are saying that they will accept no other settlement short of victory over the Vietnamese people. Anything else, they say, would be a defeat for "the free world," a triumph for "communism."

An American general is dispatched from Korea to Indo-China in an "advisory capacity." Then follows a new shipment of planes and some hundreds of American technicians to service them. A Congressman, worried by the critical military situation in Indo-China, questions the advisability of these moves: The technicians, he says, will soon have to fight or run. What is the policy of the White House and the State Department? Will it send an expeditionary force to Indo-China if the French decide to quit or if they refuse to continue the fight alone? Eisenhower evades the question when it is put to him directly at a press conference. If America is to become involved in war, he says, it will be by an act of Congress according to the

"constitutional process." Eisenhower is apparently intelligent enough to have learned from Truman's sad experience of having to take the gaff *alone* for sending tens of thousands of Americans to their death in Korea without a declaration of war by Congress. How close are we to another Korea today, to involvement in the Indo-Chinese war?

IN MANY WAYS there is an ominous parallel.

In 1949, the economy was slipping into a depression; there were 4-5 million unemployed. Today the economic curve is again downward. Steel is operating at 69% of capacity. There are again almost as many unemployed as in 1949. Will Big Business—and the Republican Party—run the risk of the "readjustment" becoming a full-scale depression? Or will they seek salvation in another Korea?

In 1949, there was a big wrangle about foreign policy in Washington, a hunt for Democratic scapegoats on whom to pin responsibility for Mao Tse-tung's victory. If anything, Republican foreign policy is in a worse crisis today. Does the "new look" mean that Eisenhower is prepared to lose Indo-China? Or does it mean involvement *first*, and then massive retaliatory action?

Finally there is the McCarthy crisis. The Democrats seem determined to make it an issue in 1954, if the GOP continues to insist that the communist danger comes from within; i.e. from the Democrats. But suppose the danger were *made* to come from *without*, from a war in Indo-China?

True, the politicians know the people have had a belly-full of Korean wars. But would the Democrats dare oppose a war in Indo-China? The danger of such a war may not be immediate, but it is real enough. When the money gang gets desperate at its failures abroad, and at spreading political and class conflict at home, what is to stop

it from plunging wildly into another military adventure?

Whether such a war would be the magic formula for national unity at home is another matter, however. If the people found it difficult to understand the Korean war then involvement in Indo-China will be literally incomprehensible.

WHY, it will be asked, do we have to pull France's chestnuts out of the fire? Nobody knows the answer to that one because France—that is, the bulk of the French people—are through with the chestnut of Indo-Chinese colonialism. They haven't asked anyone to help them; they just want to get away from the fire of popular rebellion that has burned them for almost eight years.

In these eight years, since the French imperialists undertook to reconquer a people determined to be free, the war in Indo-China has become universally detested in France, considered the root of all evil and misfortune. Over 1,000 billion francs (roughly \$3 billion) have been spent to keep it going. This is at least 300 million francs more than the French have received in Marshall Plan aid. On top of chronic government deficits, the military expenditures have been a constant source of inflation, keeping wages low, preventing any housing program or modernization of industry. A public opinion poll published in Paris some three weeks ago (*le Monde*, Feb. 24), showed that 65% of the people were in favor of either negotiating an immediate peace or of withdrawing French troops.

This opposition to the war extends all the way up to ruling circles of French capitalism. For them, the war has become a "hemorrhage" which has bled France militarily to the point where it can no longer act as a great power in Europe. Since the conflict began, France has lost some 30,000 men and 1,200 career officers in Indo-China. Some 300,000 men, together with 38,000 officers and sub-officers are actively engaged in combat there today. Without men, and especially without this officer corps, the French rulers feel themselves impotent in their military rivalry with Germany on the European continent. Not all the French capitalists hold this position, to be sure. One group is making billions from speculation on the dollar. Another gang of reactionaries sees in it a hope for McCarthyism in France, just as the Korean war was the spur for McCarthy in the U. S. They naturally want the war to go on.

Despite the fake "victory" reports issued by the French high command in Indo-China, despite the constant promises of "showdowns" and final settlements, which never materialize, the military situation of the French in Indo-China has steadily deteriorated. Nobody in his right mind in France believes the war can be won.

This is not because of the incompetence of French generals or strategy, or for lack of the most modern means of murder. It is because the Indo-Chinese war is not an ordinary war; it is a war of national liberation and social revolution rolled into one. It is the same kind of war that the Chinese fought against the Japanese from 1937 to the end of World War II, and in many ways similar to the war fought by the North Koreans against the U.S. in the last few years. On the one side are the mercenary im-

perialist troops, equipped with jet planes and napalm bombs, supported only by a handful of wealthy landowners and corrupt native politicians; on the other side are the guerrilla armies of the Vietminh resistance, who are supported by millions of peasants, workers, students and intellectuals. An army can defeat another army, but it is a different matter against an insurgent people in arms. Nobody knows this better than the French generals.

THE MILITARY SITUATION follows none of the normal rules, the country is not divided horizontally but vertically. Indo-China, says a French reporter, is like a two-story house. The French, he says, command the upper story, "the superstructure," that is, the big cities, or more precisely their modern sections where the "white gods" and the wealthy Indo-Chinese live, the roads, the ports, the factories. The Vietminh holds the lower story, the cellar (the "infrastructure"), that is, the native parts of the cities, and they rule the densely populated villages throughout the rice paddies. The French operate on the roads, thrusting out to the countryside by means of forts and blockhouses. The Vietminh rise out of the mud of the rice fields to harass the blockhouses and attack the cities. Action for the French begins at sunrise when they set out on the roads to seek the rebels. When night falls and the French return to their blockhouses, the Vietminh goes into action until the morning, retaking villages lost in the day, cutting communications, seizing supplies, laying siege to the forts. The Viets, says the reporter, take on the coloration of the countryside; they are a kind of vegetation of the delta. For all their boasted victories, the expeditionary corps are in the position of the gardener who weeds his flower-bed every four months only to find the weeds sprouting up again in three months.

There are no big battles. The engagement currently reported in the press at Dienbienphu involving thousands of troops is the first of its kind in years. Usually, the French mobilize, march and prepare for the frontal encounter. But they find no enemy, although he has probably advanced some hundreds of miles within the same territory. This was the case of the recent "war" in Laos, a part of Indo-China hitherto untouched by the rebels. The Vietminh advanced and retreated without ever giving battle to the French. But nevertheless Vietminh had won the war, because entire villages and even areas had been won over to its cause and were being secretly governed by the communist political workers left behind by the retreating army. Thus the pattern is repeated: the Vietminh takes the countryside and the villages while the French are left isolated to the big towns, left with "the lumps in the soup," to use the words of a French correspondent in Indo-China.

THE POLITICAL FACTS that emerge from this military situation are even more striking. Conservative French sources admit that the Vietminh rebels govern 12 million of the 23 million Indo-Chinese people. This is a minimum figure, but it means that Vietminh dominates more than two-thirds of the territory of the country, that it harvests 55 percent of the rice crops, that it uses two out of every three kilometers of railroad now in operation.

The influence of Vietminh penetrates directly into French territory, in the big cities. There is a constant undercover trade between the farm products of the Vietminh-controlled countryside and city goods. Every Indo-Chinese family in the French zone is torn by divided loyalties; it is a rare family which doesn't have a brother, a son or a cousin in the "resistance." A reporter describes how even the most anti-communist of these Indo-Chinese will glow with pride at news of some Vietminh victory.

The French have tried to convey the impression that they are not seeking to re-establish their colonial domination but merely to support the "free" Indo-China, headed by Bao Dai, against the communists. The lie may stick in America but it is only too transparent in Indo-China. Like Syngman Rhee, Bao Dai is a puppet ruler kept in power by imperialist guns. *Le Monde* says he is supported by only 20 percent of the population. That's a maximum figure. Political conventions of Bao Dai supporters are usually marked by big brawls and end with substantial minorities and even majorities condemning his policy. Like all these "independent" facades for imperialist rule, his government is shot through with corruption. A high official states that fraud is rife in all the government departments. Only straw men of the French will hold office, comments a French priest. Competent, experienced people either go over to Vietminh, or join what is called the "attentistes," the wait-and-see group who refuse to take sides and whose numbers in French Indo-China far exceed that of the supporters of Bao Dai. The same goes for the native (Vietnam) armies fighting on the side of the French. Most of these are coerced into the army by press-gang methods; at the first opening they quit in droves and go back to their native villages, or they go over, arms and all, to the Vietminh side. "The Vietminh forces," says an officer of the Foreign Legion, "fight very well because they have an ideal; their morale is solid, while the Vietnamese troops feel that they are fighting for the interests of France and of the government bigshots. Because of this they generally refuse to engage in offensive combat." Nobody, not Eisenhower himself, could create a native "anti-communist" army out of such human material.

THERE ARE deep reasons, economic and political, why Asians won't fight Asians in Indo-China. The native allies of the French have been and still are a small group of privileged landowners; their opponents, some 700,000 landless families and 1,700,000 families with tiny plots of land. A breakdown of landownership by a French sub-commission, published in 1948, provides the following revealing figures for the province of Cochin China (the proportions are similar for Tonkin and Annam, the two other provinces):

Small farmers (183,000 or 72 percent) own 15 percent of the land, an average of a half hectare each, or a little better than one acre; medium-sized farmers (65,750 or 26 percent) own 37 percent; but 6,300 big farmers own 45 percent of the land. Landless families come to 345,000 or 57 percent of the total.

For all the blare of trumpets promising liberal land reform, which we have heard also in Chiang's China,



THEY WANT FREEDOM: Vietminh regulars captured by French in the Tonkin delta fighting are questioned. The full might of French imperialism, aided by U. S., has not been able to crush the spirit of the young men and women of Indo-China, who, like this pair, fight for the right to rule their own land.

in the Philippines, in Korea, with the same dismal results, only 3,600 of 1,800,000 hectares in Bao Dai's Indo-China have been affected by the reform. Only in communist Vietminh territory has there been extensive reform, and that explains the support they receive from the peasantry on both sides of the civil war.

Meanwhile, French Capital, seeing the handwriting on the wall, is out to finish its 90-year plunder by literally sacking the country. Production of rubber, rice and other crops is beating all records, workers are driven at an inhuman pace, the land is being exhausted. 51 companies have increased their profits from 2.5 billion francs in 1948 to 11 billion francs in 1951. These huge sums are not being re-invested in Indo-China but taken out of the country. A case in point is the largest of the big French monopolies, the Bank of Indo-China, whose profits rose from 49 million francs in 1946 to 622 million in 1952. It has transferred seven-eighths of its Indo-China portfolio to Africa and France.

This plunder has meant terrible exploitation and suffering for the Indo-Chinese masses. Because of the resulting inflation, the standard of living has been driven down 57 percent from its 1939 level. But if in 1939, the standard was only 40 percent of bare minimum existence, it hovers today at around 14 percent. Even when an entire family works it can only realize some 50 percent of its needs. On the countryside, where in 1939 the peasant was able to satisfy 50-70 percent of his needs, today he earns only from 30-40 percent. Plunder, famine and misery are the final bequests of the white "civilizers" to the Indo-Chinese people.

THE BIG public information trusts in our country, of course, cover up the fact that we are openly supporting a colonial power by the charge that the Vietminh regime, headed by Ho Chi Minh, is communist-led. The charge is true, but true also is the fact that the over-

whelming majority of the Indo-Chinese people support this movement, consider it the champion of independence and the agency of social reform.

France had won Indo-China by conquest, subdued it by force, kept it a colony by terror, tyranny and trickery. When the Japanese armies marched into the country in 1940-41, the French colonials knew it was wiser not to resist, for one thing because the natives had no inclination to do their fighting for them. But soon a big resistance movement, known as the Vietminh and led by the communists, took shape against the Japanese—and the French. When the Japanese capitulated in 1945, the Vietminh was lifted to power on the crest of a great popular movement. The country was in the throes of revolution. Independence from France was proclaimed. The old colonial and mandarin system of government and justice was crashed to the ground and People's Committees were elected in its place. Women were liberated from feudal bondage, the sexes were proclaimed equal. National minorities were to be accorded equal representation in a forthcoming constituent assembly. An eight-hour, minimum wage law was enacted. A struggle against illiteracy, which stood at 80 percent after 80 years of the French "civilizing mission," was begun.

The Communist Party, led by Ho Chi Minh, quickly rose to the top. In the struggle against Japan during the war they had built the force that could now challenge the rule of French imperialism. Trained in the Stalinist school, they often employed brutal methods against their opponents, particularly on their left. But there can be no question that they were a native movement, that they rose to power by their own resources, without help from Moscow or anyone else. There was no question that the new government was broadly representative of the people, nor of the great popularity of Ho Chi Minh with the masses of the people.

THE REVOLUTIONARY government, caught in the vise of imperialist rivalries, of Kremlin treachery and of the opportunism of its own leaders, was to last longer than the Greek revolution of the same period, but in the end was to suffer the same fate. The big nations of the world turned a deaf ear to the proclamation of Indo-Chinese independence. This includes the Kremlin which failed to raise the Indo-Chinese question at the UN, in the Moscow Conference; wouldn't even send an observer to Indo-China.

For all its promises of "Four Freedoms," the U. S., hostile to a return of French domination, was maneuvering to set up an "independent" government under Chiang Kai-shek's tutelage, but really under its own control. The Kremlin had agreed in Potsdam that the country was to be divided into two zones to accept the Japanese surrender, the Chinese occupying the area north of the 16th Parallel and the British to the south of it. By intrigue and maneuver, the French finally came to an agreement with both the Chinese and the British and returned with an armada to land an expeditionary force on Indo-Chinese soil.

Frightened by its isolation, the Vietminh began to conciliate and maneuver. Ho Chi Minh went to Paris hoping to get support for his demand for independence from the

powerful Communist and Socialist parties. But both of them were up to their necks in government collaboration and were not inclined to sacrifice their coalition with capitalist parties for the sake of the colonial people. Ho returned from Paris with a flimsy compromise agreement that gave the Vietminh very little but time, and was then used as a pretext by the French for their assault, which they began with the massacre of 6,000 Indo-Chinese in Hanoi. The revolutionary government was smashed, the independence forces driven back into the brush and the mountains.

It was not until the Vietminh government lay in ruins that the French C.P. finally reversed its position and abstained from voting military credits for Indo-China. In 1950, the Vietminh government got its first real support when it was recognized by Mao Tse-tung's People's China, and invited to exchange ambassadors. Three weeks later, without explaining why it had delayed for four years, Russia followed suit in recognizing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Vietminh) as representing the "overwhelming majority of the people."

BETWEEN the time of the French return to Indo-China and the present, Indo-China has become a crucified country. War has never ceased. The French razed villages to the ground, burned people alive, killed between 500,000 to 1,000,000 of their foes, some of them soldiers, but most of them defenseless civilians. Yet it is generally conceded that if France withdraws from Indo-China, the Bao Dai government would crumble like a house of cards, and Vietminh would sweep back in through a general election with the backing of an entire people. This should be an inexpungable lesson to Washington: Imperialism is finished no matter what its form—and it would be just that were it not for the plutocratic madmen currently trying to decide our fate and the fate of the human race.

Indo-China will be back on the chessboard of international diplomacy at Geneva toward the end of April. It was put there by French politicians who think they can do better by dealing with Russia and China than by negotiating directly with Ho Chi Minh. It was agreed to by Dulles who wanted to prevent any real negotiations. The French press is speculating that Molotov and Chou En-lai could leave Vietminh in the lurch as Stalin did after World War II. But France must give in return what French capitalism is incapable of giving. She cannot promise Moscow to reject the EDC and German rearmament without breaking with the U. S.—and starting a fatal struggle in France. She cannot promise China entry into the UN because Washington won't have it.

We conclude this survey where we began it. The next play is Washington's. France is finished in Indo-China—she will either get out or be driven out. That will all be to the good for the Indo-Chinese, for the workers of France, for the people still under colonial rule in Asia and Africa—for the peace of the world. America alone can force a continuation of the war in Indo-China. But that will mean eventually, or sooner, American troops, after that war with China and World War III.

Don't let it happen!



Rise of unions, labor shortage during war, and militant protest movements have made some gains possible. But the struggle for full Negro equality is far from won.

Survey of Two Decades:

Negro Labor Fights For A Square Deal

by Bert Cochran

STEADY JOBS and better living standards, enjoyed in the course of the long economic boom of 1940-53, made the white workers more conservative and enthroned a complacent bureaucracy over the new CIO unions. This development had a counterpart with the improvement of the economic position of the Negro community, especially in the North, and the rise of a stronger professional and business class earning incomes from \$5,000 to \$50,000 a year. The old middle class leadership that previously dominated the Negro community, has in recent years concluded an alliance with the established heads of the offi-

cial labor union organizations, and has strengthened its hold on the Negro ranks.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the middle class nostrums of respectability and gradualism, badly scarred and discredited in the Thirties, should be refurbished again. For the past few years Negroes have had the Dr. Coué argument literally dinned into their ears that every day things are getting better and better, that by the slow evolutionary approach, careful not to infuriate one's enemies, or antagonize one's potential friends, the Negroes have been inching along, and that in due course this accumulation of an improvement here and a concession there will give them the boon of economic, political and social equality.

The new reformism, and the new assurance and confidence of the "Talented Tenth" rests, of course, on a material base: Negroes have made progress in the past decade. But a conscientious investigation cannot but disclose that the advances have been very modest, in some cases ephemeral and passing, and that right now Negroes are getting pushed back and threatened with the loss of the most important of these gains. Furthermore, what little progress has been made in the last ten years was not due at all to imperceptibly slow evolutionary developments, but in every case was a direct result of militant techniques, hard-hitting tactics and mass action.

THE THREE most important events responsible for today's more advanced status of the Negro are: 1. The rise of the CIO; 2. The second world war; 3. The March-On-Washington movement of 1941. Now, it needs no elaborate demonstration to show that the first and third events fall into the categories of either militant techniques, hard-hitting tactics, or mass action. The CIO was born out of a veritable civil war that swept the country from one end to the other and involved sit-down strikes, mass picket lines, and defiance of court injunctions and police attacks. The march on Washington, while it never came off, constituted an effective threat that embraced all three of these categories. As for the second world war, it was the most violent convulsion in the whole history of the human race. If anyone objects that while there is no denying the cataclysmic or militant nature of these three events, nevertheless plenty of day-to-day reformistic spadework was necessary before the Negro people could reap any benefits from any of these developments, we completely agree. Marxism—the scientific doctrine of socialism—supports not only the fight for reforms in society, but also the historical view that society progresses by a combination of evolutionary and revolutionary processes.

The rise of the CIO was the most important single happening since the Civil War in the Negro struggle for equality. The new unionism has enrolled more Negroes than the biggest and most significant Negro organization of the past, the Garvey movement of the early Twenties. The "Back-to-Africa" crusade did not last but a few years, while the new unionism is a deeply rooted organization which has influenced and will continue to make its impact on American life for many years to come. Garveyism represented the Negro's despair and cut across his traditional aim of integrating himself into American society. The CIO gave impetus to his assimilationist aspirations and made possible an organized struggle for them on a superior plane to anything witnessed in the past.

UNTIL THE CIO came along unionism was pretty much a white man's proposition. Most of the important AFL unions and the Railroad Brotherhoods either barred Negroes entirely, or where they grudgingly permitted them in, segregated them into special lodges. During the first world war probably a quarter of a million Negroes went North to man the war industries, but by the time of the depression, they had been forced out of their positions and relegated to either the very hot, dirty and heavy jobs, or to certain menial jobs traditionally reserved to them. Even in the South, where Negro artisans were firmly established via a wage structure in-

volving racial differentials, Negroes were being pushed out of the building and hand trades under the fierce competition for jobs, and unions were sometimes used as the vehicle to do the pushing. Since the American Negro often broke into Northern industry as a strike-breaker, the bitterness between the white and black workers was further aggravated, and the attainment of labor solidarity loomed as a well nigh hopeless task. The Negro community was almost universally hostile to labor unions and understandably considered them a roadblock to Negroes' finding employment in trades and industry.

The CIO changed all of that with one resounding blow. Black and white solidarity—which had appeared as but another of the many quixotic utopias of radicals—came to America not imperceptibly, but with a rush, in the midst of the storm and strife that brought the barons of industry to their knees and established modern unions in America's mass production plants.

THE CIO, from the moment of its formation, opened its doors wide to all Negro workers on an equal basis. There were no constitutional bars, no segregation of the colored into separate locals, no secret Jim Crow rituals. Negro organizers were employed in all of the initial CIO organizing campaigns and struggles, as this was found to be the most effective way to demonstrate that the policy of non-discrimination was really meant, and would be carried through. While Negroes, mindful of their sad experiences of the past, and often more easily intimidated by the companies because of their isolation from the social life of the community, were a little hesitant at joining up at first, and played no leading role in the early CIO campaigns, their doubts, fears and antagonisms were overcome in the heat of the battles and the CIO's repeated demonstrations of good faith. They were drawn into the unions, and the employers' efforts to pit them against the whites were frustrated. Slowly, the pendulum began to swing in the workers' direction throughout the Negro communities, and in time, the preachers, lawyers, doctors and funeral parlor entrepreneurs had to swallow their prejudices and accept unionism as part of the Negro's way of life.

Like all important prizes in life, this was not won without a considerable struggle. George S. Schuyler gave a devastating account of the role of the Negro middle class throughout this heroic period in labor's history. He wrote:

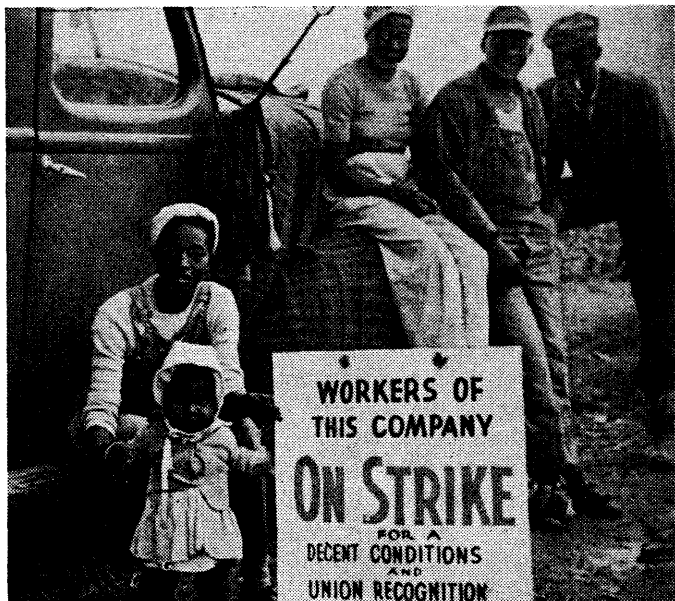
Their desertion of the struggling Negro workers in this crisis constitutes one of the most shameful chapters in our recent history. The new position Negro labor has won in the past year has been gained in spite of the old leadership. It has been won with new leadership; militant young men and women from the ranks of labor and grizzled black veterans of the pick and shovel and the blast furnace. . . . Nowhere was the bulk of Negro leaders actively aiding the Negro workers upon whom they depended for a livelihood. Nowhere were the "educated" classes cooperating with the unions to aid the work of organization, save in a few notable instances, and there by only one or two individuals. Nowhere were Negro preachers opening their churches for labor meetings although they were glad to give any itinerant bush priest a "break." Here and there a preacher, lawyer, a politician or social worker was found whose aid to the workers cannot be too highly commended. But a great many more denounced the new unions as "radical," were belligerent in siding with

Unfortunately, I was born poor—and colored—and almost all the prettiest roses I have seen have been in rich people's yards—not in mine. That is why I cannot write exclusively about roses and moonlight—for sometimes in the moonlight my brothers see a fiery cross and a circle of Klansmen's hoods. Sometimes in the moonlight a dark body swings from a lynching tree—but for the funeral there are no roses.

—Langston Hughes

the employers and in some instances openly recruited strike-breakers to take the jobs of the black unionists. The sentiments they expressed were invariably a rehash of the editorials in the local kept press. ("Reflections on Negro Leadership," Crisis, November 1937.)

The struggle to accept unions can be said to have been won when the CIO finally triumphed over the Ford Motor Company, and the approximately 8,000 Negroes working at the River Rouge plant signed up with the UAW. This was a symbolic case, as Henry Ford dominated the Detroit Negro community politically, taking advantage of the fact that he was the largest employer of Negro labor and had broken the traditional color bars of the industry in his River Rouge plant. This epic battle to establish the union at Ford split the Negro community right down the middle, with many preachers actively engaged in recruiting strike-breakers. At the climactic point, a few of the national NAACP figures and far-sighted local leaders stepped to the fore, broke the "back-to-work" movement being organized, and the narrow-minded opportunists were put to rout. From that time on, it was no longer popular in Negro circles to scoff at, or ridicule unions or union men.



CANNERY WORKERS: The rise of the unions opened up a new chapter in the struggle for Negro equality.

THE ESTABLISHMENT of the CIO represents the most important historic step in welding unity of black and white labor, in putting a mass movement behind Negro aspiration for equality, and in laying the groundwork, at least, for labor's preponderant role in the Negro community. But despite its transcendent historic substance, the immediate effects were necessarily limited. The early CIO campaigns and strikes were waged to secure bargaining relations in the unorganized industries, and to win immediate improvements in the matter of wages and working conditions. The CIO was too busy in this period fighting for its right to live to be concerned with the hiring practices of the companies. It had its hands full just trying to organize the people em-

ployed by the corporations. Hence, the early CIO victories were of immediate benefit only to the Negroes already working in the mass production industries. Those discriminated against at the hiring gate, and without a job, derived no advantage. And as throughout the Thirties unemployment was hitting the black workers far more drastically than even the whites, the new unionism, with all its virtues, was helpless in solving or even ameliorating their most pressing problem.

Inside the CIO unions, the non-discrimination policy looked better on paper than it actually was. Not because of any hypocrisy or double-dealing on the part of most CIO officials.

It was simply too much to expect that the long-standing ingrained prejudices of white workers and local officials could be wiped out overnight. The constitutional provisions were often circumvented or ignored, and in the South in the early period, openly flouted. The advanced CIO policy derived, after all, not from the superiority of the human material in the CIO unions as against AFL unions, but because of economic circumstances. The traditional craft union was built on the idea of creating a monopoly in a given trade or craft, and that idea led to exclusion, first of all of Negroes, but also other minorities as well as newcomers in general, in order to keep the labor supply limited. The industrial union had to rely on solidarity, and hence from the first was forced to battle against all divisive prejudices whether based on color, religion or nationality. In the long run, the primacy of the economic factor in human affairs was exemplified especially in this case where even the most deeply rooted of prejudices began giving way under the impact of economic necessity.

NEVERTHELESS, discrimination remained the rule in employment, and Negroes who had jobs were working chiefly in the unskilled and most poorly paid sectors. The proportion of Negroes in manufacturing had grown from 6.2 percent in 1910 to 7.3 percent in 1930. By 1940, it was at the new low of 5.1 percent. The ground lost in the depression has not been regained. Robert C. Weaver writes in his documented study, "Negro Labor":

When the defense program got under way, the Negro was only on the sidelines of American industrial life. He seemed to be losing ground daily. The prospect was dark; he was discouraged. The forces of racial reaction felt that their position was secure. There were few signs to defeat them. The color caste system seemed to be firmly entrenched.

The war boom which took on steam in 1940 soon absorbed all of the available white male labor supply. By 1941 a universal cry went up for more workers to man the expanding war industries and perform the thousand and one tasks necessary to keep an economy going, which was fast doubling its previous output. But in spite of the acute labor shortages developing, the color bars held fast, and Negroes were effectively excluded from most employment opportunities. In a number of cities the thousands of new workers pouring in created terrible difficulties because of the lack of necessary housing and transportation, yet old-time colored residents of the city were refused jobs. For many of the new jobs Negroes lacked

the required skills, but in the first two years they were for all practical purposes kept out of the defense training program.

Naturally, the Negro community was in an uproar. Everyone realized that it was now or never so far as breaking into industry was concerned. If the Negro could not find employment while the country was clamoring for labor, it was obvious that he was forever doomed to a serf status in America. Negro leaders protested heatedly, met with government officials, sent innumerable appeals—and nothing happened. Walter White wrote to John Temple Graves, the Southern journalist, that he pleaded repeatedly with Roosevelt to do something but that the President refused, giving as his reason that “the South would rise up in protest.” After considerable pressure, several government departments sent out vaguely worded letters, but the situation remained basically unchanged.

Gunnar Myrdal in his important work, “An American Dilemma,” stated (in mid-1942) that Negroes made even less headway in the war boom than during the first world war, that “in October 1940, only 5.4 percent of all Employment Service placements in 20 selected defense industries were non-white, and this proportion had by April 1941 declined to 2.5 percent. In September 1941, it was ascertained that the great bulk of the war plants did not have any Negroes at all among their workers.”

IT WAS painfully plain that the old methods of the middle class leaders were getting the black workers nowhere. In that hour of frustration, A. Philip Randolph, President of the AFL Pullman Porters union, stepped forward with the proposal that 50,000 Negro workers march on Washington “to exact their rights in National Defense employment and the armed forces of the country.” The idea took on like wildfire. A March-On-Washington Committee, headed by Randolph and other prominent Negro leaders, was formed and the march was officially announced for July 1, 1941. By spring, Negro communities all over the North were seething, and instead of the 50,000 called for, a minimum of 100,000 black workers were preparing to march. This militant challenge finally woke up the powers-that-be, and the wires began to buzz.

Randolph received a message from Secretary of the Navy Knox asking him to come to Washington for a discussion of the entire matter. General Hugh S. Johnson wrote to Randolph requesting him to call off the march on the grounds that it would do more harm than good. As the deadline was approaching and the march was still on, Washington really got scared. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt was enrolled in the campaign to stop the march, and on June 10 she wrote to Randolph that she had discussed the entire situation with her husband, and stated: “I feel very strongly that your group is making a very grave mistake at the present time to allow this march to take place. I am afraid it will set back the progress which is being made, in the Army at least, towards better opportunities and less segregation.”

A few days later a conference was called in the offices of Mayor LaGuardia in New York City in which the Mayor, Aubrey Williams, Mrs. Roosevelt, Randolph



A. Philip Randolph, president of the AFL Sleeping Car Porters, was the chief moving force behind the March-On-Washington movement, which, by its militancy, won big gain in Negro hiring.

and Walter White participated, with the New Deal liberals putting the heat on Randolph to call off the action. According to the story carried by the *Amsterdam News*, Randolph, supported by White, replied: “We are busily engaged mobilizing our forces all over the nation for the march, and could not think of calling it off unless we have accomplished our definite aim, which is jobs and not promises.” He also informed Mayor LaGuardia that on June 27 a march on City Hall was going to take place. Surprised, LaGuardia asked, “What for, what have I done?” Randolph replied, “To ask you to memorialize the President requesting him to issue an executive order to end this shameful practice.”

THE FOLLOWING DAY, Aubrey Williams telephoned Randolph from Washington to inform him that the President requested that the march be called off and that a conference be arranged with members of the March-On-Washington Committee. In the meantime, on June 12, in a further attempt to forestall the march, Roosevelt issued a memorandum to Knudsen and Hillman, the joint chairmen of OPM, placing the support of his office behind Hillman’s letters to defense contractors which had asked them not to discriminate. Following the telephone call and the publication of the President’s memorandum, the March-On-Washington Committee met, characterized the memorandum as ineffective, reiterated its demand for an executive order, and expressed its resolve to make the march “the greatest demonstration of Negro mass power for our economic liberation ever conceived.”

On June 18, Randolph, Frank R. Crosswaith, Layle Lane and Walter White met with the President. Roosevelt spent a good deal of the half-hour interview trying to convince his visitors that “the march would do more harm than good,” that the idea was “bad and unintelligent.” The Negro leaders got no satisfaction, and Randolph announced, following the conference: “The march will go on.”

Finally on June 24, after a lot more rushing to and fro, LaGuardia and Aubrey Williams met with Randolph and handed him a draft of an executive order. After telephone conferences and changes made in the text of the draft, it was approved, and the march was called off. On June 25 Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 prohibiting discrimination in government and defense industry. Thus was born the Fair Employment Practices Committee. A little dose of mass action, or, as in this case, even the threat of it, accomplished what all the appeals, exhortations, begging and fancy negotiations failed to achieve.

(Next Month: *What’s Ahead in the Negro Struggle?*)

New day in Latin America is most plainly typified by Guatemalan Revolution, which began in 1944 and is still going. Here is a full account of these little-known events, and their background.

Revolution In Guatemala: 1944-1954

by Harry Braverman

THE MASSIVE underlying trends of history never reveal themselves in a week or a month. Nevertheless, from time to time the cumulative piling up of millions of small facts and new relationships registers in the minds of men as a giant fact. The senses of mankind are coming to be more keenly attuned to this process of change: We hear the old mole working in the earth a little sooner than we used to. So it is today with Latin America.

John Foster Dulles, in his first speech after becoming Secretary of State, showed that even the ruling class can feel the historic change at work there:

I have a feeling that conditions in Latin America are somewhat comparable to conditions as they were in China in

the mid-Thirties when the Communist movement was getting started. They were beginning to develop hatred of the American and the Britisher, but we didn't do anything adequate about it. . . .

As to the "hatred of the American and Britisher" in Latin America, one could cite the experiences and observations of many diplomats and journalists. But sometimes a capsule of fiction concentrates truth far better. Mr. Ray Bradbury, who writes science-fiction in the "social" style, recently published a story called "And the Rock Cried Out," in which the white residents of Latin America are suddenly divested of the protection of imperialism by an atomic war which destroys their far-off homelands. They are at once overwhelmed by a flood of burning and limitless hatred. Who can doubt that this would happen? In truth there would be, in the words of the spiritual, "No hiding place down there" for the hated Americans and Britishers if the power behind them were removed.

We have just lived through a symbolic month. All the circumstances of the Caracas conference, and of the event in the Washington House of Representatives on the first day of that conference, typify the changing scene. No matter what one may think of the action of the Puerto Rican Nationalists in invading Congress with Luger pistols and spraying the hall with bullets, one cannot doubt the strength of the feelings that lie behind it.

THE TENTH Inter-American Conference is itself a revelation. Who would have thought, thirty years ago, that the United States would one day plead, cajole and flatter the Latin American states to get them to join in a denunciation of a revolutionary government in their midst? In days gone by, the problems of the United Fruit Company would have been quickly solved by a contingent of U.S. marines and a light cruiser, or by a sudden "army revolt" of a well-financed clique ready to play along with the savage exploitation of the nation for a small cut of the profits.

Such methods no longer work. Military intervention is a hazardous game which the State Department can play only at the risk of brewing a storm that would complete the isolation of the U.S. in this hemisphere. And a



coup by a U.S. Navy-backed military junta becomes less and less possible as new forces enter the scene in Latin American politics. For the big difference in Latin America today is the awakening of ever broader strata of workers and peasants.

In Guatemala, there have probably been as many as three dozen Rightist revolts against the revolutionary government since 1944. In the old days, almost any one of these would have been successful, but because there is now a mass force available to support the regime of a kind that was never available before, they all failed miserably. Samuel Guy Inman, a liberal journalist, summarizes this fact in his pamphlet "A New Day in Guatemala." "When President Arevalo's enemies at home and abroad started frequent uprisings, he was compelled to accept help from radicals with whom he did not agree as well as from workers. . . . It was organized labor that enabled him to finish his six-year term." Inman describes one revolt:

These tactics were demonstrated during the most serious uprisings following the assassination of Col. Frederico Arana. Fighting lasted for three days, but was finally put down because of the help given by loyal members of organized labor. . . .

An inventory showed that the government was in a precarious position. The rebel fort contained more than half of the military personnel in the city. At about 5 P.M., the government sent out word that civilian volunteers would be given arms at the Aurora Airfield, two miles from the center of the city. The headquarters of the two labor federations were filled with workers who rushed to Aurora by every possible means of transportation. . . . Between two and three thousand rifles were handed out to organized workers who were joined by students, teachers and liberal exiles from other Central American countries. . . . The workers were enthusiastic in defense of their government. Laborers from other parts of the country poured into the city to aid in the fighting. . . . At 2 P.M., the third day, the rebels asked terms.

WHEN A SMALL Central American regime can count on "two or three thousand rifles" in its central city in addition to its normal forces, rifles manned not by indifferent and treacherous mercenaries or professional filibusterers, but by ardent and reliable labor militants, then its overthrow can never be accomplished by a gunboat and a few companies of Marines.

On July 20, 1950, workers and rank-and-file soldiers broke up a Rightist demonstration, and then, feeling that the Minister of the Interior in the revolutionary regime was himself responsible for this demonstration, organized another demonstration demanding his resignation, with some going so far as to demand the resignation of the President himself! The Minister of Interior was soon afterwards actually compelled to resign. Assuredly, it is not easy to overthrow a regime that is so zealously guarded, even against itself, by so many militant followers.

It was the new mass awakening which made the success of the Guatemalan Revolution possible from the outset. Revolutions had taken place before in misery-ridden Guatemala, where the merciless exploitation by German and American imperialism, the ten cent daily wage, the malarial poverty bred in thatched hovels, the monopoly

by 2 percent of the wealthy over three-fourths of the land, the systems of forced labor, and the other common characteristics of colonial lands which bear the white man as a burden, had all combined to produce a social instability that not even the iron blanket of rigid dictatorship could suppress. But these revolutions, in the absence of sufficient mass force to maintain them, soon slid back and the country subsided into accustomed channels.

Not so, however, with the Revolution of 1944, which overthrew General Jorge Ubico, last of the dictators. At first, it followed the usual pattern. A General was named provisional president, and the reactionary forces gathered to assume the reins of power under new forms and with new personnel. But the revolutionary mass appeared which decisively altered the history of the nation, and tore it forever from age-old feudal muck.

On Oct. 20, 1944, an alliance of workers, soldiers and university students stormed the ancient forts of San José and Matamoros where the generals were mobilizing, and destroyed them. Reaction was crippled, and the revolution moved into its next stages.

Far from being a "plot" of a "handful of communists," the Guatemalan Revolution is rooted in deep social and economic characteristics of all colonial nations. It is this that is most frightening to the Dulleses: They know that "plots" can be crushed, but how does one crush a vast groundswell of revolt arising out of centuries of oppression?

IN GUATEMALA, as in the rest of the colonial sphere, capitalist penetration opened a tiny window on the world, and through that window, the masses caught a glimpse of what could be. That was enough; they awakened from the sleep of centuries. Up to 75 years ago, Guatemala was a semi-feudal plantation land, producing mainly for local consumption. With the intrusion of imperialism and the world market came the transformation which led straight to the Revolution of 1944-54.



Imperialism brought modern civilization in just the limited amounts required to make Guatemala profitable. Agriculture was transformed to a few big staple crops, and soon Guatemala was exporting large quantities of coffee and bananas. The plantation owners had long wrestled with the problem of compelling the Indian peasant to work for a master when he could do better cultivating garden plots. Imperialism showed the landlords how to do this in the modern way: by stripping the peasant of land, by involving him in debt and coercing him with debt laws compelling him to work off his delinquency, by "vagrancy" laws that defined a vagrant as one who owned too little land and forced him to hire out at least 150 days in the year.

Imperialism built a railroad, just extensive enough to carry bananas and coffee to Puerto Barrios. Imperialism built a power system for its machines and to make little circles of light in the darkness for the *pukka sahib*. Imperialism brought in sanitation and medicine in just large enough quantities to keep the overseer, the official, the tourist safe from plague. Outside the little circles of light, the mass lived as before—worse than before.

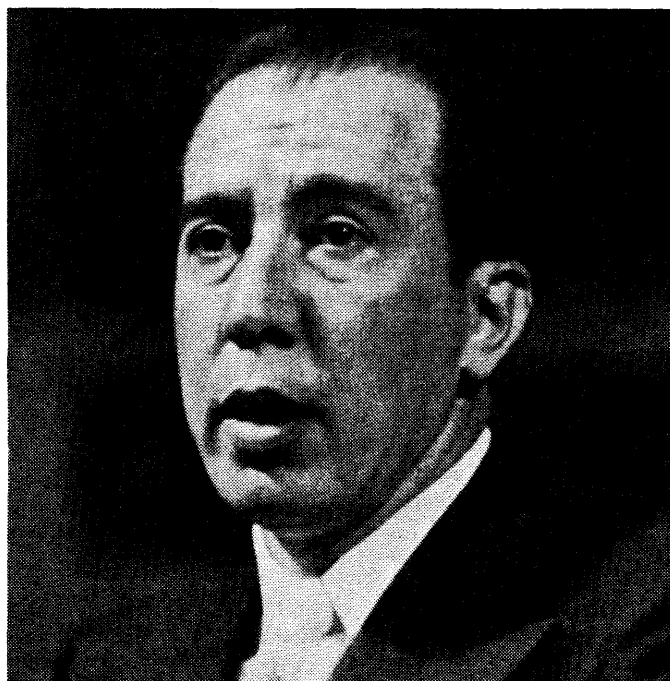
With the coffee and banana plantations, the power station and the railroad, came UFCO, IRCA and AFPCO: United Fruit Company, International Railways of Central America, and American & Foreign Power Company. The country had a new ruler, elected by the dollar.

The first revolutionary president after 1944, Dr. Juan José Arevalo, once told a journalist: "You have not had here ambassadors of the United States, but ambassadors of the United Fruit Company." He was not speaking metaphorically. The Under-secretary of State for Latin America in the Truman administration was Spruille Braden. When Braden left that job, he went to work as the Public Relations Director of . . . the United Fruit Company! The present Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs is John Moors Cabot, whose brother is a director of the United Fruit Company bank, the First National of Boston. These are only two examples of many.

WITH THEIR hand-picked dictators, the giant U.S. corporations negotiated agreements that gave them fantastic privileges and immunities. United Fruit's contract with Dictator Ubico, dating from 1936 and still in force, provides an exemption from import duties on all materials used by the company, and grants sweeping immunities from municipal or local real estate taxes. International Railways of Central America, the sole railroad in the country, has a franchise due to run until 2009 A.D.

United Fruit controls International Railways, and pays its railroad \$90 a carload for shipment from the Tiquisate region on the Pacific across to Puerto Barrios. But Standard Fruit, UFCO's far smaller rival, must pay \$200 for the same carload; independent coffee growers have to pay \$350 a carload; and the government itself must pay from \$200 to \$250. Small wonder that in 1951, UFCO made a net profit after taxes equal to one-third of its capital investment.

Such conditions have made Guatemala a revolutionary



AT CARACAS: Guatemalan Foreign Minister Guillermo Toriello speaks.

nation. The starving, landless peasantry, the exploited plantation workers (more than 20 percent of whom are children under 14, and more than 22 percent women), the miserably underpaid working class, the crushed and rebellious intellectuals and students, the weak and restricted native capitalist class which couldn't get its "fair share"—everybody but a thin top stratum of feudal landholders and direct associates of the UFCO dictatorship turned to rebellion as the only road.

In a 1953 speech to a U.S. audience, Dr. Guillermo Toriello, then ambassador to the U.S. and now Guatemala's foreign minister, described the aims of the revolutionary regime as the nationalists saw them:

Carrying forward the economic and social transformation of the country by seeing to it that the people are better fed, that wages rise, that agrarian reforms are effected, that agriculture is mechanized, that industrialization proceeds, that communications are improved and that capitalist methods of production are instituted.

Since 1944, foreign companies are being regulated more closely, currency reform and control have been instituted, a labor code has been promulgated and a social security institute established, and other institutes devoted to Indian affairs, development of production and cooperatives, etc., have been created. But the most important changes have been the organization of labor and the agrarian reform.

Under the dictatorships, unions were illegal; Ubico didn't even permit the word "worker" to be used—you had to call yourself an "employee." Since the revolution, the bulk of the industrial and agricultural workers has been organized in two labor federations. A series of great strike struggles (the strikes against United Fruit, the "state within a state," came close to civil war) have taken place and changed the entire position and outlook of the urban and rural working class, maturing it into a powerful class-conscious body, and raising its standard of living.

THE AGRARIAN Reform Law of June 16, 1952, provides for the denunciation of uncultivated portions of the large estates by local committees of peasants. The lands can be seized (the owners get 25-year 3 percent agrarian bonds) and distributed among the peasants either on a life tenancy or 25-year purchase basis.

The landowners now find themselves hoist by their own petard. The Feb. 20, 1953, *U. S. News and World Report* complained:

Owners find that they take terrific losses on lands that are seized. It is the practice here for the owner, rather than a public assessor, to set the valuation of his land for tax purposes, and he always has set it low. A farm worth \$100,000 might be valued for tax purposes at \$5,000 or \$10,000. Now under the Agrarian Law, this valuation becomes the price at which the land is taken over for redistribution. . . .

Having defrauded the government of hundreds of thousands of dollars each year on taxes for many, many years, the owners really have no kick coming. But landowners never look at things that way, and least of all the United Fruit Company, which is kicking like mad. UFCO has lost about three-fourths of its almost half-million acres since the agrarian reform, but that company has still not learned the stoicism that exploiters ought practice, in thankfulness for past profits, when the tables are turned.

The reform has not proceeded without struggle. Occasional reports appearing in the press in the early period of land seizure tell something of the conflict:

Inflammatory speeches by national leaders have been carried to the back country by agitators, mainly communists or communist sympathizers, seeking to stir the Indians into forceful seizures of private property. (N. Y. Times, Feb. 21, 1953)

Police say knife-wielding peasants in southeastern Guatemala are taking the national land reform law into their own hands and are seizing plantation property. Some 400 farm workers armed with machetes were reported to have grabbed land in the Asuncion Mita area near the El Salvador border. The police say they were led by a regional officer of the Confederation of Farm Workers, a communist-dominated group. Guatemala's Communist Party, which is closely tied in with the government of President Arbenz, has agitated for forced partitioning of land. This has already led to violence in several areas. (Christian Science Monitor, Jan. 23, 1953)

In recent weeks, peasants, stirred by left-wing agitators and unwilling to wait for completion of the machinery for expropriation, have moved in and taken over land in various parts of the country. Due to lack of funds to pay for expropriated land . . . the government has not gone very far with expropriation of private lands. This slowness in turn has helped spark the spontaneous land seizures. (Christian Science Monitor, Feb. 1953)

The picture of violence may have been exaggerated for propaganda purposes. On one occasion, the U.S. press reported "rivers of blood" after a demonstration which had, in fact, caused only one death. But the direct battle between people and landlords is unmistakable. The Feb. 21, 1953, *N. Y. Times* reported Minister of Economy Robert Fanjul as saying: "Trouble and violence had to come. You cannot carry out anything as basic as land reform without trouble and violence. In Mexico it cost 20,000 lives. If we get away with losing 200, we will consider ourselves fortunate."

RUNNING LIKE A RED THREAD through the entire press treatment of Guatemala in the U.S., is the "communist" angle. The intent of this is to smear the revolutionary movement with the "foreign conspiracy" label, and prepare for imperialist intervention if possible. President Arbenz, in a recent speech, pointed out that the "communist" howl was started by United Fruit before there was even a Communist Party in Guatemala. "How could they invent an umbrella before it rained?" he asked.

What is the Guatemalan Communist Party? In the Revolution of 1944, a left-wing group developed under the leadership of José Manuel Fortuny, member of Congress and leader in the revolution. This group helped form the *Partido Accion Revolucionaria* (PAR), within which Fortuny founded in September 1947 a faction known as the Democratic Vanguard. In May 1950, this group quit the PAR and announced the intention of founding a Communist Party. It began publishing a weekly newspaper called *Octubre* (named after the October 1944 Revolution), and it was reported that 2,000 persons attended the founding ceremony for this paper in Guatemala City in July 1951. This group was called the "October Communists" to distinguish them from those known as the "Stalinist Communists" who were organized in a group called the Revolutionary Party of the Guatemalan Workers led by young Victor Manuel Gutierrez.

The two groups later united into a single party which now bears the name Guatemalan Labor Party. Fortuny became secretary-general of the new party, and *Octubre* continued as its paper. The party leads both the General Confederation of Guatemalan Workers and the Confederation of Farm Workers, a fact which is not surprising since the radicals had taken the lead in organizing the workers and farm laborers. Typical is Carlos Manuel Pellecer, one of the communists' top leaders. Before the 1944 revolution, Pellecer, then a cadet at military school, was first jailed, then exiled, for opposing Ubico. He went to Mexico, where he worked in a U.S.-owned mine and studied Marx. Upon his return after the revolution, Pellecer was an organizer for the unions, and now, at the age of 33, he is one of the most prominent leaders of farm workers in the agrarian overturn.

Party membership is apparently still small; estimates run not much above 2,000, and the party has four deputies in Congress out of 56. Recently, with activity around the agrarian reform, it has penetrated deeply into the Indian regions. In the December municipal elections, the party contested four town administrations, running against other parties of the government coalition, and won in three of them.

IN A SPEECH to a party congress, Fortuny outlined the following conception: "We communists recognize that, due to special conditions, the development of Guatemala must be accomplished for a period through capitalism." But Guatemalan experience has shown that the innate tendency of the revolution is towards ever-increasing workers' power, and not to the stabilization of capitalism. The epoch of the founding of new capitalist economies, even in the so-called "backward" areas, is ended, and

capitalism is having the greatest difficulty maintaining itself even where long established.

In China, Mao Tse-tung's Communist Party, with a similar theory, was in the end forced to the establishment of a workers' state. It is significant to note that this lesson has not been lost on the Guatemalans. Fortuny went on in the same speech to insist that the examples of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China "demonstrated clearly that in our days it is no longer historically inevitable that the people, in order to overcome economic backwardness, must pass through long capitalist periods." Fortuny has arrived at an approximation of Leon Trotsky's theory of uneven and combined development.

Inadequate ideas can limit or cripple a party. But, as has happened elsewhere, the course of the Guatemalan revolt may be determined in the end by the dynamic of the struggle itself and not by an indistinct formula. What will happen if the Guatemalan capitalist and middle class forces give way to Wall Street and seek to suppress the Left, or if they crumble out of their internal weakness into complete impotence? It is likely that the Guatemalan Communist Party would then be separated from present capitalist-nationalist allies and have to enlarge its sphere of independent struggle, possibly to the point of a fight for power. But this stage may not be reached until further development of the socialist and nationalist struggle in all of Latin America.

Meanwhile, the Guatemalan regime does not try to suppress the communists. The reason for this resistance to the international McCarthyites was plainly set forth

by Robert M. Hallett in the Jan. 8, 1953, *Christian Science Monitor*:

Basically the parties which give the Arbenz government its support are very fluid, shifting in their loyalties and torn by intense rivalries. They offer no solid base for a political foundation. The only cohesive, consistent forces are the labor movement and the Communist Party—which for the present are one and the same. Therefore, reduced to simplest terms, the government cannot exist for long without labor. . . . And the price of this support is freedom of Communist political and propaganda activity.

What has been begun in Guatemala, in Bolivia, and elsewhere, will not be halted by imperialism. Imperialism will try, and the dangers are still great, but in the long run it cannot succeed. Americans will find that they live in the epoch of repayment for past inequities, of evening-out of the disparity between two continents which evolved so differently because one lived at the expense of the other. The vast majority of Americans in the U.S., who own no shares of UFCO, IRCA or AFPCO, and who are opposed to the domination of any land, including their own, by a few giant corporations, will in the end celebrate that liberation along with the Latin American people, and help it to completion by their own battles.

The memories of the bloody events of 1932 are still too fresh in most Salvadorian [Central America] minds to permit the Communists to win over any sizeable following. The former dictator, Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez, put down a Communist-inspired rising by back-country Indians at the cost of an estimated, 16,000 to 20,000 lives.

N. Y. Times, Jan. 3, 1954

Korea PW Action—A Deep Impression

YOUNGSTOWN

IT WAS the first time in many months that anyone in the department talked about Korea. The war had been fading like a bad dream when one morning it was on everybody's lips again. It was the day after TV had featured the interview with the 21 GIs who chose "to stay for peace" rather than have "our voices silenced . . ." by "McCarthyism, the witch-hunt." I was suddenly surrounded by a stream of questions, arguments, opinions.

Behind the banter and the baiting, some of it joking, some hostile, you could see that the dramatic stand of the GIs had made a deep impression. When had POWs ever decided not to come home after a war? (The Geneva Convention doesn't even provide for such a thing.) This was really something different. And it wasn't because the GIs were long-haired communists. They were as like the men in the plant, or their sons, as peas in the

pod. Tennessee . . . Texas . . . Georgia . . . Oklahoma, one of them even came from next door Akron. Only two had gone to college, six had graduated from high school. Average earnings at time of induction was \$48.90 a week.

I was surprised at the sympathy shown for the GIs, especially coming from men who had never uttered a radical political opinion before. "You can't condemn 'em after the way Dickenson and Batchelor were treated after they decided to come home," was one comment. Another fellow said: "McCarthy has gone too far. There's too much fear and no free speech in America." But these were in a minority. They were cut off by a loud, rough challenge:

"—Just a pack of stoolies!"

That struck me a little funny since the informer has been made a national hero in the USA in the last few years. But I stuck to the facts. None of these charges had ever been substantiated. They were made *after*

the GIs' decision to stay. Besides, it's the same slander hurled at the American POWs who never hesitated about repatriation. The argument shifted.

"—They must have either been mad or traitors to leave a wonderful country like ours for China."

Makes you think, I argued. *Their* country these past few years was bomb-blasted, bleeding Korea. They never had it so rough. They didn't choose China in preference to America. They chose between revolution and counter-revolution, between war and peace. And they did it in full knowledge of the consequences. How is that less patriotic than the civil wars our brass hats and millionaires keep trying to drag us into from one end of the world to another? Remember how they used to say the GIs didn't know what they were fighting for in Korea. Well, these fellows found out.

"Commie talk," a voice called out as the foreman hove in sight.

L. B.

Informers, ganster-ties, characteristic of corporation methods in the Thirties, are still in use. Bits of evidence come to the surface in such places as a Smith Act trial courtroom or a Kefauver hearing which show that Big Business hasn't lost its spots or grown any halos.

Anti-Labor Thugs Still In Business

ALMOST ANY DAY in the week, you can visit a quiet, elm-shaded university campus and hear a scholarly professor of sociology explain that the day of gangsterism and spying is ended in industrial relations. Employers have become "accustomed" to dealing with unions, and don't employ violent or underhand methods typified by the thug and the spy, you will be told.

These gentlemen should have been present in Judge Frank Picard's courtroom here during the recent trial of six Michigan Communist Party leaders on charges of violating the Smith "Gag" Act. Or they should have followed the long tale of violence and sordid underworld connections of certain Michigan corporations that has been unfolding here for the last nine years.

On the record, the Ford Motor Company ended its connections with professional spies and intimidators when it signed a contract with the union. But the Michigan Smith Act trial definitively revealed that the agreement with the union to abolish Harry Bennett's Service Department has been systematically violated for years. Bennett's work, according to the trial testimony, has been continued through the Security Communications Department of the Ford Motor Company, headed by one William H. Corrigan. A subsection of this department, the Investigative Section, pays and supervises a contingent of labor spies, some of whom were called upon to testify at the trial.

Stephen Schemanske has been spying for the Ford Motor Company since 1936. He testified that the company paid him \$300 to \$400 a month "expenses" for his work. Schemanske hired a certain Milton Santwire to spy within the union, to which he himself never belonged.

In their first courtroom appearances, Schemanske and Santwire perjured themselves flatly, stating under oath that they did not work together or know each other as spies, despite the fact that one was employed by the other! Government attorneys, after this perjury was exposed, held hurried conferences with their paid witnesses, and were then quoted in the *Detroit News* as saying the witnesses were "instructed to tell the truth today."

But the most revealing aspect of the trial was the information that came out when defense attorneys tried to

subpoena the records of Ford's Investigative Section. The head of the department, trying to block the subpoena, said it would take weeks to separate the cash vouchers for Schemanske from the others on file in his office! This only exposed the extent of spy operations maintained by Ford. As another objection, one of the government attorneys pointed out that the records contain names which should not be revealed in open court, whereupon Judge Picard helpfully offered to advance-screen the records himself.

THE TALE of the Michigan Stove Company and the Briggs Manufacturing Company, both located here in Detroit, has briefly lifted the curtain on the gangsterism practised by corporations. A revealing glimpse of the workings of the system emerges.

In 1945, a mysterious series of brutal assaults on members of the CIO Auto Union began. First came the Briggs beatings. This involved several of the most prominent unionists in the Briggs Manufacturing Company.

On March 22, 1945, Art Vega, an active member of Local 212, was walking home with his wife when two men caught hold of him and began to beat him with lengths of pipe. Among other injuries, he suffered a broken arm. On May 23, 1945, Roy Snowden was attacked and beaten as he started to open the door of his house. A few months later he was severely beaten a second time under similar circumstances.

On the morning of October 16, 1945, Genora Dolinger, a Briggs militant, was attacked by two hoodlums with steel pipe while in bed at 5 A.M. When her husband attempted to shield her, he was knocked unconscious. (See *American Socialist*, February 1954, for Mrs. Dolinger's account.) In October, Mrs. Marie MacDonald, wife of a vice president of the Briggs local, was beaten.

A few years later, the thugs aimed higher in the union. On April 20, 1948, Walter Reuther, president of the UAW, was the victim of a shotgun blast that almost killed him, and partially crippled his right arm. Some time later, his brother Victor was similarly attacked and missed death by inches. Police "efforts" to fix responsibility for this series of attacks and shootings were futile.



WHO SHOT REUTHER? The answer is an open secret around Michigan, but it seems very hard to get anything done about it.

It was not until the Kefauver Committee hearings on Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce that some of the facts began to come out. The Kefauver Committee reported as follows:

The most important fact uncovered in the Detroit hearings of this committee was that some manufacturers have entered into and are today continuing intimate business relationships with racketeers for the purpose of affecting their labor relationships. . . . The Detroit, Mich., Stove Works, the president of which is John A. Fry, whose social respectability in the city of Detroit is beyond any question, entered into a relationship with one Santo Perrone, the obvious effect of which was to enlist the assistance of Perrone's gangster friends in Fry's labor problems. . . . Fry's close friend, William Dean Robinson, likewise socially impeccable and a high official and now president of the Briggs Manufacturing Co., concocted a legal fiction whereby Perrone's son-in-law, Carl Renda, obtained a contract for doing nothing which has given him since 1946 an income ranging between fifty and one hundred thousand dollars a year, the real purpose of which was to have Perrone exert his gangdom's influence in the Briggs Manufacturing Co.'s labor problems.

The services rendered by the Perrone gang at the Michigan Stove Works included bringing in strike-breakers during union organization attempts, intimidating workers, etc. At one time while Perrone and his brother Gaspar were in prison on a federal charge of illegal manufacture of whisky, the UAW organized the plant, but shortly after they returned from prison, the organization was broken up.

THE BRIGGS Manufacturing Company is one of the largest auto parts suppliers in the Detroit area, and the Briggs union organization one of the important UAW locals. Carl Renda, Perrone's son-in-law, was awarded a contract for the purchase, removal and resale of steel scrap by the company in April 1946, despite the fact that he had no experience for the job, had just left college, had no machinery or equipment or yard, didn't even have a business telephone, and there was already a company employed in the scrap-removal business by Briggs. As it turned out, that same scrap company continued to remove and sell the scrap after Renda had the contract, and Renda got an income of as high as \$100,000 a year for doing nothing—at least nothing about scrap.

The Kefauver Committee reported:

The granting of the Renda scrap contract preceded the first of the notorious Briggs beatings by a little more than a week. The committee's records indicated that approximately six prominent labor officers of the Briggs Manufacturing Co. were beaten in a most inhuman fashion by unknown persons in the year that followed the granting of the otherwise inexplicable Renda contract.

But this was not all. Early this year, a small-time hoodlum, Donald Ritchie, came forward and claimed the \$5,000 UAW reward for information in the Reuther shooting, and named Perrone and Renda as the planners and paymasters in the murder attempt. Perrone fled, Renda denies all, and Ritchie slipped out of police hands with the greatest of ease.

This brings us to the next layer of a corporation-gangster collusion that appears to have as many layers as an onion: the role of the government and police. Informa-

tion in this sphere can be anything but definite, but there are a certain number of known facts. The first fact that is general knowledge is a long-standing influence by the Perrone gang in official circles.

THE ORIGINAL contact between the underworld and the overlords, between the Perrone gang and the "socially impeccable" industrialists of Detroit, was between Perrone and John A. Fry, head of the Michigan Stove Company. But Fry, in addition to being an industrial executive, was also Third Deputy Police Commissioner of his city, and held the honorary post of head of the Bureau of Public Safety (!) from July 1934 to January 1940. The Perrone contract with Fry's company began in 1934, around the time Fry became a "law enforcement" official.

Shortly after getting the contract, Perrone and his brother Gaspar were sent to prison for the illegal manufacture of whisky, an operation which they apparently were able to abandon after the greener pastures of corporation-sponsored hooliganism were opened to them. Their six-year term was soon shortened to only two years, and grand jury witnesses in the Briggs beatings were at one point questioned as to whether Mr. Fry had used his by no means inconsiderable influence in official circles to get the terms reduced, but this was denied. However, while the Perrone brothers were in prison, Santo's wife continued to "operate" the scrap contract. It does not appear that she had any more to do with moving scrap than Perrone himself did, but she continued to collect.

It was discovered during a murder investigation that Perrone had close friends on the Detroit homicide squad. Arthur Glover, who retired soon after these events from the Detroit police force, had been assigned to question Perrone in the 1945 murder of a Mrs. Lydia Thompson. It was later revealed that Detective Glover was an intimate of Perrone's, that he together with another police officer had stayed at Perrone's hunting lodge.

Other peculiar connections have appeared. A policeman, DeLamillieux, assigned to the case of the Briggs beatings, according to Mrs. Dollinger, one of the victims, "grilled me as cruelly and inhumanly as though I were the criminal." DeLamillieux was later exposed by the Kefauver Committee as having a mysterious source of income through his wife who had inexplicably come into possession of a beer garden.

FINALLY, there came the farce of the "police guard" around Donald Ritchie, whose testimony could have resulted in the punishment of the ambush-shooters of Walter and Victor Reuther. A police trial board holding hearings on the circumstances of Ritchie's "escape" was told by policemen assigned to keep Ritchie that he had many opportunities to escape from the downtown hotel rooms where he was being held. They said they had orders to safeguard the witness, not detain him! This despite the fact that Ritchie was himself under suspicion in the shootings.

Ritchie was "locked" into his room by turning the key on the inside and leaving it in his door. He fled easily by pretending to take a shower, and, with the water

running, turned the key in his "locked" door and walked out through another exit from his suite. But, according to police testimony, he could have walked out almost at any time. The policemen on trial for Ritchie's escape put the very pertinent question to the Senior Inspector in charge of Ritchie: "Wouldn't you have felt safer putting Ritchie under bond and lodging him in jail?" But Police Commissioner Donald S. Leonard intervened and the Inspector was not required to answer.

An even more interesting fact was established in the Kefauver Committee hearings with respect to the FBI. It seems that the late George E. Herbert, general superintendent of Briggs salvage in 1945, fought the Renda deal and investigated the suspicious circumstances surrounding it. For his pains, he, together with his secretary, were fired on Jan. 7, 1946, shortly after he reported his suspicions to the FBI.

In other words, the FBI in 1946 possessed the essential clue which, if followed up, could have led to the solution of the Briggs beatings and the prevention of the Reuther shootings! But the FBI, which has become so notoriously efficient in discovering the most secret thoughts in the inner recesses of the minds of American citizens, and in prosecuting thought-control investigations and cases, was apparently unable to do anything about the Perrone gang after the case was handed to it on a silver platter. Nor could it protect Mr. Herbert when he was fired from his job for appealing to government authorities.

Finally, in 1946 a one-man grand jury had the entire situation unfolded before it by more than a score of witnesses in tens of thousands of words of testimony. Action based on the findings of this grand jury could have broken up the Perrone gang and prevented the

Reuther shootings. Yet nothing was done and the grand jury testimony remained secret until five years later, when it was aired before the Kefauver Committee. By that time, Reuther and his brother had been shot and nearly killed. To this day, the culprits remain unpunished, and the police are entangled in a hopeless skein of technicalities of the kind which it seems to be able to brush off very quickly when unionists or radicals are in the dock instead of anti-labor thugs and their corporation employers.

IN THE Twenties and Thirties, Henry Ford collected around himself a cluster of Detroit hooligans and gangsters to do his unsavory work for him. He rewarded them with dealerships, jobs and concessions of various kinds. One of the favorites was the inner-plant fruit concession, a juicy and lucrative plum for which the gangsters competed feverishly.

In the case of Michigan Stove and Briggs, the plum was in the form of fancy no-work high-profit "scrap contracts." At Ford today it takes the form of spying jobs paid for by company and FBI in a sort of informal partnership. In all of these cases, though the forms vary, the principle is the same. Unsavory characters hired by companies to intimidate unions, spy on workers and keep profits high, while government officials blink, blindfold themselves, or even become directly implicated and play the "communist" angle when asked for an explanation. Only in a few cases has the network been exposed to public view. Who can say how many other companies are involved, what different forms the rackets take, and which unsolved anti-union attacks, glibly attributed by newsmen to "inner-union rivalries," have resulted?

Guilty Books

THE JURY VERDICT in the trial of the six Michigan Communist Party leaders here clearly illustrates the effect of the present social and political climate upon the court system. It was not just the verdict of "Guilty," but the way that verdict was arrived at.

In spite of the four-month length of the trial, the jury brought in a guilty verdict in the record time of six hours and 23 minutes. And the brutal fact is that books were convicted, and people are being punished for what books say. Boyd Simmons, writing in the *Detroit News*, said: "Indications from Federal Court jury room today were that jurors are inquiring seriously into the 44 communist books introduced by the government in the Michigan communist conspiracy trial. Bailiffs reported that the books showed they had not been ignored, but had been read to a considerable extent in the first few hours of the jury's deliberations." All this in six hours and 23 minutes!

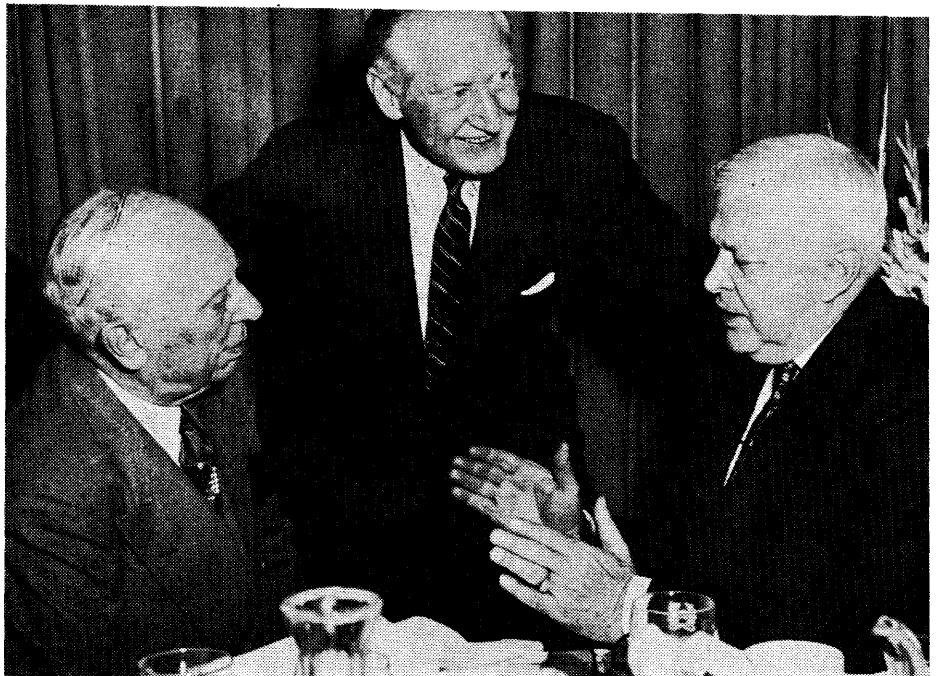
A juror, Mrs. Isabelle Feinstein, was quoted as saying: "The most convincing evidence, I thought, were the books on communism which the government attorneys submitted in evidence. When you see it written before you in black and white it is much easier to reach a de-

cision." Another jury member, Mrs. Martha L. Johnson, said: "One man held out first, for a little while, but we finally convinced him by referring to the books and other evidence the judge let us take into the jury room."

The jury was no doubt spurred on to reach its hasty verdict, under which the six were sentenced to four to five years in jail and fined \$10,000 each, by the weight of the forces of intimidation surrounding it; the horde of police, FBI agents and informers in and about the courtroom. The papers described the jurors as follows: "They represent fairly a cross-section of those liable to jury duty in Federal Court here—property owners who live in the southern division of the court's Eastern District of Michigan." It is not hard to imagine what would happen to the members of such a jury if they voted "Not Guilty." Some are pensioners, others work for companies like the Ford Motor Company, which was itself involved in the prosecution. A jury in a case of this kind must be prepared to face terrible pressures, social ostracism, as well as possible loss of job and other economic sanctions. No wonder the press reported that the jury was "tense," and no wonder its verdict was practically determined in advance.

As an aftermath, a federal grand jury declined to take any action against a government witness who lied under oath during the Smith Act trial of the six.

General Motors' billion dollar spending plan—will it mean more jobs for auto workers, or will it mean fewer?



GM BOSSES AND EX-BOSS: Alfred P. Sloan, Chairman of the Board of General Motors, Harlow H. Curtice, GM president, and U. S. Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson, formerly GM head, shown at Waldorf-Astoria banquet where Curtice announced billion dollar GM spending program. Curtice clearly has inside track on war contracts.

by Frank Anders

THE PRESS dealt indulgently with Charley Wilson when he said "What's good for General Motors is good for the country." And when Wilson's successor, Harlow Curtice, announced that General Motors would spend \$1 billion for plant and equipment in the next two years, the papers universally proclaimed that General Motors would set the pace that would rout the gathering forces of recession. General Motors and the U. S. economy, it seemed, were cast on opposite sides of the same coin.

After all, it was argued, why would General Motors be willing to invest a billion dollars from its own pocket unless it was sure that its investment would be justified by an expanding market? For nearly all economists, investment for expansion is the wheel that moves the economic clock.

What made the announcement startling was that it was set in the backdrop of a 10 percent decline in production from 1953 highs for all of U. S. industry. Even more unusual is the fact that General Motors is betting its wad in the light of a widely-forecast 10 percent drop in automobile production from 6,150,000 units in 1953 to 5,500,000 in 1954. Did General Motors decide that the pessimists had overstated the case for auto, which would run counter to the national trend? A widely-quoted quip that went the rounds in Detroit had it that "there'll be 6 million cars produced in 1954, even if General Motors has to produce every last one of them."

It's Good for GM—But Is It Good for the Country?

General Motors' high-spending program followed in the wake of reports that General Motors and Ford were in an all-out battle for supremacy and "devil take the hindmost." "Ford," it was said, "will take the leadership from General Motors even if Ford goes broke in the attempt." Chrysler, number three in the industry, decided that it would need an outside loan of \$250,000,000 from the Prudential Life Insurance Company if it were to remain alive in this bitter struggle. Nobody worried about the independents, who would be drowned in this economic whirlpool. Even mergers of all the hard-pressed independents would probably not suffice to see them through such rough seas.

BUT THE "battle for survival" is only part of the whole story—and a small part of it at that. General Motors' president, Harlow Curtice, said that the goal of his corporation was 48 percent of the auto market in

1954. In 1953, the company's share was 46 percent. Multiply 48 percent by anticipated production of 5,500,000 autos in 1954 (Harlow Curtice himself said he expects 5,300,000) and you get a General Motors' output of 2,640,000 cars. For 1953, 46 percent of 6,150,000 units produced gives GM production as 2,829,000 units. Thus the paradox: GM will be spending its billion dollars to expand output about 20 percent at a time when it expects to produce 7 percent fewer cars.

The answer to this seemingly senseless paradox—a billion dollar expenditure in the face of a declining market—was indicated in the *Wall Street Journal*: "A General Motors representative hints that a good-sized share of its billion dollar expansion outlay for 1954 and 1955 will go for more automatic equipment." Chrysler, in arranging its big Prudential loan, was even more explicit: It would help, according to L. L. Colbert, Chrysler

president, to finance "continuing expenditures for expanding and modernizing facilities and improving productivity, including further automation, and to provide additional working capital."

Another bit of evidence: Writing in the N. Y. *World Telegram* on March 3, Ralph Hendershot, financial editor, said:

[Chrysler] plans to use part of the money it has just borrowed to further modernize plants and to buy labor-saving machinery. Its aim is to reduce physical labor requirements in production, improve accuracy, lessen cost and increase productivity.

Here we have the tipoff that the big investments, far from signifying confidence in an *expanding* market,

are designed to reduce labor forces and cut costs in a *declining* market.

IN REALITY, nobody expects that last year's abnormal production schedules by Ford and General Motors will be maintained. Dealer inventories of cars, already swollen to 640,000 units, the highest level in history, are threatening to go even higher, because

Jobless Crisis Call for Union Action

DETROIT

WITH MORE THAN 220,000 unemployed in Michigan by the beginning of March, the situation is becoming extremely grave. And the mass of union men and women, more and more aroused, are looking for a way to make their voices heard.

The huge Dodge mass meeting, which jammed the union auditorium with more than 3,000 persons on Feb. 28, illustrates both the mood of the ranks and the line of the union officialdom.

Dodge is one of the worst hit of all the auto plants by the mass layoffs. Fully 20,000 workers out of a total of 32,000 in the Dodge main plant of Chrysler Corp. are out of work, or 63 percent of the employees! *There are workers with as much as 37 years seniority in Dodge now walking the streets, men who started working for the company in 1917.*

In this situation, union attendance has jumped sharply. In a local which has sometimes had difficulty in getting a quorum to meetings, as many as 1,000 now attend. At one such meeting about two months ago, Pat Quinn, chairman of the local's unemployment committee, spurred on by vigorous audience reaction, took the tack that union lobbying in Lansing is not making a dent, and recalled that the only way the unemployed got anything during the Great Depression was by militant mass action. He called for a big demonstration in front of the Dodge plant to draw attention to our plight. This received a tremendous ovation and was unanimously adopted by our meeting.

The time for the demonstration came and went, with nothing being done. Finally, at one union gathering, an unemployed worker asked what had happened to the plan. Quinn replied that regional director Norman Matthews had told him that such a demonstration would be a demoralizing flop. He proposed an indoor mass rally and, in spite of the pessimistic view of the officials, 3,000 workers came out, although the only advance publicity for the rally was an announcement in *Dodge Main News*, and despite cold and rainy weather.

The meeting itself was virtually turned into a Democratic Party rally, with the main burden of most of the speeches, some of them by Democratic politicians, being a tirade against Republicans. While there is no doubt that pressure must be directed against incumbent office-



holders, whether Republicans or Democrats, neither party will become alarmed by political rallies in support of the opposing party; only an independent and militant demonstration of strength can get results.

FAR WORSE than this is the proclivity of many union officials to let their alliance with the Democrats dictate the nature of their actions.

In Flint, Chevrolet Local 659's paper, *Searchlight*, printed a column by local president Robert Murphy on March 4 in which he said:

In the last issue of Searchlight, we told you of a caravan being sponsored by this Local Union and the Greater Flint Industrial Union Council, to go to Lansing to bring pressure upon the legislators for passage of a better unemployment bill and a Fair Employment Practices bill. . . . Upon talking to Brother Jimmy Collins, who is one of our State Representatives, and after he had conferred with Governor Williams, they were of the opinion that we should hold an unemployment rally . . . in the IMA auditorium. . . .

In other words, the union officers had scheduled a militant action and had already publicized it, but when top Democrats told them to call it off, they did so.

The International officers of the UAW are busy with postcard campaigns, newspaper ads, and similar activities, which, while helpful, cannot in themselves get results for the jobless.

Meanwhile, 20,000 unemployed here at Dodge, and large numbers of unemployed in almost every auto center, finding it impossible to get jobs, are looking for action.

UNEMPLOYED DODGE WORKER

cars are being produced faster than they are being sold. Ford, GM and Chrysler are taking the attitude that it would not be surprising if as many as 25 percent of the country's dealers go out of business in 1954. And Ford and GM, in their recent complaints about dealers who are "bootlegging" to used car dealers the cars dumped on them by manufacturers, tacitly admitted that dealers' stocks are too high. In this situation, how can anyone think that the new investments are made in expectation of a larger market?

Using present equipment, the cut-backs must increase unit costs. Auto manufacturers still bear the same fixed costs: rent, writeoff of machines and equipment, maintenance and repair charges, despite the use of fewer workers to produce a reduced output. It is precisely at this stage that the GM investment begins to make sense. Introduce more efficient machines, step up the trend towards automation, use less production and maintenance labor, cut unit costs so that profitable operations can be maintained at a lower level of capacity. What "automation" means to the auto industry was stated by *U. S. News and World Report* in the following terms for a Ford engine plant in Cleveland:

Before 'automation' in an engine plant, it used to take 29 machines and 39 men to drill holes in crankshafts. After 'automation,' in the modern plant, with new equipment, it now takes 3 machines and 9 men to do the same job.

GM's preeminent position in the automobile industry permits that company to do some expanding through the building of additional facilities, while at the same time production costs are cut through the substitution of more efficient equipment. Hence, the announcement by T. H. Keating, general manager of Chevrolet, in the *Detroit News* for Jan. 27, 1954, that Chevrolet's current expansion program will add 22 percent to its nationwide capacity. That expansion was programmed long before the announcement of the billion dollar investment policy.

Far more to the point that GM isn't investing solely on "faith in the American economy," are recent intimations that GM holds all of the newly let Government contracts for tank production. An Associated Press dispatch for March 11 stated:

The Government "soon will be at the mercy of General Motors" on any new contracts for Army tanks, Senator Estes Kefauver . . . said today.

He made the prediction in a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing as that group opened a study of the award of a \$204,000,000 contract to General Motors' Fisher Body division as the only builder of Army medium tanks. . . . Previously, four plants shared the tank work.

DESPITE ex-GM president Wilson's admonition to American industry that it better start concentrating on peace-time production since defense

orders are due to fall off, GM had nearly \$2 billion of defense sales in 1953, up a half-billion over 1952. If anything, the company is counting on more sales of war goods to the Defense Dept. in 1954 than in 1953, at a time when other companies, like Chrysler, have been just about frozen out of the war production market. GM has a fat cushion to fall back on when auto sales decline.

Under circumstances prevailing at the end of World War II, a program such as GM's would have been spelled out in terms of additional equipment and new factories in the belief that the market was growing. But that's not the case today. GM's investment means that growing unemployment will be the consequence of an increased output per man hour for the same, or for a declining, market. This was indirectly admitted by Curtice of GM when he said, according to the *Detroit News* of January 21:

Whether there will be a corresponding increase of 20 percent in employment over the expansion period will depend on the technological progress made by the corporation.

Translated into simple language, this means that GM expects to take advantage of increasing productivity by cutting down on employment. General Motors, like all business, recognizes that profits can be maintained and increased only at the expense of labor time, the decisive variable in mass production.

Anti-Speedup Strikes

“ONE MAN Balks, 8200 Are Idled,” said headlines in the March 10 *Detroit papers*. According to these accounts, one worker was fired from the Chrysler-Mack Ave. plant for objecting to a new method of installing windshield molding. The strike that followed resulted in the shutdown of much of the huge plant.

But there is more behind this than was revealed by these accounts. At bottom is Chrysler's attempt to "General Motorize" their plants. The corporation hopes the time is now ripe to undermine working conditions and weaken the militancy of UAW-CIO Local 212 (the Chrysler-Briggs local). Chief weapon in this anti-union drive is the back-breaking speedup. Resistance to bull-whip company methods is answered by on-the-spot firings. Simultaneously, intimidation attempts are rained

down on stewards, chief stewards and committeemen.

The direct effect of the firing of the windshield installer was a walkout of installers in the trim shop. The resulting shutdown forced the company to reinstate the fired worker. Another set of firings in the same plant led to a shutdown affecting 1,300 workers. In the body division's garage, 69 workers walked out in answer to a company provocation: the firing of a union committee chairman and a utility worker.

Pressed by the company's arrogance, union officers met in emergency executive board session. Leaflets were issued explaining the reasons for the walkout, and calling for a general membership meeting. At this writing it is unclear whether union officers will take the lead to halt the speedup. But it is clear that the company is determined upon a showdown, and future plant conditions depend on the militancy with which the union fights back.

BRIGGS WORKER

Puerto Rico Is Not Free

by Jules Geller

WHEN LOLITA LEBRUN cried out from the balcony of the House of Representatives "Puerto Rico is not free!" she did not lie. The liars are those who tried to explain the sudden act of violence by young Nationalists as merely the product of a handful of "lunatics." Neither the authorities in Washington nor their puppets in Puerto Rico really believe this. That is why they have struck so hard and so fast to round up and imprison Puerto Rican Nationalists both on the island and on the mainland, and to try to prevent the rise of an organized independence struggle.

There is a marked difference between the reaction to the attack on Congress, and the 1950 attempt to assassinate Truman on the steps of Blair House. In the latter case there were no comparable dramatic wholesale arrests, nor the intense propaganda campaign linking Nationalists with communists. In the intervening two years, Washington has become alert to the spread of anti-imperialist forces in the American hemisphere.

For home consumption, and to impress an already critical world opinion, the U. S. press completely falsifies the facts about Puerto Rican relations to the "mother" country. "Puerto Ricans are 90 percent self-governing, and all but a fanatic handful know that they can have the other 10 percent whenever they ask for it," says *Time* magazine (March 15, 1954). But the facts are to the contrary. The struggle for full and unconditional independence of Puerto Rico from foreign domination has not ceased since the time of the Spanish conquest, and has by no means lessened during the 56 years the island has been controlled by United States overlords.

THE EXISTENCE of a terrorist sect, which mistakenly attempts to substitute its own heroic acts for the organization and political action of the masses, does not prove that a genuine independence movement does not exist. Nor by any stretch of the imagination does it prove that Lolita Lebrun and her aides, or Pedro Albizu Campos, leader of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, who was recently clapped into prison, were produced by a society fast approaching heaven.

If Campos is a terrorist, and his movement has been compared in the scare articles in the newspapers to the terrorists under the Russian Czar, then it should be understood that it is precisely social misery and oppression, such as that of Czarism, that produces such movements, usually as preludes to far more widespread and effective action of great masses.

There are about 400,000 Puerto Ricans in the United States, 300,000 of whom live in New York City, and

Despite repeated demands for a vote on independence, Puerto Rico has never been allowed by U. S. to hold such a vote. Rise in unemployment, slum horrors, poverty and degradation lead to a revival of Puerto Rican independence movement.



ANTI-IMPERIALISM: Picketing Government House in San Juan, Puerto Rican law students in 1945 protested Rexford Tugwell's policy of importing U. S. jobseekers to fill key administration posts on island.

growing concentrations in Chicago and Los Angeles. Driven from their island by poverty and unemployment, and now experiencing at first hand the "benefits" of race prejudice and sweatshop conditions, and the mainland counterparts of their own island slums, these Puerto Rican migrants are viewed by Washington as potential sympathizers and partisans of the coming anti-imperialist struggle of their homeland.

The powers-that-be have good reason to be fearful. Despite the relative quiet that has reigned in Puerto Rico during the past few years, present conditions are building toward a growth and general revival of independence sentiments and unrest. In 1953, 18 percent of the Puerto Rican labor force was unemployed as against 2½ percent in the U. S. During the past year, with the general recession under way, unemployment is on the increase throughout the island, and especially in the main cities. While previously, the growing surplus labor force could be siphoned off by New York's booming garment industry and other trades, the fall in the U. S. economy will bottle up the unemployed and underpaid to their little island, which has a population of 650 people to the square mile. This hemmed-in population—if the U. S. were as densely populated it would contain the entire population of the world—is growing rapidly.

During the past ten-year period, the artificially stimulated military prosperity in the United States has spilled over a little to overcrowded Puerto Rico. Since the end of World War II, according to the Puerto Rican Department of Labor, 225 new industries have been built and around 30,000 jobs created. But while new industries

have added 30,000 jobs in the last decade, 18,000 new workers join the labor force each year, or 180,000 in a decade! And these 18,000 do not include those from 14 to 17 years old, the overwhelming majority of whom are no longer in school and must seek work in the factories or the sugar plantations. The problem of unemployment in Puerto Rico is permanent.

To make things still worse, there is now a marked trend of laid-off workers in New York moving back to the island.

A Puerto Rican government pamphlet published in 1953, the purpose of which was to paint the glories of present commonwealth status, had to admit that there is "persistent unemployment . . . an inadequately-fed population . . . poor living conditions," in Puerto Rico.

IN THE ECONOMIC SENSE, Puerto Ricans are less than second-class citizens of the United States. The average per capita income is \$400, less than half the wage of a U. S. Army private. (Despite this, there is widespread draft evasion on the island; Puerto Rican youth protest the draft despite the monetary gain it offers.) This annual income per person in Puerto Rico is one-fourth of the average in the United States. By minimum Puerto Rican government standards, over half the income of each individual must be spent on food to barely keep body and soul together.

Even so, this low-wage status represents a great increase during the past 14 years. Prior to the war boom the per capita income was about \$135. It must be kept in mind that these figures are not computed for wage workers alone, but the average includes the very rich landowners and native capitalists.

Puerto Rico must import most of its food; and this food is purchased from the United States producers at mainland prices. Thus, the consumer on the island is confronted with mainland prices when purchasing the necessities of his life.

For Puerto Rico is a typical colonial country in its economic relations with its imperialist master. It has a perpetual trade deficit with the United States. For the past ten years the island has imported fully a third more than it exported to the United States; and trade with the United States represents over 90 percent of all Puerto Rican foreign commerce.

The biggest single field of employment on the island is still the sugar plantation system, which employs 141,000 workers. But this figure holds only for the peak sugar season in April. In the off-seasons, over 100,000 sugar workers grub for a living on little patches of land or seek work in San Juan. Every year, 16,000 14-year-olds join the other tens of thousands of job seekers.

The U. S.-sponsored and controlled plantation economy, which ripped the individual farmers from their land and implanted the characteristic imperialist one-crop system on this colony, is strictly dominated and regulated by the U. S. government and wealthy operators. For the most part, Puerto Rico cannot process its own sugar, but must export the raw product to American refineries. The extent of the crop and the price are set by the United States authorities. U. S. control prevents Puerto Ricans



HAPPENS ALMOST EVERY YEAR: Puerto Rican village slum during flood of the type that takes place nearly every year, killing many.

from seeking a market elsewhere, but even if they were allowed to sell to other nations, the antiquated system of the plantations is such that more highly mechanized sugar production elsewhere destroys the chance of selling at a competitive price.

The fact is that the Big Brother to the North has a virtual monopoly of the trade of Puerto Rico—one of the "benefits" of commonwealth status. The commonwealth government cannot negotiate and conclude trade agreements with other nations without the consent of the U. S. government.

THE 70,000 needle-trades workers of Puerto Rico get from \$20 to \$25 a week for their labors. It is not hard to understand why tens of thousands of these workers migrated to the New York garment trade center, where they could raise their income. But now their situation is becoming doubly aggravated. With the island's labor reserve rapidly increasing, with economic conditions on the mainland cutting off an avenue of escape, it is unlikely either that their wages can be increased, or unemployment reduced, in the foreseeable future. The prospect for the industrial workers of San Juan, Puerto Rico's major city, is continued starvation wages and lay-offs, and no place to go.

The Puerto Rico government itself states that about a half-million of its people live in slums. "To this," says the Department of Labor, "can be added an annual increase of about 4,000 families." The notorious El Fanguito, slum of San Juan, still exists. Thus far the addition to the slum population has far outstripped the building of new housing.

As part of the health program of the Munoz regime, the government has succeeded in practically wiping out smallpox and malaria in Puerto Rico. But this commendable progress has increased the life expectancy, decreased the death rate, and aggravated the growing problem of surplus labor.

The government spends one-third of its annual income on education, and as a result illiteracy has been substantially reduced. Still, 23 percent of the people cannot read or write. After a considerable trade union struggle,

universal compulsory education was introduced, but today 30 percent of all Puerto Rican children do not go to school. They are just too poor. And the government's per capita expenditure on education is much less than in the miserable state of Mississippi, lowest in the United States.

No matter how they try, the apologists for American rule over Puerto Rico cannot wipe out these facts, above all in the consciousness of the Puerto Rican people themselves. Rosy pictures painted in American magazines are feeble arguments against the facts of life. The crumbs picked up at the imperialist table have not substantially changed the poverty, misery and degradation of a subject nation.

WHAT ARE THE political facts about Puerto Rico?

First, they have no genuine independence. Nothing that is done by the Puerto Rican Congress or by the Governor, Munoz, can become binding and legal until it is first given the OK by the United States Congress, which may abrogate any law passed by the island legislature. Eisenhower can veto any law passed by Puerto Rico's elected Congress with a scratch of his pen—and no two-thirds vote can make it law.

When the newly elected Puerto Rican Congress wrote its first constitution in 1952, it was torn up and rewritten by the U. S. Congress, and crammed down their throats. Puerto Rico has a "representative" in our Congress, but although elected by his people, he cannot vote. Nor can any Puerto Rican vote for officers of the Washington government which makes the laws ruling their lives.

Contrary to U. S. press claims, the Puerto Rican people have never voted against independence. The present majority in the Puerto Rican Congress, the Popular Party of which Governor Munoz is the head, ran for office in 1952 on a program of "eventual" independence, and not, as the propagandists have attempted to indicate, on a flat program for status as a subject nation of the United States.

The Independence Party, which won almost a quarter of the votes in 1952, stands unequivocally for independence. Its big distinction from the Nationalist Party is that it is for peaceful means to achieve independence. To what extent the Nationalist Party has popular support is not

CHICAGO

CHICAGO had the largest civil liberties meeting in years on February 28, at the KAM Temple, in response to a call by the Chicago Committee for Academic and Professional Freedom. More than 800 attended the protest meeting-demonstration entitled "McCarthyism 1954."

Each of the speakers was a warrior in the fight against the witch-hunt: I. F. Stone; Harvey O'Connor, who now faces contempt charges for refusing to answer McCarthy's questions on the ground that his constitutional right to free thought and free speech were being violated; Earl B. Dickerson, National Lawyers Guild official, who has been contesting the Attorney-General's arbitrary placing of the Guild on the "subversive" list. The dominant note of the meeting was the defense of the right of the individual to think as he pleases and speak his mind.

The audience was serious and attentive. This can be partially

known to us. But that it exists, and that its membership runs to several thousand, is generally known.

Even today, the subservient Governor Munoz speaks of a long range "aim" for independence, thus indirectly giving evidence of popular sentiment. The vote which the press has falsely called a popular rejection of independence—the vote for or against commonwealth status held in 1952—was not a defeat of a proposal for independence. It was a vote on the question: commonwealth, or continuation of Puerto Rico's status as a possession without the meager rights granted under the commonwealth. Repeated demands by the Independence Party for a plebiscite on complete independence have been consistently refused.

Puerto Ricans not only never voted against independence; they were never given the opportunity to vote on the matter.

FROM ALL these facts, and many more, it is not difficult to find a reason for a strong nationalist sentiment among the Puerto Ricans, who do not view U. S. domination as the way to a better life.

The reform government of Munoz has taken a few faltering steps toward the lifting of the economic and social level of the population. It is probably true that it did as much along these lines as possible under conditions of U. S. control, and as a small and impoverished country within the orbit of the imperialist economy.

But the industrialization program, the housing projects, the educational campaign, meager and insufficient as they have been, are now coming to an end. The United States industrialists will not readily invest in Puerto Rican manufactures when their market is shrinking and forcing layoffs here. What is in store for Puerto Ricans is a fall in their already low standard of living as a result of the sickness of capitalism in the United States.

Fearful of a rise in independence sentiment, the Munoz regime, prodded by the Eisenhower administration, is using the terroristic act of the Nationalists to cover up a campaign of suppression of all anti-imperialist organizations. Munoz, who only recently freed Nationalist prisoners, is now clapping them behind bars in wholesale lots.

This will not prevent the rebirth of a militant movement for the independence of Puerto Rico.

judged by an incident which occurred at the very end of the meeting, which ran until 11:15 P.M. Ernest Mazey, Secretary-Treasurer of the Citizens' Committee Against the Trucks Law (Michigan), was in Chicago and attended the meeting. Although he was not a scheduled speaker, the chairman, Mr. Rittman, asked him to report on the recent partial victory in the fight for civil liberties won by his committee. The hour was late, and the audience, not expecting another speaker, had already donned coats and was on the way out. Yet, with scarcely an exception, they stopped and listened to the heartening account.

The Chicago labor movement did not participate in this meeting. There were no trade union speakers. No one from the labor movement sat on the platform, although there were some union officials in the audience.

The daily press, which reports numerous smaller gatherings of far less consequence, carried no coverage of this meeting.

I. B.



BOOK REVIEW

A Monument To Trotsky

The Prophet Armed. Trotsky: 1879-1921, by Isaac Deutscher. Oxford University Press, New York, 1954, \$6.

THE WRITING of political biography usually suffers from too much partisanship or too much criticism. It is the author's viewpoint, rather than the man, that tends to emerge from the accolade or denunciation. This is particularly true of the biographies of contemporary political figures, although the fiercely controversial works about Napoleon, Cromwell, Jefferson show that time is no great healer in this sphere. There is revealed in this conspicuous display of subjectivity the fact that political biography is a weapon in the social struggle from which the writer cannot remain aloof.

The Marxist alone, by identifying himself with the historically progressive class, is in a position to approximate objective truth. Yet even for a Marxist, the difficulties are further enhanced when it comes to biographical writing. Classes are fragmented into political factions, the issues and the people are not always easily projected from the vantage point of one era into another, and the author's personal attitudes, his intimate experience with life and politics tends to color his judgment.

The life of Leon Trotsky is a remarkable illustration of this point. Its transparent simplicity, that is its undeviating theme of direct association with the Russian working class and Russian revolution, becomes a barrier rather than an aid to objective treatment. The blinding class prejudice against the Soviet revolution is turned against its leading architect as well. On the other side, the passions of political factionalism, provoked by Stalin's ruthless march to power after Lenin's death, distort the vision of many of those who have otherwise succeeded in grasping the class truth of history. For the first group, Trotsky's life is a challenge to vested material interests. For the second, it is a challenge of entrenched political positions.

ISAC DEUTSCHER restores Trotsky's role in history to the extent that a book alone can accomplish such a work. In the excellence of its scholarship, insight, understanding, and above all, objectivity, "The Prophet Armed," the first of two volumes on Trotsky, is a piece of rare historical writing. Deutscher approaches Trotsky as an admirer and a critic. He builds a monument to an Olympian figure, to a genius in thought and in action. At the same time, he places Trotsky under a critical microscope in order to examine him as a *historical fact*, as the leader whose

life becomes part of the fabric of human events. Trotsky emerges as neither God nor devil. *Ecce homo*. Made great by his virtues, made human by his faults.

Here was one of the most versatile, gifted men of the contemporary world, perhaps of all times. This was the man who stood at the helm of the two social upheavals that collapsed the edifice of Czarism, changing the course of Russian and world history. From the first, he gained the political experience, permitting him to delineate the second as a draftsman, tracing in advance with an uncanny accuracy its main lines of development. This was the man who could change roles from "the Prince of Pamphleteers" as George Bernard Shaw called him, to the commander of a victorious revolutionary army. He could turn from literary criticism and political journalism to international diplomacy or the reorganization of the Russian railroads.

Deutscher brings to light, in summary form, Trotsky's literary criticism written during his first Siberian exile, and up to now available only in the Russian original. He wrote on Nietzsche, Zola, Ibsen, Maupassant, Gogol, Ruskin, D'Annunzio and many others. "The twenty-one year old writer insisted that revolutionary socialism was the consummation, not the repudiation, of great cultural traditions—it repudiated merely the conservative and conventional conception of tradition. He was not afraid of finding that socialist and non-socialist views might overlap or coincide and of admitting that there was a hard core, or a grain, of truth in any conception which as a whole he rejected."

Deutscher is somewhat chary in his praise of these writings, calling Trotsky's style "over-elaborate," "over-rhetorical," "still adolescent," although he concedes his "judgment" to be "on the whole, mature." But reading Trotsky as a war correspondent some 15 years later, Deutscher is unrestrained in encomium, comparing Trotsky with Remarque, Zweig, Barbusse.

"If," he says, "the fate of Trotsky's writings . . . and the extent to which they are read or ignored had not been so inseparably bound up with his political fortunes and with the sympathies and antipathies that his mere name evokes, he would have had his niche in literature on the strength of these writings alone."

Later in the book, Deutscher is so impressed with Trotsky's military writings during the civil war that he diverges from his tightly-written narrative to summarize them rapidly and readably in an eight-page note. Trotsky's "military correspondence" (during World War I), says Deutscher, "together with his writings of the years of the civil war, should have earned him a place in the history of military thought."

THERE ARE other chapters from Trotsky's life, such as episodes from his youth, his intellectual partnership with Parvus, "the drama of Brest Litovsk," which contain new material even for those familiar with Trotskyist literature. At any rate they are so lucidly written as to be a fresh

experience for all. We must leave this to the reader, however, and rush on to the central theme around which Deutscher builds his biography of the "Prophet Armed," which closes in 1921 when although Trotsky was at the pinnacle of power "the dictator was already waiting in the wings."

The theme is the same one that runs like a red thread through all of Trotsky's works: the fate of the revolution that triumphs in the most backward country of the West, with the smallest working class and the most unripe of all for the building of a socialist society, whose revolutionary energy is exhausted without advanced Europe being spurred to follow the Russian example. In Deutscher's hand, the theme assumes the form of a Greek tragedy relentlessly overtaking Trotsky and Bolshevism itself.

The 14-year struggle between Bolshevism and Menshevism that began in 1903 in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, in its intense and often obscure polemics, is presented with the fatal intonations of the classic chorus. Trotsky, wavering between the factions, drawn to the Bolsheviks by his class instincts, but closer to the Mensheviks because of his premonitions, is the clearest, most prophetic voice in the chorus. In the struggle between Lenin and Martov over a highly centralized or loosely-knit organization, the shape and outcome of the future Russian Revolution was involved.

Trotsky came out into the emigration in 1902, a supporter of a centralized organization. This was in fact a position common to most Russian Marxists at the time.

Under conditions of absolutism, facing constant repression, an underground opposition could function in no other way. But soon he drew back and became the most subjective and bitterest of Lenin's critics. Why? Because of his prophetic premonition in 1904 that centralism could become a straitjacket for the Russian working class. It was one thing for Germany, and all the Russian Marxists approved of the centralism of the German social democracy. But the Russian working class was much smaller, it was only a stone's throw away from its uncultured peasant background. The party could easily slip into substituting itself for the class, becoming like the Jacobins of the French Revolution, with Lenin the Russian Robespierre.

THERE WAS, however, no other way to build the working class party. The Mensheviks tried, and found themselves in the embrace of an alliance with the frightened liberal capitalists, compromising their socialist principles. For Trotsky the problem was solved—in theory—after the 1905 Revolution, when he, first of all the Russian socialists, saw that no other class but the proletariat could lead the revolution in this overwhelmingly peasant country. Its sole justification and hope lay in the "permanence" of the revolution that would carry it into Germany, France, England. Meanwhile his theory alienated him further from the Mensheviks, and his fears

from the Bolsheviks, so that he entered the tumultuous Russian scene in May 1917, a man without a party.

History, however, cast a peculiar verdict on Bolshevism, justifying and rejecting Trotsky's ambivalent position of the years before. Deutscher correctly asserts that without Lenin's party there would have been no Bolshevik revolution. Yet the revolution was not led by the "committeemen" who felt themselves strangers in the stormy surge of mass upheaval. Among the most significant figures were those who with Trotsky had often fought Lenin's faction before 1917. One of the most peculiar twists of history is that it should have been Trotsky who personally directed and master-minded the October insurrection for the *Bolshevik Party*. With his closest co-workers, Zinoviev and Kamenev, opponents of the insurrection, Lenin, who was forced to remain in hiding, had to rely solely on the erstwhile critic of Bolshevism, Trotsky, to carry through the Bolshevik revolution.

But what would happen if there was no German revolution? Again and again from 1905 onward Trotsky raises the question only to brush it aside; it was the least likely of all variants, virtually impossible. At Brest-Litovsk he literally plays with the fate of the Soviet regime in order to give the German revolution time to develop. But the haunting "impossibility" became the stark reality. The German revolution had begun only to come to an abortive end. Within a few years the young Soviet republic is thrown back on itself. The working class, so heroic in action, is now exhausted, famished, bleeding from years of civil war and retires into the shadows of a society that "seemed to relapse into a coma." The danger of "substitutism" is no longer a polemical epithet. It is the fate of Bolshevism, not only of Trotsky. It is to Deutscher's credit that he does not here indulge in idle speculations, in "democratic" day dreams. Had the Bolsheviks acted differently they would have been quickly "substituted" by raging counter-revolution, by White terror, chaos, imperialist dismemberment.

"... would [Lenin and Trotsky] have acted with the same determination [in seizing power] if they had taken a soberer view of the international revolution and foreseen that in the course of decades their example would not be imitated in any other country?" This Deutscher correctly says is a "speculative question" that "cannot be answered." He adds: "The fact was that the whole dynamic of Russian history was impelling them, their party, and their country toward this revolution, and that they needed a world-shaking hope to accomplish the world-shaking deed. History produced the great illusion and planted and cultivated it in the brains of the most soberly realistic leaders when she needed the motive power of illusion to further her own work."

The idea that the Bolshevik "world-shaking hope" was an "illusion" is a dubious one and needs further discussion. Suffice it to say here that the real illusion was that of the right-wing German social

democrats who betrayed the revolution of 1919 in order to maintain "democracy" and reform. It was that illusion which not only created the conditions for Hitler, but also for the degeneration of the Soviet regime.

THE GREATEST historic irony is that it should have been Trotsky himself who for a short period became the chief "substituter." It is this that Deutscher calls his "defeat in victory." The economic life of the country had ground down to a virtual standstill, the peasants were disaffected and the cities were starving to death. With the characteristic energy and vision that had marked his leadership in the civil war, Trotsky turned to the problem of economic revival.

This is probably one of the most paradoxical chapters in Trotsky's life—more because of how he justified his actions than his actions themselves. The program of mobilization of labor he devised was not accepted voluntarily by the people; it had to be imposed from the top. Facing opposition from the workers and in the party itself, Trotsky invoked the "historical birth-right" of the party to act in the general interest regardless of the immediate reaction of the masses—in short, the very "substitutism" against which Trotsky had spent a lifetime fighting. Now by a strange coincidence, he found himself the chief "Jacobin," a minority on the Bolshevik Central Committee and opposed even by his closest friends. What separated Trotsky from Lenin in this matter was not the strategy. They had been united in implementing the rigorous regime of "war communism," as they were later in turning to the "New Economic Policy." It was rather the logic of the policy which Trotsky was carrying to its ultimate. And Lenin was as frightened of this "ultimate"—which could place the party in an uncontrollable dictatorial position over the masses—as had been his factional opponents many years before when the question was merely one of theory.

The fact that years later the Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship, which had substituted itself not only for the class but also for the party, used some of Trotsky's arguments anonymously is a historic quirk. The bureaucracy could not use Trotsky as an authority because, between the era of war communism and the final victory of the bureaucratic regime, Trotsky had been destroyed politically—not because he wanted greater centralism and more pyramiding of power, but for just the opposite reason.

THE STRESS that Deutscher places on the curious reversal of roles between Lenin and Trotsky, on the surprise and dismay that overtook virtually all the Bolsheviks at their isolation from the people so soon after taking power makes an absorbing narrative. Yet there is little in this episode of the revolution to buttress the position of those who have made a profession of identifying Bolshevism with Stalinism. Deutscher describes in consid-

erable detail the unceasing efforts made by the Bolsheviks, in spite of formidable difficulties, to secure the cooperation of opponent working class parties in the Soviet regime. Only with the greatest reluctance, when the regime stood at the edge of the abyss, when these parties attacked the state with terror or collaborated with its military foes, did the Bolsheviks place them outside the law. Historical adversity, not the doctrine of its leaders, led to the subsequent degeneration of the Russian Revolution.

There remains the contention that Bolshevism contained within itself the elements of Stalinism, and its protagonists will undoubtedly find some nourishment for this in Deutscher's book. Their triumph is a hollow one. All organisms, natural and social, contain within themselves the seeds of degeneration: democracy those of fascism, the normal man those of criminality or perversion. But it takes a specific combination of external conditions to bring the noxious elements in the internal organism to fruition. At any rate, the gains made by the Bolsheviks in blazing a revolutionary trail of social reconstruction, will prove in the long run of far greater weight than their having taken the risk of degeneration and lost. That makes the revolution, for all its tragic features, a turning point in history.

The figure of Trotsky emerges from that revolution as a towering fact. The further achievements of the Russian Revolution rest in no small part on the contributions of this man whom Deutscher has restored to true historic proportions after years of Stalinist defamation and distortion. From every point of view, "The Prophet Armed" is an outstanding work. We warmly recommend it to all.

G. C.

Socialist Origins

The Forging of American Socialism, by Howard H. Quint, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, S.C., 1953, \$6.

THE University of South Carolina Press deserves credit for adding to the library of scholarship on American socialism. Dr. Quint has written a carefully documented study of the movement from its early beginnings after the Civil War to the formation of the Socialist Party in 1901, relying for his information chiefly on socialist and liberal newspapers and magazines of the period.

Twenty-five years of travail, experimentation and repeated failures were necessary before American socialists could organize an indigenous party which seriously influenced the working class and spoke with some justification on its behalf. But even in the decade of its glory from the turn of the century to the first world war, the Socialist Party was a crazy patchwork of an organization, at all times a conglomeration of reformism, Christian Socialism, Populism and Marxism, repeatedly in danger of transformation at the hands of its host of preachers, middle class lecturers and "sewer socialist" politicians into

a New Deal reform kind of an organization, and repeatedly saved by its incorruptible banner-bearer, Eugene V. Debs, and the heterogeneous left wing that supported and idolized him. And before an organization of even this level of maturity could be founded, a quarter-century had to elapse which witnessed the wreckage of the most diverse reform and socialist groupings: De Leon's Socialist Labor Party, Henry George's Labor Party, Bellamy's Nationalists, Christian Socialism and Fabianism, numerous socialist colonization schemes, and finally the debacle of Populism.

DR. QUINT describes in rich detail the story of each of these currents. He hews pretty closely to the historical data and does not go too far afield in evaluations. This very unpretentiousness is a virtue of the work as it enables the reader to follow the events more easily.

The Socialist Labor Party, the first socialist organization in America, suffered from its exclusively German-emigrant character and, as Frederick Engels repeatedly warned, its doctrinaire sectarian conceptions. It labored mightily, according to its own lights, but it was out of the stream of American radicalism and could make no headway. When its leader, Daniel De Leon, turned his back on the AFL and the Knights of Labor, and the SLP set up its own impeccably pure labor union federation in 1895, the climactic point was reached in the process of hardening the organization into a rigid sectarian mold. For the next five years De Leon kept busy hounding out of the party all who would not accept as gospel his various dogmatic pronouncements, reducing the organization in the end to a moribund sect of personal adherents.

Dr. Quint, to use his own words, "attempts to show both the European influences and the distinctly American elements that affected the movement, since it should be borne in mind that the upsurge of socialism in the United States was only in part inspired by the classic doctrines of the European Marxists." He therefore devotes a good section of the book to discussing the different middle class reform and quasi-socialist movements.

ONE OF THE mileposts in the history of early American social protest was the labor campaign for the New York mayoralty in 1886. Responding to the proposals of the socialists, the New York Central Labor Union founded the United Labor Party and selected as its candidate, Henry George, who had gained a national reputation with his single-tax classic, "Progress and Poverty," published in 1879. The campaign was a memorable one. The final vote, tabulated in round numbers, gave Hewett, the Democratic candidate, 90,000; George, 67,000; and Theodore Roosevelt, first starting on his career in the Republican Party, 60,000. Quint writes: "New York elections were not famed for their pristine purity and honesty, and this particular one was in all probability even more malodorous than others. The Tammany

machine, faced by a serious challenge to its traditional ties with the working class and the Irish bloc, operated with efficiency and dispatch at the polling places and in the purchase of doubtful votes. Rumor had it that thousands of George ballots found a watery grave at the bottom of the East River. But the principal cause for George's defeat—and there should be no mistake about it—was the opposition of the Catholic Church."

After the election George and his followers tried to make the party more acceptable by throwing out the socialists. But the old-line politicians pulled the rug from under him by enacting most of his platform demands at the 1887 session of the N. Y. State legislature. George's vote fell sharply in that year's election, and the party soon disappeared from the political scene.

If the 1886 Mayoralty election revealed an undercurrent of dissatisfaction and class bitterness, the reaction to Edward Bellamy's book, "Looking Backward," shocked the country into a realization that millions were living in a state of acute frustration under capitalism and yearning for a new cooperative society. "Looking Backward," one of the great socialist utopias, sold more copies than any other American novel since Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The book made such an overwhelming impression that thousands rallied to "Bellamyism" to help realize the cooperative utopia. A chain of Nationalist clubs soon extended from coast to coast. At its high point in 1891, the Nationalist movement had issued 165 charters.

Like British Fabianism, it was an avowedly middle class movement, stressing reforms and gradualism, and determinedly opposed to the Marxist idea of an inherent class conflict in society. In the early Nineties, Nationalism shared the reform stage with the single tax and the eight-hour day movements, although there was little mutual cooperation among the three. Unlike British Fabianism, however, which found a berth in the developing Labor Party, Bellamy's Nationalists disintegrated after the rise of Populism, when hundreds of members flocked to the new banner, leaving the old clubs hollow shells.

One of the outstanding defects of the Nationalist movement was the lack of a transitional program between the present and the promised utopia. It had no practical platform of action except to support this or that reform. The newly formed People's Party, in contrast, gave the magnetic appearance of a movement that was going places.

POPULISM, the culmination of two decades of small farmer resistance to the encroachments of monopoly capitalism, was the most important of the agrarian mobilizations designed to curb the power of the financial behemoths of the East and return to a society of small, independent, self-reliant producers. The farmers were out to reform capitalism, not abolish it. Even the plank in the party's platform calling for nationalization of railroads was

not intended as a collectivization measure but simply a device to do away with the exorbitant freight rates and discriminatory practices of the railroads. The main Populist strength was in the South and Middle West. But there were small People's Party organizations, led by Nationalists, socialists and trade unionists in the Eastern cities. And in the Midwest urban centers, especially Chicago and Milwaukee, important Populist groups were organized in the course of trying to effect a farmer-labor alliance.

In the 1892 presidential election, the Populist candidate, General James Weaver, polled 1,027,329 votes, a most promising beginning for a fledgling party. But the essentially conservative farm leaders and politicians who headed the movement, impressed with the popularity of the currency inflation issue in the Midwest, eager to retain the financial backing of the silvermine owners, and jittery over the efforts of urban radicals to seize leadership of the People's Party in Chicago and Milwaukee, made the fateful decision to stake the party's future on one issue—"free silver." In their resolve to rid themselves of the socialists and reformers, they blocked with conservative and crooked trade union leaders, undercut all attempts to form a farmer-labor front after the 1893 economic panic, and finally, at a gagged, clique-ridden and machine-run convention in 1896, sold out the movement to the Democratic Party, which had just nominated Bryan as its presidential candidate on a "free silver" platform.

THE COLLAPSE of Populism, which in the five years of its existence had plowed up the ground so tremendously, convinced many socialists and reformers that only a new type of organization solidly grounded in socialist principles could withstand the corroding effects of jobs and the scramble for patronage and place. It was symbolic of a whole trend when Henry Demarest Lloyd, prominent for years in Chicago reform circles, and J. A. Wayland, founder of America's most popular socialist paper, *Appeal To Reason*, decided in 1896 to turn their backs on Bryan and "free silver" and cast their votes for the SLP until a new party could be formed "under more representative American leadership."

The new party soon came into being. When Debs, in 1897, realized that all attempts to revive his American Railway Union were hopeless, and the ARU transformed itself into The Social Democracy of America, the whole left wing of the old Populist movement, radicals, socialists, reformers and do-gooders throughout the country, rallied to the organization. After three years of storm and stress, including a split with the socialist colonizers, the Social Democracy united with the split-off section of the SLP, headed by Morris Hillquit and Job Harriman, to form The Socialist Party of America.

American socialism had finally emerged from a sect to form a party.

B. C.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Best Homage to Dead Heroes . . .

I have been thinking about writing a review of Deutscher's new biography of Trotsky. In case somebody is already at work on one, I will give you my view . . .

Reviewing this book gives us the opportunity to write an essay explicitly stating our attitude toward Trotsky. The chief business of a revolutionist is to shorten the birth pangs of the new society—not to venerate the memory of the great heroes of past struggles. In this sense we are not cultists. But we are by no means patronizing toward the past and the heroes of the past. Knowledge of the past illuminates the present and helps us to glimpse the future. The best homage we can pay to dead heroes is to take their living ideas and apply them to the solution of the problems of today.

We are the disseminators of these ideas, not the proprietors. If we are really selflessly devoted to the cause, we don't give a damn about labels. It is not inappropriate to cite the example of Trotsky in 1917. The new Bolshevik line after Lenin's April Theses accorded with the perspectives of the theory of permanent revolution; it was in essence Trotskyist. The Bolsheviks didn't make any formal acknowledgment of this fact, and Trotsky didn't demand one. What mattered was that the correct idea had found its place in the political arsenal of the party.

Deutscher presents Trotsky's great perceptions, deeds, and moral stamina, but he does not ignore Trotsky's errors of judgment and characteristic faults. We might cite Trotsky's mistake in refusing to side with Lenin in the split with the Mensheviks. Trotsky couldn't face the fact that the grand old men, the founders of Russian Marxism, had outlived their usefulness as revolutionary leaders. It took him a decade to acknowledge this sad truth.

Deutscher sees the rise and fall of Trotsky as a Greek tragedy in modern dress. His viewpoint is not that of a man of action, but of the spectator, sympathetic, yet aloof. Those of us who feel we carry a particle of the responsibility for the future on our shoulders cannot share Deutscher's tragic view of history. It is our characteristic to view history as an epic in which mankind, grappling victoriously with its fate, conquers.

D. S. Minneapolis

Doing a Remarkable Job

Just finished reading the March issue of *American Socialist*. Its continued excellence was sufficient compensation for the few days delay in arrival. I enjoyed it from cover to cover. I think the editors are doing a remarkable job. The com-

ments I continue to get from auto unionists indicate they are really impressed. I ran into a former Chevrolet union officer who has consistently refused to subscribe to anything in the past; he *volunteered* to take a subscription to *American Socialist*.

I thought the article "Man's Fate and the Bomb" exceptionally good and worthy of reprint.

S. D. Flint

Have just received a copy of your March issue, and hasten to mail the enclosed for a six-month subscription. You do have an excellent writing staff.

D. L. B. Palm Springs, Cal.

Twice from Cover to Cover

Received the March *American Socialist* yesterday, and I believe it holds the same high quality of previous issues, although the content may not have the same popular appeal.

A. J. Dearborn, Mich.

Congratulations for the *American Socialist*! It must have entailed a good deal of work and thought on your part to put out a periodical of this quality both in layout and content. I have read each of the numbers over twice from cover to cover.

With respect to the important article, "Prospects of American Radicalism," (*American Socialist*, January 1954) I wonder whether liberals of the Hubert Humphrey type would be leaders in the labor party. Would not politicians closer to labor and farm organizations, perhaps politicians such as Roy Wier, James Youngdale, Blatnik, etc. be more likely candidates?

W. C. G. Minneapolis

What Kind of Progress . . . ?

It seems as though the top UAW leadership, instead of advancing with the needs of the times, is going backwards. What makes me think so is the arrangements for the coming (April 8-11) 6th International Educational Conference in Chicago.

An invited speaker at this conference is to be Paul Hoffman, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Studebaker Corporation. This is the first time an auto industry executive has been invited to speak to a union-wide meeting of the UAW. What kind of education can we expect from him?

At the UAW Educational Conference in January 1949, Robert Lynd, Professor of Sociology at Columbia University, made a very fine talk, in which he said: "I should be interested to know the reaction of you labor-education people to my strong belief that your educational work should be pitched in terms of making members of the

UAW aware, in season and out, of the nature of classes; why classes exist; and how classes mess up and thwart the things that democracy tries to do, and in the end, render real democracy impossible." Lynd went on: "If labor is to seize the initiative, I am convinced that it has to go political. And I don't mean reward your friends and punish your enemies! I mean go political all out and through and through. I mean a labor party."

Now we get the president of Studebaker Corp. What kind of progress is that?

D. L. Detroit

May I Offer Congratulations?

My first issue of your magazine has been a revelation of all I could possibly ask in the sense of good journalistic approach. For too long, the socialist papers and magazines have given us the usual "yellow journalism" that is the scourge of the capitalistic press. As one just coming to a social understanding of the problems confronting the American people today, may I offer my congratulations and a few comments on the "Letters to the Editor" column?

To S. D., Flint: Your comments were as usual brief, colorful, and in your usual manner of kicking the rest of us in the pants for "letting George do it." The recommendation that we all write our views, not only in letters but articles, was the best suggestion that the editor could have hoped to receive.

Ternstedt Worker, Flint: I wish I knew who you are. There are far too few people at that plant with the social conscience you display.

L. J. C. Flint

I like your journal. Here is my buck. I just bought and read your March issue. I would like to see the January and February issues. Could you include them in the six-month subscription? . . .

H. R. Philadelphia

PROSPECTS OF AMERICAN RADICALISM

A speech by

BERT COCHRAN

Order Now:

American Socialist Publications

863 Broadway
New York 3, N. Y.

Single Copy: 10c

Special Bundle Rates

Newsstands—Stationary and Walking

New York Readers

PANEL DISCUSSION

What's Ahead For America?

GEORGE CLARKE • MIKE BARTELL
HARRY BRAVERMAN

Special emphasis on the menace of
McCarthyism — also the 1954 elections,
depression and war.

Come and Participate

FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 8 P.M.

863 BROADWAY

CONT. 35c

MAY DAY CELEBRATION

Hear

MIKE BARTELL

Entertainment — Refreshments

May Day Program

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 8:30 P.M.

•

863 Broadway (Near 17th St.)

•

Contribution: 75c

NEWSTAND SALES of the AMERICAN SOCIALIST have been good from the first. Even more important, they have been climbing steadily since our first issue in January.

New York is, of course, the chief newsstand city in the country for our magazine. Some stands sell as many as 50 or 60. Chicago newsstand sales also look promising: a stand that took 35 of the first number sold out and raised its order on the second bundle. Another took eight copies of the first issue and sold out, took ten of the next and sold all of them within a few days, came back for more. In Detroit, newsstand sales are reported good in the university area; this is the case in some other cities as well.

In Flint, two drugstores stocked the magazine, and both sold almost out within ten days. Our San Francisco circulation manager writes: "I have been going out to find newsstands but we ran out of magazines before I got around to many. We have three newsstands in San Francisco and one in Berkeley, all selling well. The Berkeley stand sold the ten copies of the first issue I left with them within a few days. This month they took 20 . . ." He also reports a newsstand purchaser who left his name, asking for back issues.

WHILE WE'RE on the subject of newsstands, we must not forget to mention the Detroit auto worker who is a walking newsstand around the union. He has taken one local as his stamping ground, and, in addition to many subscriptions, sells as high as 40 copies of each issue. Not satisfied with that, he has collected and sent in \$60 from readers to help us expand, and still not satisfied, writes: "Much more is there for the asking."

All friends of the magazine should check likely newsstands, and bring them to the attention of the local circulation manager, or, if your city has no AMERICAN SOCIALIST agent, handle it yourself. One reader in a Midwest town wrote in proposing to do just that.

If you don't have your own subscription yet, send it in right now if you want to catch our special introductory offer.

The American Socialist

a monthly publication

863 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 3, N. Y.

INTRODUCTORY SUBSCRIPTION

ENCLOSED FIND \$1.00 FOR 6-MONTH OFFER.

Date

Name

Street

City Zone State