

# *The American* **Socialist**

DECEMBER 1955

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By Isaac Deutscher:

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# CLIPPING S

ARMY procedures in giving less-than-honorable discharges to draftees as punishment for alleged ideas and associations prior to being drafted have now been modified as a result of nationwide protests. The Defense Department promises to make its investigation of "security-risk" charges before inducting a draftee, and to reject without stigma those it doesn't want. However, the Department left a loophole by retaining the right to issue security-risk discharges by claiming that the draftee had "withheld" information upon being inducted.

Last summer, a report by Rowland Watts of the Workers' Defense League with the aid of a Fund for the Republic grant did a crushing job on the Military Personnel Security program, exposing the vague guilt-by-association standards. One draftee, it pointed out, had been denounced as having a "subversive" mother-in-law who was "lying low" for the time being. The lady in question had been dead since 1940, when the inductee was ten years old.

As a result of the Watts report, a panel of the Senate Judiciary Committee headed by Senator Thomas C. Hennings, Missouri Democrat, looked into the matter. The Defense Department announcement of a change in policy came on the same day that the army procedure was being subjected to vigorous attack by witnesses before the Hennings Committee. However, Hennings hastened to note: "If during the period of service there develops derogatory information about a service man's pre-service activities and associations, he may still . . . receive a security-risk discharge at the end of service."

AN employer-financed barrage of advertising and pressure defeated the Ohio amendments to the unemployment compensation law which had been put on the ballot in the recent election by the Ohio labor movement. One important provision desired by labor was an amendment legalizing the supplementary unemployment payments negotiated this year by the CIO auto union. Those contracts will not go into effect until states in which two-thirds of the workers are employed say the provision is all right under state laws.

Since Michigan and New York have already given their OK, an Ohio victory would have put the proposition over the two-thirds mark for both Ford and GM workers. However, even the loss of the Ohio vote has not darkened the picture too much. New Jersey has since ruled that the payments are permissible under its laws, and approval is being sought in Illinois, which would be enough to meet the two-thirds requirement. Even in Ohio the attorney general could still rule that the existing law is no bar to the auto contracts.

The Ohio employers, assisted by many out-of-state companies with plants in Ohio, raised an over one-third-million-dollar war chest to beat the labor amendments, had the backing of 35 to 40 statewide trade associations and most of the state's daily newspapers, and, co-

ordinating their efforts through the Ohio Information Committee, blanketed the state in what they frankly admitted to be "emotional" propaganda. Labor's message, by contrast, got almost drowned out in the company shouting. Both the Democratic and Republican party machines fought labor on this issue.

JOSEPH C. McGarraghy, Federal district judge, gave strong backing to the Fifth Amendment by dismissing the case against Barrows Dunham, who had refused to tell a Congressional Committee anything more than his name and address. The same judge, however, gave ground to the enemies of the First Amendment when he refused to uphold Harvey O'Connor's contention that a Congressional committee invades the right of freedom of speech and opinion when it hauls a citizen up and quizzes him about his ideas. Judge McGarraghy during the trial refused to force O'Connor to answer a question as to his political affiliations, although O'Connor offered to answer if forced by the Court. But he then turned around and found O'Connor guilty of contempt of Congress for refusing to answer the same question when Senator McCarthy asked it, and passed sentence of a year in prison and \$500 fine on O'Connor, suspending the jail term. O'Connor's attorneys will appeal the verdict.

CARL Braden, defendant in the outrageous Louisville "sedition" trial, has been receiving growing support. Successful meetings in New York, Chicago, Minneapolis and else-

where have been held during the past month in his behalf. Growing labor support for Mr. Braden is evidenced in a powerful two-page spread on his case in the October issue of the Packinghouse Worker, monthly paper of the CIO packinghouse union, which is titled: "15 Years in Prison: Kentucky Rewards its Good Samaritan; The Story of Carl Braden Who Dared Help a Negro." Braden filed an appeal from his conviction in Frankfort, Ky., on November 16.

JOSEPH M. Molony's anti-McDonald bid for the vice-presidency of the CIO United Steelworkers (see *American Socialist*, May 1955) went down to an expected defeat by an approximate 2-1 vote in the union's referendum on October 25. The balloting, which took place in more than 2,000 union halls across the country, was preceded by large-scale intimidation and violence against Molony backers. While in most districts observers noted only a small percentage of the steelworkers coming to the polls, in the official tallies most of the membership of those districts was reported as having voted. Joseph Germano, Chicago area director and a strong McDonald machine man, reported a huge vote in favor of McDonald's candidate. The Molony caucus carried the districts under its control, as for example Youngstown and New York.

It was generally conceded, however, that even a strictly accurate count would probably have returned a McDonald victory. While the Molony campaign struck a chord in the steelworkers' ranks by its emphasis on the fact that McDonald's candidate was an office clerk, and by occasionally protesting McDonald's buddy-buddy attitude to the companies, there was little question that McDonald would carry the day after his success in winning a 15-16 cent settlement several months ago.

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## Spirit of Geneva—Redefined

THOSE who derive their political opinions solely from newspaper headlines may think that the Geneva meeting last July ushered in a new era of sunshine and joy, and that the just-concluded Foreign Ministers gathering dashed all the high hopes and thrust us back into a world of darkness and gloom. Actually, the second conference was the inevitable complement of the first and rounds out more accurately the meaning of the spirit of Geneva.

Even the most exuberant analysts could not fail to observe that the July meeting, despite the back-slapping and air of joviality, produced no agreements, partial or otherwise, on any of the outstanding disputes between the two camps. This should not be taken to mean that the July declarations were just a lot of hot air. On the contrary: The deliberately contrived good-fellowship coupled with the lack of any practical agreements signified that a climactic point had been reached in the cold war. It meant that the State Department policy of bluff, bluster and threats had come to a dead end. As Churchill recognized a year ago, there was a stalemate between the two sides; the two camps had achieved a balance of power. Finally, even Dulles realized that his tactic of threatening the other side with war had hit the law of diminishing returns since his bluff had been called and he was in no position to follow through on his threat. The powers-that-be in Washington and Wall Street had no alternative but to sit down one fine day and recognize the reality that for the present, at any rate, they were in no position to utilize nuclear war as an instrument of policy. That was the towering reality that was officially recognized by the Big Four in July. That was the meaning of the Geneva Conference.

HAVING mitigated the war of nerves, which was affecting their own peoples at home more devastatingly than the enemy camp abroad, the Western leaders returned to their respective countries to discover that the "spirit of Geneva" was operating against them. The relaxation of tension was painfully underlining the troubles inside the capitalist camp, and permitting the anti-capitalist bloc to concentrate on building up its economies and mending its foreign-relations fences. As the voice of British Big Business, the London *Economist* warns:

*Nor is it generally realized that to accept what looks like a status quo silently and passively can prove as fatal for the free nations as to accept Moscow's terms. Unless the Western case is tirelessly recapitulated (and it is a complex case, much less easy to put over than are the Communists' glib slogans) it will go by default, and the status quo will prove to be not static at all, but rather a deadly drift in just the direction the Soviet rulers want, toward neutralism, isolationism, indifference and blindness.*

These fears of the British rulers are well founded. In the short space of four months since the first and second meetings at Geneva, Western imperialism has been harried and wracked with internal difficulties, while Soviet diplomacy has improved its position. A mere listing of some of the important foreign policy developments confirms the estimate:

1. Khrushchev and Bulganin visited Yugoslavia, where they apologized for Russia's previous policy, and succeeded, at the least, in halting Tito's drift to

the West and winning him to a policy of friendly neutrality.

2. The Russian leaders forced the Bonn government to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in return for the verbal promise to release the remaining German prisoners-of-war. Russian diplomacy neatly killed two birds with one stone. It is the only major power enjoying direct relations with both East and West Germany; and it tore to shreds Adenauer's policy of "negotiating from strength."

3. The recent sale of Czechoslovak arms to Egypt tore a hole a mile wide in Dulles' "northern tier" alliance of Near Eastern States linked to NATO, which Iran, lying on Russia's border, just joined. A leading article in a Lebanese paper said: "From now on we smaller nations need not hesitate to stand up to great powers. . . . We will smile at the West for a price, at the East for a price also." If the Arabs are figuring to play both ends against the middle, then Western imperialism's monopolist position in the Near East is coming to a close.

4. Russian emergence as the second industrial power of the world is just beginning to make itself economically felt in the international arena. Russia is offering to build the Aswan High Dam on the Nile River—for a decade the dearest dream of Egypt's leaders. In India, the Russians have agreed to erect a \$100-million steel mill, while Czechoslovakia and Hungary are bidding on four 100,000-kilowatt turbine generators for a hydro-electric project in the Punjab. Important industrial aid projects are also under way in Afghanistan, Burma and other countries. At the same time, the trend of U.S. spending in the foreign aid field has turned overwhelmingly in the military direction with economic and technical assistance reduced to a trickle.

OF course, Russia's gross national product is considerably less than half of America's and the amount of assistance it can supply abroad is not entirely clear. But these initial moves have already enhanced its position in the backward countries and sent a surge of fear down the spines of the international capitalists. Because the Russians have two spectacular advantages over the Americans in this type of venture: First, they are able to

accept agricultural products of these countries in payment for their industrial exports and services, while the United States is glutted with its own agricultural products. Second, Russia is willing to build all sorts of industrial projects that these countries want, while the United States is determined to maintain the imperialist pattern, where the West will remain the industrial supplier and the backward countries will continue exporting agricultural and mineral products.

Concomitant with these shifts in Russia's favor, the capitalist powers are having a hard time holding their own:

1. Britain is up against a sweeping popular revolt in Cyprus, main anchorage of her Mediterranean position after abandonment of the Suez Canal base. The demand of the island's Greek population for unity with the homeland has led to a break between Turkey and Greece, and the bust-up of the Balkan Alliance.

2. The previously mentioned Near East crisis has put a question mark over the entire Anglo-American policy in that part of the world.

3. NATO is seriously shaken by the uncertainty of Germany's future, by France's re-deployment of most of her European troops into North Africa to quell one of the most shattering of post-war colonial uprisings, by the lowering of military budgets in France and England.

Already in September, C. L. Sulzberger, foreign correspondent of the *N. Y. Times*, was lamenting that the Allies' "shoulder-to-shoulder spirit is wilting under warm Geneva winds. . . . If this trend continues, what will become of NATO and the foreign policy it represents? . . . Is our diplomacy approaching a dead end?"

**T**HE Western leaders have not been able to devise any strategy as yet to arrest and reverse this trend, but they are resolved to get their people psychologically in trim for such a change when and if they can devise one. Their determination to "clarify" the real meaning of the spirit of Geneva sealed the character of the Foreign Ministers Conference even before it was convened. As one of the high participants informed newsmen, they had come to Geneva as salesmen, not diplomats. In other words, the purpose

was a play for public opinion, not an attempt to reach agreements.

On Germany, the Western diplomats' big pitch was that Russia is opposed to free elections because it fears defeat. Molotov didn't do himself very proud with his unabashed defense of single-list elections. His argument only furnished grist to Dulles' mill. It is clear, though, that the Russians deliberately toughened their German position. Confronted with the re-arming of Western Germany and its inclusion into the NATO military bloc, the Russians withdrew their offer of last year to unify the country on the basis of nation-wide elections with the proviso that Germany stay neutral between the two blocs. Molotov then reverted to his old terms of a Council representing the East and West German Parliaments, and he made it a point to reiterate again and again that the social conquests in East Germany must not be violated. Now, Germany is up against the fact that it can in the present circumstances achieve unification only by negotiating with Russia and the dependent East German government. The Adenauer strategy of pressuring Russia has collapsed. Therefore the probability is that the old alignments in German politics will crumble and the Social Democratic party and pro-unity capitalist groups will come to the fore.

On disarmament, the old League of Nations farce of interminable negotiations leading to nothing is being repeated. No sooner did Russia accept last May some of the basic propositions put forward by the Western powers than the latter hastened to drop their own proposals behind a smoke-screen of catch-phrases and recriminations, and came up with another diversion—Eisenhower's exchange of blueprints and sky reconnaissance scheme. Molotov answered at Geneva: "All right, we'll buy that as part of a comprehensive disarmament proposal." Whereupon Dulles came back with: "Nothing doing! We first have to lay a basis of confidence which is now lacking. That can only be accomplished by your accepting the Eisenhower sky-formula. Later on, we can maybe start talking about reduction of armaments," and so forth *ad infinitum*.

**A**CTUALLY, the U.S. government is against any disarmament or even

proposals for reduction of armaments, as its spokesmen freely admit. Donald A. Quarles, the new Secretary of the Air Force, has been making a series of speeches on the subject that lack nothing in the way of frankness. Walter Lippman summed up the American position with admirable clarity: "We are not proposing to disarm. We are proposing to keep our armaments, including atomic bombs, and what we want of the Soviet Union and are prepared to give them in return, is publicity about where the armaments are."

**E**VEN on the third point of the agenda — East - West contacts — where some had believed minor accommodations might be effected, the conference broke down into mutual accusations, and the point had to be passed over.

The conference, therefore, from a formal point of view, was a complete and unmitigated failure. But if we keep in mind its role in the unfolding international developments, it is clear that it was not an unrelieved tragedy anymore than the July conference was an unalloyed triumph for a new era of good feeling and mutual understanding. The second Geneva conference nailed down the fact all over again that the two camps are stalemated and cannot presently conceive of going to war—but that the bitter struggle is continuing for the allegiance of the uncommitted nations, and for the building of positions of strength. It also, as far as the Western leaders were concerned, aimed to inculcate their peoples with the idea not to get too friendly and easy-going concerning Russia—but not to go overboard in the other direction, either, as the American rulers are kind of scared of getting on a McCarthy-Knowland-Radford roller coaster again as they had two years ago.

**A**ND so, armed with a policy clear as a noonday haze and firm as a jellyfish's backbone, Secretary Dulles, immediately upon his return home, hastened to assure the long-suffering American public that within the context of a more flexible and realistic understanding, the cold war was not to be re-inaugurated in its past form, and that the spirit of Geneva, although weary and sore at heart, was by no means entirely dead.



# What's Ahead for Labor?

## A Symposium

In the following pages, we publish an abridged transcript of a symposium held in Chicago on Friday, October 14, at the Midland Hotel on the topic "What's Ahead for Labor?" The three participants were: Professor Kermit Eby, of the University of Chicago, prominent educator and formerly Director of Education and Research for the CIO; Ernest DeMaio, president of District 11 of the independent United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America; and Ernest Mazey, Detroit auto unionist and secretary of the Michigan Citizens' Committee Against the Trucks Law.

Prof. Eby having been called out of town on urgent business the day before the symposium, his prepared talk was read for him at his request by Reverend William T. Baird of Chicago, who interpolated several remarks indicating his own disagreement with some of the points in the talk. These remarks, together with sections of the speeches of the participants as well as the introductory remarks by the chairman, and also the question period, had to be omitted from this transcript for reasons of space.

## A View of the Future

by Kermit Eby

IT would be superfluous for me to discuss the political implications of our subject, "What's Ahead for Labor?" for everything I think about that subject and its relation to labor unity has been published in the *American Socialist* [Labor Unity Doesn't Excite Me," by Kermit Eby, August 1955 issue] so I will not repeat. Instead I will look into the crystal ball and do a little prognosticating from my particular platform, left-wing Protestantism.

Today the trend in American economic development, constantly stimulated by unions, is toward the professionalization of the worker. We are moving toward an egalitarian society in the United States, which reformers have long anticipated. The greater percentage of our spendable income is in the middle brackets. Many family units which are in this income classification have auxiliary earners. Today more than 19 million of almost 65 million gainfully employed are women, and of these 19 million 11½ million are married; consequently the moves to the suburbs of the white

collar and so-called middle classes is also the movement of skilled workers and industrial workers with high seniority and good pay.

Last year Mr. Blue Collar earned on the average almost \$12 more per week than Mr. White Collar. These are the people who buy the products that they themselves produce. They drive the cars and enjoy the refrigerators, and charge the prices against future income like almost anyone else in America, and many of them are finally determined that their children are to have the education which will move them into the professions. These are the Americans clustered around our great industrial cities, men who work in the plant, go home afterward to build another room on the house, or to work in the garden.

With a 40-hour week and adequate pay, steelworkers, auto workers and their brothers are experiencing for the first time the sweets of a living wage and some time for creative leisure. Paid vacations make possible fishing trips, or cross-country jaunts with the wife and kids. It can be argued that

the do-it-yourself craze which is sweeping America is an example of a cultural pattern infiltrating society from below. Do-it-yourself was the only alternative for the worker who wanted his linoleum laid or a playroom for his children. Gradually what was a necessity became an avocation. Today it isn't the idle rich who are copied, instead it is the ingenious worker, and this is in contrast to the long pattern of man's past when cultural changes were always determined from the top.

THIS is a welcome transition and one which will be accelerated, I am sure, and one which we do not yet fully understand. It appears, at least to me, that man's creativity which was once expressed in his daily work is increasingly expressed in his avocational interest. If this is so, an entire way of life which once rested on the dictum that man must live by the sweat of his brow will have to be re-examined. In other words, the work-ethic, which Protestants have brought very near to the center of their value system, must be re-evaluated.

Today the word automation is on the lips of every one who is aware of the continuing and rapidly accelerated industrial revolution. Automation can be defined simply as the process whereby machines operate machines. In the old days the *given operation* was automatic. Today, the *process* is. Raw

steel enters one end of the line and comes out the other as motor blocks untouched by human hands. Radios are assembled by machines which follow the model of a pattern. Calculating machines balance books. The illustrations are endless. The results of all of this no one knows. One of the significant trends, however, is obvious. More and more goods can be produced with fewer and fewer man-hours of work.

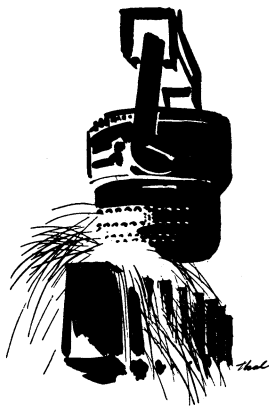
Today, upwards of 1,600,000 fewer workers are engaged in industrial production than were engaged at the high point of employment. These displaced persons, of course, push into the services and displace others. All the time, each is working for lower wages. Perhaps we need displacement insurance to tide over those looking for jobs because of industrial changes. Further, the men who run the machines are becoming ever-more skilled. These trends are on the mind of every labor leader who thinks at all. These are the trends he would meet and anticipate through the power of his unions.

For example, Walter Reuther and his auto workers were ever conscious of this development as they drove for the annual wage. It was their aim, an aim successfully introduced in recent contracts, to establish the fact that a worker had equity in his job. The argument for the annual wage is profoundly moral and rests on the affirmation that a worker has a right in our society to look forward to continuous employment at an economic level high enough to assure his family of more than minimal standards of health and decency. If unemployed through no fault of his own, his idleness is to be charged against the employer and against society. The annual wage is also a step towards the professionalization of the worker. If it is desirable for management to be paid by the year and protected by pensions, it is also desirable that the worker be so protected. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. It is true, however, that the General Motors and Ford contracts do not guarantee a 52-week year. But the important fact is the definition of principle. Once the principle is determined, as it was in pensions, the details can be achieved in future negotiations.

**H**OWEVER, for our purpose the most significant statement in the official pronouncements of the UAW is to be found in *Ammunition*, auto union magazine, June issue: "Meanwhile, the union's next major bargaining goal has been mapped by a convention resolution. It will be the shorter work week." Or as the sloganeers have already designated it, the 30-40 plan; 40 hours pay for 30 hours work.

There is no doubt in my mind that present productivity trends make such an achievement inevitable. If so, ours will increasingly become a society where men work at production for a short time and have ever-growing leisure to live life as they wish. Freed from the long hours of labor the ever-present question will persist—to what uses shall our time be put? The possibilities are infinite in the culturally creative fields of music, the arts, travel, and so on. But before this development can be fully understood it is imperative that we examine our traditional work-ethic.

Simply stated, we teach, because we are so taught, that work is good, that work ennobles. The devil, countless innocents have been admonished, always finds things for idle hands to do. Now, anyone who has had to do the dirty work of the world knows very well that drudgery did not and does not now ennoble anyone. And few factory workers or miners ever believed that it was beneficial to their characters to work long hours on the assembly line or in the pit. These moral adages



were more often than not coined by owners to admonish their workers. In turn, these adages were supported by preachers. Today, when management takes off to play golf the emphasis is on contacts and morale. But when a worker goes fishing he is charged with absenteeism.

It is my thesis that man's creativity, which is expressed normally in vocational areas, is constantly disappearing. Creativity, that which expresses divinity, is today increasingly avocational. Hence, the old argument that work for its own sake is meaningful no longer holds. Today men will increasingly work under automatic processes, produce their gadgets, gadgets we all enjoy, and seek their enjoyment and recreation elsewhere. And this is a trend which is not finding expression in industry alone. Modern technology is bringing the factory to the field, decreasing man-hours of labor on the farm, and increasing production in almost geometric proportion.

**I**F Americans have a unifying goal, irrespective whether they are classified as labor or management, that goal is productivity, more and more production. Ours is an escalator concept, ever-more production absorbed by ever-more consumption. It is exactly here that Walter Reuther and C. E. Wilson are at one. General Motors is good when General Motors produces. It is the responsibility of the auto workers to compel them to produce, says Reuther. But always the good is defined in terms of production, and ironically enough, it is exactly here where communists and capitalists join hands. How are each to be judged? By the quantity and quality of gadgets produced. Both capitalists and communists are missionaries. Both teach: Follow me and I will give you machines, and machines to make machines ad infinitum.

It is not my thesis that the machine does not liberate, nor do I argue for return to the primitive, as Gandhi did. However, I do insist that man's ends are not defined in the volume of goods and services his industrial machines produce. Instead, man's ends lie in the *quality of life* that increased leisure makes possible. And today, at least in America, more and more of us are freed to live life in dimensions which transcend survival, as measured in bread-and-butter terms. Consequently, not only must we today examine our work-ethic, but also our attitude toward play and leisure-time activity.

For example, it has been emphasized that ours is a spectator culture. It is, of course, but there are other signs already mentioned: do-it-yourself, travel,

and so on. All these things point to something more than the spectator view. To begin with, I would examine what life would be like when we no longer need to eat our bread by the sweat of our brow. And how would our lives be changed if we realized that work is not a punishment for past sins and that play is not evil, but rather a creative expression of man's creative and artistic self?

As our industrial revolution advances, we come face to face with a new world, a world moving towards the 30-hour week, paid vacations, early retirement. How many workers dream of their chicken farm? For the skilled operator and the maintenance man, going to the factory will perhaps not be so bad. On many operations there will be little to do except watch the machine. There will be time for talk-fest with the boys. Under such circumstances the factory kind of club where the worker goes to meet the boys will be one of the few man-dominated worlds left.

**T**HIS projecting of labor's role in 1955 emphasizes only one train of thought, the worker's role as man and citizen in an advancing technology. There are many other questions one might ask about this somewhat utopian picture I have painted. In conclusion I will ask only what is the guilt the American worker shares with his fellow American? Why aren't the unions more insistent on bringing their benefits to the economically depressed and unorganized?

The most recent report of the U.S. Census Bureau on wages and salaries indicates that the lowest-paid workers, those in the bottom fifth, continued to receive 3 percent of the total wages and salaries paid in 1951. That was the same share they received in '45 and in '39. The study indicated that among the greatest relative gains in income were those made by manual workers, such as laborers and craftsmen, whose average was tripled from '39 to '51. The moral is obvious. Organized labor, like other elites in our compensatory state, did all right by its own, but failed miserably in broadening its organizational base and spreading its benefits. The guilt which the American worker feels stems from the contrast of his comfort with the hunger and need in the world about him.

And believe me, ours is a common guilt. The organized American worker lives generally at a level which in comparison with most of the rest of the world might very well be called plutocratic. The workers shared in the blood money of Korea, even though



many of them understood that it *was* blood money. The workers too, live to some extent off the naked and bowed backs of coolie labor in other parts of the world. Many American workers feel guilty about this and support the aspirations of their brothers in less favored countries of the world. Nevertheless, the dilemma remains. Much as many workers in this country would

like to feel that they are supporting their working brothers in Europe, in South America, in Asia, they cannot. For they must support the principle of war even though they hate the barbaric idea of mass retaliation. For they, like industry and agriculture, use the war system to gain wage increases or profits, and they do so because they are part of the American economy and American nationalism.

Here our dilemma rests. Here is the paradox which produces guilt. Having achieved much for its members, and incidentally for all other workers, the leaders of labor must, if they would survive, oppose the very war system which stimulated so much of our prosperity. Otherwise the entire foundation on which the good life rests collapses. Only peace and the conditions which make peace preferable can keep us continually striving towards the goal envisaged by the prophets who foretold of a world of swords beaten into plowshares and men safe under their vine and fig tree. So on this day, I would conclude, never has the future been brighter and never so dependent upon the thinnest thread of destiny.

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## Labor in a Changing America

by Ernest DeMaio

**B**ROTHER chairman, brothers and sisters: I am fearful that I haven't participated in a lot of this prosperity that has been talked about. Perhaps that's why I have a sort of lean and hungry look. [Laughter]

The subject of the symposium tonight is "What's Ahead for Labor?" Implied in that, it seems to me, is the fact that there are tremendous changes taking place, and if we want to give consideration to what lies ahead we perhaps ought to see where we're starting from to see where we're going and how we're going to get there.

We've arrived at a period in history where we can produce more than enough to go around. Roosevelt pointed that out in 1944: that as a result of our raw materials, the facilities of our factories, the skills of our working men and women, and the techniques and sciences of our time, we produce more

than enough of the good things of life to go around.

There are powerful forces in our country who own and control the economy and the political organs of our society. They use their positions of power, both political and economic, to prevent any basic changes from taking place. They like the *status quo* because the *status quo* means for them maintaining the social order that puts them on top of the heap and enables them to rule at the expense of those who create the wealth of our country, and see to it that they get only enough of it to exist. The big problem is whether or not the changes that are taking place will be permitted to take place peacefully. Do we have the type of society, do we have the organizational structure or the political structure in our country and in the world today that permits peaceful change?



**P**EOPLE want higher wages, better working conditions, security against unemployment, sickness, etc. They band themselves together in unions to achieve these things. There are some struggles taking place in our country right now where workers want just the right to negotiate with their employer. In Indiana, there's an outfit known as the Perfect Circle. In that strike, the National Guard has been brought out, and we don't find the workers being protected in that particular situation; we find the employer being protected. There is another company known as Kohler in Wisconsin, and Governor Kohler of that state took a leaf out of Governor Craig's book. When he saw that Governor Craig got away with calling the militia, he threatened to bring out the militia in Wisconsin. Mind you, there cannot—not even by the wildest stretch of the imagination—be any characterization of the struggles of these workers as being anything more than fighting for bare economic necessities. In the Kohler situation fighting for higher wages, for a pension plan, for a health and welfare program, for arbitration of grievances. This is no threat to ownership. It's just for the right to live, live decently in a period of abundance.

Now, if we have enough to go around, it shouldn't require bitter struggles on the part of the working population of this country to get the bare necessities of life. It's clear, therefore, that powerful forces in this country place their profits before the needs of the working people, and if the working people are to get a square shake for themselves it doesn't come out of the goodness of heart of the employer: It comes as a result of organization, as a result of determined, bitter struggle, and no other way. If it comes at all peacefully, it is because the corporation head finds that the cost of taking on his workers is greater than he is likely to get out of it by a battle.

**H**OW sound is our economy today? The latest reports show that employment is at a peak in this country. But we have many thousands of workers today, I don't know the exact figure, that are involved in the production of war goods: the old concept of digging holes up and filling them up again to provide employment. But

in order to provide the wages you have to water down the dollar. If you were ever on the soup line when the lines got long, you know that instead of putting more vegetables and meat in the soup, they added water. There was enough soup to go around, but less sustenance. So the more they water down the buck, the more bucks you get but the less the buck is worth. Somewhere down the road you come to the end of that whole proposition.

Tremendous capital investment is going on. In the race for markets, each company, concerned with improving its position in its industry, increases its productive capacity to a point where the industry produces more than the market can absorb. We come therefore to a crisis of overproduction. We see a new situation in this country where they're dumping automobiles not in Europe, Africa, South America or Asia, but dumping them here on the home market. Why, ten years ago you had to know somebody to get an automobile. Today you don't dare pass by an automobile show window. You get near that open door and it's like the old vaudeville days, the hook is out, you're in, and they don't let you go unless you go with a new car. You don't need any money, no money down and forever to pay. [Laughter] And there's only \$13,500,000,000 in automobile paper today! That's about 9 months production of the automobile industry—not paid for.

There's about 80 billion bucks more paper in homes. It just can't go on forever. Somewhere, sometime, people will have to pay off. And if on top of this, new machines are being installed which eliminate workers, the very people who have bought on paper with long terms—well, figure it out for yourself.

**N**OW I'm not one who is going to predict any great economic upheaval. I have listened to many speakers who say that there are many built-in protections. Why, we have social security, they say, we have unemployment compensation, we have GAW (I don't know if that's something like yaw). We have any number of things of this sort which are built-in protections. And it reminds me of what they say about the military strategists—that they always work out the strategy to win the last war. We have the built-in protections in our economy to protect us from the last depression. [Laughter] We don't have anything to protect us from the coming depression. And it's coming, there can be no question about it. I have no crystal ball, I can't set the date, but I know that you can't live on borrowed time any more than as they used to say in the depression days that Chinese live by taking in each other's washing. [Laughter] You know, it just can't be done.

What do you think is going on in





the agrarian section of our society today? In a loaf of bread of 20 slices, the wheat farmer gets the equivalent of the value of 3 slices out of the 20. I have a brother-in-law who because of his past activities and you might say youthful indiscretions found it rather difficult to get employment in industry. He found no other place to go to than that idyllic chicken farm. He found himself in a situation where the price of eggs was so high that he couldn't afford to eat his own eggs; he had to take them to market for the few pennies he needed to buy more grain for more chickens to sell more eggs, and couldn't get around to the point of eating his own chickens and eggs, because if he did that he couldn't feed the chickens, let alone feed himself.

I'D like to touch briefly on automation. Last week, in *Business Week* the whole front page was automation, automation, automation. And the entire issue was devoted to this question. About two years ago this same magazine carried a story about the "workerless factories." I was on a trip to New York and coming back I got on a plane and I sat next to a McGraw Hill executive. "Oh," I said, "I read one of your publications, *Business Week*." He said, "Yes, that's the one I'm connected with." I said, "Do you mind my raising with you something I have been reading in one of your recent issues?" He said, "No, what is it about?" I said, "This article on the workerless factories." "Oh," he said, "did you like it?" I said, "Yes, I liked it, but I was a little disturbed by it." He said, "You were? What disturbed you?" I said, "Who is going to buy the goods that these workerless factories produce?" He said, "Well, what do you mean?"

I said, "I'll start from the beginning. You build factories to produce goods to sell them at a profit on the open market, is that right? Well, who is this market? It's the workers who produce these goods, who draw the pay who then turn around and buy these goods, don't they?" He says, "That's right." "But if you have workerless factories," I said, "where's the customers?" "Oh," he said, "We haven't figured that one out yet." [Laughter] I said, "You had better begin. You had better begin because

you are in trouble." He said, "I am aware of that fact."

In this last week's issue, *Business Week* had a very interesting definition of automation. "Mechanization," they said, "has reached a point where the speed of the machine operator is the only limit on the speed of production. By removing the operator the only limit on speed becomes the machine." [Laughter]

Mind you, this is on top of an economy where we produce more than enough for the market, we have a sudden leap forward where we can produce tremendous quantities more above what we're producing today. Problems of production are solved. The problem of who's going to buy the stuff begins.

WHAT should be our approach to this: Is automation good or is it bad? Is atomic energy good or is it bad? Well, it's just like: Is a gun good or bad? It depends on who's got the gun and whom it's being aimed at. These machines are tremendously good if they will produce for the people. Atomic energy is a wonderful thing if it will be used for peaceful purposes to lift people out of poverty and misery all over the world. We can do it, we can do it easily. Or they can be used as weapons to create mass unemployment or weapons of destruction. Which it's going to be depends on which section of society will benefit. It's a question of whether what we do in America promotes the general welfare as was the concept of the Founding Fathers, or whether we promote the welfare of the generals: General Motors, General Electric, General Mills and the Pentagon generals. There are two concepts of government. Government of, by, and for the people to promote the general welfare, or promote the welfare of those who already have too much and don't know what to do with it. These are the basic problems of our time. It's pretty much the same thing in the labor movement.

We have the two concepts in the trade union movement: whether it's democratic unionism, rank-and-file unionism dedicated to the interests of the working people; or the kind of unionism which says, "Leave it to me, I am your leader. I know what's good for you. Take it easy, Rome wasn't built in a day, you gotta learn to walk

before you can run, don't shake the ship or rock the boat." Those are the two concepts.

The labor movement, as you know, is the organized force of the working people, the productive force of our society. Somewhere down the road, that force which controls production must also, if it understands its role in history, have political power. This is the only advanced country in the world where the labor movement doesn't have its own political party. I mean a political party strong enough to be able to have its representatives in important sections of government. The Congress of the United States in our country, I believe, has about three members who once worked for a living. When you consider the fact that the overwhelming majority of the population is workers, we have taxation without representation. That's a fact.

Now there are a number of reasons why the working people don't participate in the political life of the nation. Many have been lulled into a false feeling of security by the illusion of prosperity: Everything is going wonderful, you can borrow yourself into security. They are not worried about tomorrow, tomorrow will take care of itself. But it is only the illusion. We're living on a borrowed future. One ticker goes wrong and \$16 billion in values are wiped out in the stock market. Now that's stability for you. The guys who are looking for the easy buck are ready to grab and run at the first sign of any little uncertainty.

LABOR leaders in this country don't understand very much about the labor movement. However, even the most conservative, the most reactionary are compelled to react. I want to give you an example. As late as 1934 the American Federation of Labor voted against social security, against unemployment compensation, opposed WPA. Mind you, these were the leaders of the American trade union movement. Many of these same AFL leaders remain in power today, but there isn't a single labor leader in the country that would dare speak against social security. They're for it, they're for more unemployment compensation, they're for more of all kinds of legislation because they know the people want it. There is pressure on them from their members. The influx of

millions of workers into the AFL and into the CIO has brought new life; and regardless of how much of a hold the mossback bureaucrats may have on the superstructure of the labor movement, they cannot prevent the people from expressing their desires and putting the heat on from the local business agent all the way up the line.

With all of its weaknesses, the labor movement of this country represents the main bulwark of democracy in this country. It's the big obstacle in the drive toward fascism. For instance, the general counsel of the AFL announced about a week ago that he was going to present the argument in the Steve Nelson case before the U.S. Supreme Court. That seems to me a rather significant development. Steve Nelson is a guy who's been kicked around and shoved around and jailed I don't know how many times. He's a Communist leader in Pennsylvania. When the general counsel of the AFL will argue his case in the Supreme Court, there are some changes taking place in this country. There's a beginning of a recognition percolating even in the most stolid minds that what happens to a Steve Nelson may affect the fortunes of the American Federation of Labor. I don't think we should ignore that.

SO there is hope. Things will not stand still. Powerful forces of change are at work in America today. Now, some specific things that I think we can do. The labor movement, I think, has a tremendous task in organizing the unorganized, in the northern industrial cities where they are unorganized, in the rural areas, but particularly in the South, in this haven of the runaway shop, in this area where seething struggles are going on, the railroad strike down there, the Bell Telephone strike, the sugar strike, the lynchings in Mississippi.

The Dixiecrats are attempting to maintain the *status quo* there by denying the Negro people the right to vote. What's involved in the lynching of a Till is not just a humanitarian question. They are trying to strike terror in the hearts of the Negro people, to prevent the unity of the Negro and white workers, to maintain that division in the ranks of labor that keeps wages low, that attracts the Northern employer into the South, and gives

those that remain in the North the competition of the runaway plants.

It affects our daily lives. We have a stake in what's going on in the South. Unless we address ourselves to organizing the South, we are undermining our conditions in the North. We have a big job there, and the job is complicated by the fact that neither of the two major parties reflects the interests and welfare of the American people.

But, if we have any sense at all, we have to go where the people are. We can't go off by ourselves out in left field somewhere and say the people will follow us. We have to get in there where the people are, live with the people, fight with the people, struggle with them, take our setbacks with them. When we understand the problems of the people we will learn how to deal, how to organize, how to meet every challenge and how to beat it back. We have to, in the political life of the nation, as in the economic life of the nation, immerse ourselves in

those organizations which the people have, and give them leadership, because the working people, as all sections of the population, will adhere to their organizations. They will not move *against* their organizations, they will only move *through* their organizations. And if we are there, we can change the character of those organizations. It's a big job, but the labor movement of every country has had a big job. We, in our day in this generation, can't wish for the perfect setting. We can't wish for the perfect people to come along. They aren't here. We have to take them as we find them, in the period of the terror, in the period of McCarthy, with the witch-hunting, the FBI, the stoolpigeons and everything else, and all the fear and terror which this creates. We have to take this kind of a situation, organize, beat it back.

Working together, fighting together, we'll win together in America, and much sooner than most people believe.

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## Labor and the Economy

by Ernest Mazey

TO answer the question, "What's ahead for labor?" one must begin with a proper picture of the situation as it is, and this means the bad along with the good. In reviewing the retrogression of the labor movement, it seemed to me that Prof. Eby in his remarks, and also in his *American So-*

*cialist* article, did not say all that could be said or all that should be said. In addition to the points he made about the development of a bureaucratic machine, the growing away of the leadership from the ranks, the fat salaries, the tie with the Democratic Party, we should also list the capitulation of the CIO to the red-baiting campaign, the expulsion by the CIO of the allegedly Communist-led unions, the terrible laxity in permitting a Kohler to develop in America in 1955—a strike which continues after 18 months—all these things could be added to the picture and will tend to give an overall impression of blackness. But to merely review and deplore the terrible conditions prevailing in recent years is not enough. If we understand the reality, not only as it is at the moment, but from whence it came, it seems to me we can get a better picture of what lies ahead, and we can better assess what we can do.

Essential to understanding the American labor movement is an appreciation



of America's peculiar development. The expansion westward, the exceptional resources in a virgin continent free of the old feudal restrictions, isolation that America enjoyed from the wars in Europe, permitted an amazing development and expansion of American capitalism. For these reasons, and others, class lines were not sharply drawn here, as had been the case in Europe.

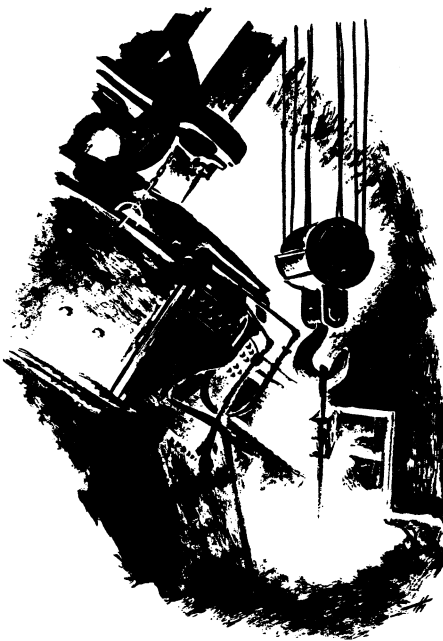
**B**ECAUSE of this exceptional development, illusions were widespread about the economy, about America being different from Europe, so that only a tiny fraction of the working class achieved even simple trade union organization up until the Great Depression. It was the hardship and mass unemployment of the early thirties that made for the Europeanization of the American working class. It was the mass reaction to the privations of those days which smashed the long-nourished illusions and gave birth to the dynamic crusade of the early CIO. I'll not take time this evening to retrace and review the stormy and inspiring development of those early days. Suffice it to say that in a very short span of years the American workers were marching with giant strides not only toward union organization, but toward independent political action and even toward class consciousness.

What happened to cut off this development? You will recall World War II cut across the path of the upsurge of the American working class. It brought with it a period of national unity, a period of the no-strike pledges. The special war conditions tended to housebreak the American labor movement.

At the end of the war for a brief period, we again witnessed an eruption of labor militancy in the great post-war strike wave which saw some two million workers marching picket lines simultaneously in early 1946. The strike struggles of that day demonstrated, to the dismay of the employer, that the trade unions organized in the thirties were here to stay. With the unleashing of the cold war in 1946, and the witch-hunting campaign which accompanied it, conservative and even reactionary figures came to the front in the labor movement. The labor leadership assumed the role of lackeys to the foreign policy of Big Business.

In addition to this witch-hunting

campaign associated with the cold war, the whole thing was tied together and buttressed, as Brother De Maio has pointed out, by the relative prosperity which has prevailed throughout this period, a prosperity which has produced apathy and even conservatism



all the way down to the ranks of the labor movement. Workers and the American people generally became preoccupied with the purchase of homes, of autos, of radios, of television sets—the latest scourge of humanity—all bought on the installment plan. Now because of the memories of 1929 this period of relative prosperity we've enjoyed has not produced illusions among workers again that we have a new kind of society here different from what we've had before. It produced rather the mood of get-while-the-getting-is-good. Workers became obsessed with the idea of personally sucking out of this situation all that they could for themselves and their families.

**T**HE workers' attitude toward overtime in the shop became transformed. In the early days of the CIO a man was looked upon with scorn who would accept the offer of the boss to come in and work overtime, or come in on Saturday and work for overtime rates. The overtime penalties in the contract were meant as that. The boss had to pay a premium for imposing himself upon more than 40 hours of a worker's labor per week. But in this

whole period that's been transformed and it's a rare worker who isn't waiting or anxiously checking the list to see when his turn will come again. In this same period we have developed the phenomenon of two or even more wage earners in a family, and, believe it or not, some two and one-half years ago in Detroit we had about 40,000 auto workers putting in two eight-hour shifts at two jobs in the auto industry.

Workers have the idea of getting all they can out of the situation while it lasts. In conversations I've had with workers in Detroit who were buying the latest model car, the best possible house and the latest furniture and equipment and so on, when I asked them: "Aren't you in kind of deep?"—some have 15 or 20 thousand dollars in obligations—the comment is: "What the hell is the difference? When the crash comes I won't have anything, the guy who has nothing now won't have anything; in the meantime I've had the chance to enjoy something, so what have I got to lose?" That may make a pretty good approach, at that.

In the face of this it is not surprising that the militancy and democracy of the unions suffered. The surprise is not that the labor movement was corrupted by this development, but rather that the damage has not been substantially greater.

This whole experience does not result from a normal, natural, stable growth of the economy. It's been built upon a foundation of sand. The economic boom in the first period following the war was based in large measure upon the pent-up consumer demand. Later on, when the economy began to sag in spite of the props that it had enjoyed, the Korean War bolstered the economy once more. Since the Korean days, a big war budget and a gigantic and still-growing consumer debt have served the same purpose.

**I**N many respects the situation is similar to the twenties, with one exception—and that exception is the fact that government spending in 1953, as contrasted with 1929, had increased 46 times over in money terms. One-sixth of the gross budget of the country is devoted to war production. Without this there is no question that America would be headed into a new major crisis of overproduction.

Now I, no more than Brother De

Maio, want to give the impression that next month, three months, or six months from now, we will have a 1929-type depression here in America. Frankly, I don't believe that's in the offing. I believe the trend will definitely be down—I doubt that it will be as precipitous as the 1929 depression—but we're not here concerned about speculating how soon it will hit. What we're concerned about is the fundamental trend, which is the important thing.

The whip of economic insecurity will have its effect on the American workers and the labor movement. In my opinion this was demonstrated quite clearly in the partial unemployment we experienced in 1953. At that time in the auto industry the unemployment was largely confined to Chrysler Corporation workers, and workers employed in independent plants. Nevertheless, in spite of the limitations, and the fact that it did not stretch out over too prolonged a period, it was sufficient to provoke opposition in the UAW-CIO, which resulted in a major struggle within the union, and compelled the leadership to shift its ground on two major questions.

At the convention before last of the UAW-CIO, the leadership introduced a resolution setting as a goal the guaranteed employment plan, or the guaranteed annual wage. Ernie asked what GAW stands for; in auto circles they say it means "Go Ask Walter." [Laughter] In any case, they were not satisfied at that time with adopting a resolution that this is the next major union goal, but they felt compelled to tie on a rider denouncing the demand for a 30-hour week for 40 hours pay as part of a Kremlin plot to disrupt production! This was just two and a half years ago. Later, because of widespread opposition developing as a result of unemployment, and the aggressive campaign carried on by Ford Local 600, at the last convention the UAW leadership was forced to reverse its ground. In order to get support for the GAW, they had to agree to a resolution that the next major demand of the auto union will be a shorter work week with no cut in pay.

**A**T the same time, the campaign conducted by the opposition against five-year contracts compelled the UAW leadership to go to that con-

vention with a pledge that no contracts of longer than two years duration will be signed in the future. The fact that they negotiated one a few months later for 3 years was rather anti-climactic. But the important thing is that they felt impelled to bow to this growing pressure within their own ranks. I think impressive too is the fact that in spite of the red-baiting conducted by the leadership of the UAW-CIO throughout this whole period, nevertheless when a strike-breaking effort developed at the Square D plant in Detroit, where the workers are organized in the independent United Electrical Workers union, the ranks of the auto workers were quickly able to see through the smoke-screen of red-baiting, and recognize the attack for what it was—a union-busting operation which would have a serious effect upon their own conditions if it was permitted to go unchallenged. And here again, it was a ground-swell from below, not initiative by the leadership from the top, which compelled the UAW-CIO leadership to give support

been the leaders in the red-baiting campaign, joined the picket lines and helped bring the strike to a successful conclusion.

Impressive too, when you consider the period we have gone through, was the tremendous demonstration and vote for Carl Stellato, spokesman for the opposition at the last UAW-CIO convention. The delegates expressed their long pent-up anger and resentment with machine rule. At the height of that demonstration more than half of the delegates at the convention were parading, carrying Stellato banners. The so-called "pork-choppers," the paid international representatives, worked all night that night and half the next morning, trying to get the situation under control, and in spite of that over 30 percent of the convention still voted for Stellato in opposition to the administration candidates.

**I**N the recent months I think we have seen an encouraging renewal of labor struggle. One of the contributing factors is the fact that the five-year



to that strike, and the workers from many local unions, including some of the most conservative locals who have

contracts of the auto industry recently came to an end. With the UAW compelled to fight for more serious de-

mands, the labor movement was again encouraged to a more aggressive stand in disputes with the employers. And as we see, while many of the major corporations have quickly signed up under the new pattern, many of these smaller corporations have decided that the time has come to take the unions on. We see a chiseling pattern unfolding where settlements two cents, five cents and seven cents below the major pattern are actually being made, and long and bitter strikes in other situations. In my opinion, the period ahead, with much more unstable economic conditions, will see a broadening of this strike struggle. I think the strikes will be more militant, as the union-busting operations we have seen at Kohler and Perfect Circle become more often the pattern of the American employers.

Because of both of these factors, the economic base and the new signs of life in the labor movement, I can't quite share the negative approach to the unity of the American labor movement which I have heard voiced in some quarters. I want to hasten to say that I see its negative side very clearly. I am convinced that in the first period one of the effects will be a strengthening of the top machine, will be a strengthening of the craft tendencies within the labor movement, but I think that's only one side of the coin. I believe out of the merger we will see a big organizing drive in the South. What will happen, in my opinion, is that just the encouragement of a formal organizing drive in the South, given the conditions which prevail, will produce a tremendous ground-swell of support and enthusiastic participation by the Southern workers themselves, and in the last analysis they are the ones who will have to do the organizing job.

**I BELIEVE** a further important effect of the unity development is its political potential. I believe the existence of a united labor movement will facilitate the drawing of lessons of class relationships in America. I think the polarization of the workers in their union organization as against the employers will tend to promote class thinking and greatly aid us in the process of achieving independent political expression by the working people. I am convinced one of the by-products of an organizing drive in the South will inevitably be the destruction of the

present function of the Democratic Party, that two-headed monstrosity which has stood as a barrier against the advancement of workers on the political scene.



One of the big difficulties in America in recent years has been the utter confusion and lack of clarity on the political scene. The important issues confronting the nation fail to find clear expression through the major political parties on the scene; more and more, political life in America is reduced to a hodge-podge of personalities and recriminations. No clear issues separate the two parties. Even the most astute politician is hard-pressed to try to distinguish himself from his opponent at the present time. The labor movement went all-out in the last election campaign, in 1954, and a great victory was won, supposedly, by the labor movement. The scoreboard was put up, the Democrats again had control of Congress, and by God, we had this liberal elected, and that liberal elected; things were looking up. But then when pause was taken for a second look, it was discovered that 14 chairmanships of Congressional committees went to the Southern Dixiecrats. This highlights one of the main problems confronting us on the political field, and that is this situation where you have the Democratic Party, with its tremendous vote-getting machine in the North based primarily on the labor movement, and

the power-wielding machine of the Southern Dixiecrats which dominates and controls Congress.

**NOW**, the last election campaign in 1954 demonstrated again, as we have seen consistently demonstrated since the early thirties, that the American workers, at least in their organized section, tend more and more to vote as a class. This is true in spite of what we may think about the policies of the labor leadership. The last election reflected labor's disquiet with two years of open and direct rule of Big Business in Washington. But labor had no real place to go. And so the traditions which had been developed of labor's alliance with the Democratic Party plus the organized support of the labor movement for the Democratic Party, found the votes of the American workers again being channelized in that direction.

In the kind of period that lies ahead, however, if I read the economic storm signals correctly, the question of who shall run the country and for what, is going to be posed before American workers in sharp fashion.

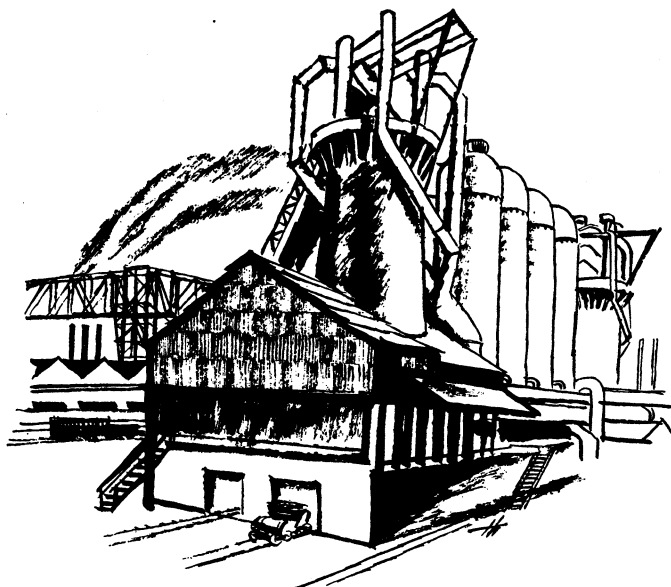
Events are on the way to hasten the destruction of American sham politics and set the stage for a new political realignment in America, the emergence of a labor party.

Now, Brother De Maio in his concluding remarks addressed himself to the political question as well. I'm not sure I fully understood the point he developed. I had the impression that part of the perspective he outlined was a need for the American workers to plunge into the Democratic Party and try to make something of it. It seems to me that would be sending workers down a blind alley. Now, I do not mean to convey by my remarks that it's going to be a simple, easy one-way street to achieve a labor party in America. Not at all. The period ahead, as I see it, will be a period of sharp struggles, temporary setbacks, and possibly defeats. But I believe that we can go ahead into this period and into this struggle armed with the conviction that deep historical forces are on our side and will plow up the ground. In the meantime difficult days still lie ahead. The period immediately facing us, in my opinion, is one of propaganda and education, a time of planting the seeds.

For many years, the Soviet wages system contained wide built-in inequities. But now a revision of the wage code is under way which may eliminate some of the worst inequalities. An important report and analysis by a leading Russian expert.

# Wages in the Soviet Union

by Isaac Deutscher



**I**T is almost thirty years since Stalin gave the 14th Congress of the Bolshevik Party the grim warning: "We must not play with the phrase about equality—this is playing with fire." He was speaking against the Leningrad Opposition which, headed by Zinoviev and Kamenev, had come to the Congress with a cry for equality in Soviet society. The cry was stifled; and the struggle against egalitarianism became the outstanding feature of Stalin's labor policy.

What is the attitude of Stalin's successors in this matter? Are they breaking with Stalinist tradition in this respect or are they upholding it? No direct answer to this question can be found in the pronouncements of Malenkov, Khrushchev, and Bulganin, who are apparently still afraid that to raise the issue frankly would be to "play with fire." But surrounded as it is by the silence of the top leaders, this is clearly becoming the central issue of Soviet domestic policy. On it hinge all the great problems arising in the Soviet economy. The question whether there is to be more or less inequality in Soviet society looms large behind the struggle now waged for higher industrial efficiency and for a new organization of industry and labor. It affects the prospects of the new Five Year Plan (1956-1960), the attitude of the Soviet working class towards its industry, and—last but not least—the degree of political stability of the post-Stalin regime.

On May 24, 1955, the Soviet Council of Ministers formed a special Committee, headed by L. Kaganovich, to deal with labor and wages. The specific purpose for which the Committee was set up was not clear at first; but this became apparent when, in July, the Prime Minister Bulganin, addressing the Central Committee, spoke about the urgent need for a reform of the existing system of

wages. He made no secret of it that this system had to some extent become a hindrance to the further industrial progress of the Soviet Union. Since then the question has become the subject of an extremely important economic discussion; and quite recently the journal *Voprosy Ekonomiki* has devoted to it a truly sensational leading article.

**T**HE present wage system has been in operation for nearly a quarter of a century. It was introduced in 1931, in the first phase of the Soviet planned economy. This alone gives a measure of the importance of the reform which is now being prepared. In 1931 Soviet industry was in desperate need of manpower. It had just absorbed all the labor reserves which were available, including the mass of unemployed workers left over from the years of the New Economic Policy. Without new labor reserves there could be no rapid industrial expansion. Equally pressing was the need to train skilled workers. Many millions of primitive, illiterate peasants were shifted from country to town in the thirties. The 1931 wages system as well as a new and most severe labor discipline were calculated to instill habits of regular industrial work into the enormous mass of uprooted peasants and to appeal to their individualistic instincts. Payments were sharply differentiated to provide incentives for skill and diligence. Piece wages replaced time wages. (Nearly four-fifths of the wages paid in Soviet industry consist of piece wages.) A multiplicity of premiums and bonuses was introduced to stimulate workers to a most intense competition for higher output. The policy culminated in the introduction of so-called progressive piece rates, under which a worker who produced, say, 50 percent above the norm, earned not 50 but 200 or 300 percent more than the normal wage.



The working class was thus sharply differentiated. Its upper stratum came to form a privileged labor aristocracy. Over the years this wage system, appealing exclusively to the acquisitiveness of the individual worker, undoubtedly helped to supply industry with masses of skilled labor. It served as the hotbed in which a vast modern industrial proletariat, such as had in the most advanced capitalist countries developed over the lifetime of many generations, formed itself in the course of only a quarter of a century. But Stalin's labor policy and the inequality which it fostered inside the working class inevitably produced resentment and social tension.

Having by and large achieved its purpose, the Stalinist policy has now become an anachronism. The outlook of the Soviet working class has changed almost beyond recognition. Gone forever is the *muzhik* who twenty-five years or twenty years ago for the first time in his life tackled a machine with barbarian clumsiness. Skilled workers are no longer a small minority of their class. The almost revolutionary character of the change is illustrated by the fact that in engineering industries the proportion of skilled men in the total of employed workers was nearly 75 percent in 1953—it was less than 25 percent in 1930. This state of affairs is certainly not characteristic for the whole of Soviet industry, because engineering is its most advanced sector. However, it is a fact that not less than one-half of the present gross industrial output of the Soviet Union comes from its engineering industries. The change in the structure of the Soviet working class has knocked the bottom out of the 1931 wages system and of Stalinist labor policy at large.

**A** POLICY which was calculated to make of the skilled workers a labor aristocracy while those workers were

in a *minority* is out of date when the *majority* consists of skilled men. A labor aristocracy which embraces half or more of the working class is no longer a labor aristocracy in the accepted sense. With the growth and spread of industrial training, the differential wage system which fostered inequality begins almost automatically to have the opposite effect and to reduce inequality. Technical progress begins to act, in Soviet conditions, as an agent of egalitarianism. When nearly three-quarters of the workers draw the premiums, bonuses, and wage rates which were previously reserved for a small group only, the differential methods of payment cease to perform their initial function and become to some extent superfluous. The change in its occupational structure frees the working class from its earlier fragmentation and imparts to it a much higher degree of social coherence and unity than it possessed during most of the Stalin era. Of this fact any revision of the Stalinist labor policy must take account.

For some time now there has been a complete silence in Russia about Stakhanovism. The old hue and cry about "socialist competition" has ceased, even though "competition" is still being encouraged in discreet and moderate terms. The Stalinist fulminations against *uravnilovka*, the egalitarian heresy, are no longer heard either. Only from time to time are Soviet administrators and industrial managers quietly reminded of the harm that may be done by leveling wages and salaries.

The reaction against the Stalinist anti-egalitarian furore is unmistakable. It did not begin after Stalin's death only; in a latent form it had developed even earlier. *Voprosy Ekonomiki* unwittingly indicates this when it discloses that in the course of the last decade the gap between the

## A Note About the Author

**I**SAAC Deutscher has, in a series of brilliantly penetrating books and articles published in recent years, established himself as one of the most authoritative analysts of Soviet affairs writing today anywhere in the world.

A Pole by birth, Mr. Deutscher became a member of the Polish Communist Party in the mid-twenties, and was active in Warsaw as an economist, political writer, literary critic and editor-in-chief of Communist periodicals, traveling extensively, in this period, inside the Soviet Union. In 1932, he was expelled from the party for leading an opposition to the then-dominant policies. In subsequent years, Mr. Deutscher withdrew from direct political activity and devoted himself to writing.

After settling in London in 1939, he quickly gained a recognized position in British journalism, and in 1949 published his authoritative study entitled "Stalin: A Political Biography." His other major work is a two-volume biography of Leon Trotsky, the first volume of which has been pub-



Deutscher

lished: "The Prophet Armed: Trotsky, 1879-1921." A second volume, "The Prophet Unarmed," and a work on Lenin are planned for early publication by Oxford Press. In this country, Mr. Deutscher has become widely known through his articles in the *Reporter*, *Foreign Affairs* and the *New York Times Magazine*.

In the spring of 1953, within a few months after Stalin's death, Mr. Deutscher published a book called "Russia: What Next?" One of his predictions was that, with the increase of Russia's productive capacity, the Russian people would demand more equity in the distribution of goods. For years, the regime had beaten back every such demand, but, Deutscher wrote, "The protracted Stalinist campaign against the egalitarian heresy has tended to defeat itself. A great cry for equality is about to go up."

This and other predictions which Mr. Deutscher made aroused the ire of various cold-war critics, who balk at every effort to depict Russia objectively as a living and developing social organism. The present article, written by Mr. Deutscher for the *American Socialist* and *France-Observateur*, bears directly on this controversy.

A collection of Mr. Deutscher's recent essays was published earlier this year in London, under the title "Heretics and Renegades." A review of this important book will appear in our next issue.

highest and the lowest basic wage rates has narrowed by about one-third in most Soviet industries. In 1946 the highest basic rates paid to engineers, chemical workers, and oil workers were three and a half times larger than the lowest rates; but they are only two and a half times larger now. This curious "manifestation of egalitarianism" was hardly accidental; and it was certainly not favored by Stalin's government, which must have put up with it only with the utmost reluctance.

This is not to say that the Soviet economy can now afford any return to the egalitarianism practised by the Bolsheviks in their earliest years, from 1919 to 1921. *The problem now is not whether or how to establish equality but how to reduce inequality.* For a long time to come a differential wage system based on piece rates will still be needed to provide incentives for higher productivity.

**I**N the course of this year the demand for higher productivity of labor has resounded ever more insistently in the Soviet Union. Since the war Soviet industry has been thoroughly re-equipped; and it has greatly expanded on a technological level which is far superior to that of the thirties and forties. Yet organization and productivity of labor have lagged behind. The Soviet worker is not utilizing his new machinery to its full capacity. Although the present Five Year Plan has, according to official statements, been fulfilled ahead of schedule, the rise in output per man has not attained the planned targets in about 40 percent of all industrial establishments.

It is in part natural and inevitable that the worker should fail to keep pace with the "permanent revolution"



in technology. In every country the ideas of the inventor and of the constructor of machines run ahead of the skill and the productive habits of the factory worker. But the lag must not be too long; and for the moment it is much longer in the Soviet Union than it should be. The productivity of the Soviet worker is now said to be six or even eight times higher than it was at the beginning of the Five Year Plans. But at the beginning of the Five Year Plans

Russian productivity was only about 10 percent of the American; and American productivity, too, has since risen enormously. With a frankness which was unimaginable during the Stalin era Soviet planners and economists now insist that the productivity of the Soviet worker is still very far below American standards, although it has already attained the Western European level. The average Soviet output per man/hour appears to be about one-third of the American average. Yet the discrepancy between the standards of the technical equipment of American and Soviet industries is very much less than that.

This unsatisfactory state of affairs has been due to many "objective" causes but in part also to the Stalinist labor policy. Paradoxically enough, the 1931 wage system designed to stimulate higher productivity has ended by giving workers and managers a vested interest in maintaining low norms of output. That these norms are exceedingly low follows from the fact that in most Soviet industries nearly all workers regularly overfulfill their norms to the extent of 150-200 percent. Since earnings depend largely on the extent to which norms are exceeded, it follows that the lower the norms the higher the earnings. Official attempts to raise norms of output have therefore repeatedly met with a resistance from both workers and managers. The government's answer has been to maintain low basic wage rates, until the combination of low norms of output and low wage rates has virtually transformed the Stalinist system of incentives into a system of "disincentives."

**T**HE Stakhanovite methods have also become a hindrance in the drive for higher productivity. In the course of years dazzling rewards and publicity encouraged skilled workers to achieve spectacular records of output. But the excessive attention given to the records of the few entailed a neglect of the productivity of the many. In the end the rewards, prizes, and progressive piece rates paid to the Stakhanovites cost the nation more than the increase in output was worth. In 1954, for instance, the average output per man was one percent higher than the planned target; but the average wage was 8 percent higher. Thus industry paid for only 1 percent of additional output eight times as much as it paid for every other percent of its production. The conclusion to which these figures point is that Stakhanovism and kindred forms of "socialist competition" have become socially parasitic.

The governmental Committee for Labor and Wages is preparing the wage reform with much caution and hesitation. There is a touch of historical irony in the fact that Kaganovich, who played so eminent a role in sponsoring the 1931 wage system, should now be called upon to scrap that system. Economic necessity has its own peculiar sense of humor. Inside Kaganovich's committee conservative and reformist tendencies are obviously at loggerheads. The government and the planning authorities are determined to raise the norms of output and to bring them in line with the new technology. This operation, no matter how necessary and justified it is from the economic viewpoint, presents grave social and political difficulties. It is bound to give rise to friction and to provoke resistance in the factories; and the resistance is likely to be much

more open and effective than it could ever be in the Stalin era.

If norms of output are to be raised will wage rates, too, be raised in a proportion acceptable to the workers? This is the difficult question with which Kaganovich's committee has to wrestle. Discussion over this is already spreading from the governmental departments down to the factories, where workers must be wondering anxiously whether technical rationalization is not going to be carried out at their expense and whether the government does not intend to use it as a pretext for pressing on wages (especially as the recent rise in wages has outstripped the supply of consumer goods and has had inflationary effects). Apprehension in the factories was certainly stirred by Bulganin when he spoke in July against the "consumptionist" approach to the wage problem.

The government's purpose is, of course, to raise productivity, not to depress wages. But if productivity fails to rise sufficiently, then the effect of new norms of output and new basic wage rates may well be to lower the earnings of at least some categories of workers. Can Bulganin and Khrushchev, who are no longer able to intimidate the working class as Stalin did, afford to take the political risks with which such a situation may be fraught?

The Soviet Government is once again confronted with the old dilemma of Soviet labor policy, the dilemma which no other than Trotsky described, as long ago as in 1923, in the following words: "The Soviet economic administrator," said Trotsky, "is always confronted with two dangers: the danger that his exacting demands may antagonize the workers . . . and the danger that he may take the line of least resistance in the matter of production and wages and . . . by yielding to the workers' consumptionist demands, sacrifice the future of the socialist economy." Lenin, speaking on the same subject in 1922, said that this dilemma "could not be removed even in the course of a number of decades." It has indeed not been removed even in the fourth decade after Lenin.

IT remains to be seen how the new wage reform will deal with this, its basic dilemma. What has already been indicated quite clearly is that the reform should abolish some of the most anti-egalitarian features of the Stalinist wages policy. This at least is the impression given by *Voprosy Ekonomiki*, which demands the liquidation of most of the "progressive piece rates," premiums and bonuses. The journal has openly come out against industrial managers wishing to preserve these items of the Stalinist wage system; and it speaks almost openly about the workers' opposition to them. "For a socialist economy," writes the journal, "it is the *average intensity of labor* [i.e. not the *exceptional* Stakhanovite intensity--I.D.] and a shortened working day which are characteristic; and there is no necessity to apply progressive piece wages on an ever wider scale." The "necessity" to apply such wages "on an ever wider scale" was to the end a sacrosanct axiom of Stalinist labor policy. "It will be necessary" *Voprosy Ekonomiki* then adds with greater assurance "to restrict the application of piece rates and to allow them to be applied only to real bottlenecks of production . . ." It is, in other words, no longer considered to be an essential requirement of socialist labor policy that a work-

er who produces 50 percent more than do his fellows at the factory bench should go on earning 200 or 300 percent more. It will be more in line with socialized attitude if he is paid simple piece rates and earns only 50 percent more. As to the premiums and bonuses, "their multiplicity reduces the effectiveness of each of them" and "if the premiums are very small their effect is insignificant . . . if they are large . . . they unduly raise costs of production."



THE policy advocated by this authoritative economic journal is certain to meet with obstruction from the very same managers whom the paper attacks. But the mere fact that this policy can now be expounded with some measure of official approval shows that the reaction against Stalinist inequality is strong not only among workers but inside the ruling group as well. The social and political implications of this development must be far-reaching. The interests of the bureaucracy as well as of the labor aristocracy are at stake, because the privileges of the former cannot be left intact in the long run if the privileges of the latter are drastically curtailed. The struggle over the wages reform is therefore of greater and more decisive importance for the trends in post-Stalinist society than are many of the events on the surface of politics.

Soviet society has, regardless of Molotov's recent "recantation," not yet achieved socialism. It is still only a transitional society *en route* from capitalism to socialism. The character of its wage system is still much more capitalist than socialist. In such a society the struggle between the various classes and groups for their respective shares in the national income is inevitable and normal, no matter how much the moralists may be shocked by it. But the growth of Soviet wealth and the indubitable growth of the socialist elements in the Soviet economy are already beginning to destroy that glaring inequality which Stalinism had the boldness to present to the world as the last word in socialism. And the real progress of Soviet society towards socialism will be measured by the degree to which that inequality "withers away."

London, October 15, 1955.

Even with Vargas gone, the people of Brazil have proved able to keep their nation out of the ranks of the "Banana Republics." A strong antagonism to upper-class candidates gave Vargas' heirs the election.

# Behind the Brazilian Elections

Rio de Janeiro, October 28

**I**N one of the most important and sharply contested elections in Brazil's history, the voters turned out in greater numbers than ever before to bring into office the political heirs of former President Vargas, Juscelino Kubitschek, President, and "Jango" Goulart, Vice President, of the Social Democrat (PSD) and Labor (PTB) parties. Although they barely squeezed in with 3.3 million votes, by a lead of only about 200,000 ahead of runner-up Juarez (at this writing not all the returns are in, but the picture is clear), their victory is significant. While not a great triumph for progressivism in any clear form, it does mean that Brazil is one of the few countries within the capitalist sphere of influence that has not, in the last few years, wound up with a more reactionary government than the one it had previously—as witness the opposite recent cases in Latin America: Guatemala and Argentina particularly.

In order to better understand the meaning of the election, it is worth while to start with a look at the opposition candidates:

1. Adhemar de Barros was the slick, wealthy candidate of his own private party. He represented Big Business, whose monopolistic financial clutch on the country's economy has its nerve center in Sao Paulo City. Adhemar based his campaign, which was larded with plenty of demagoguery in an attempt to attract the poorer classes, on the need of a business-like management for Brazil. Although 2.8 million people were fooled by his fancy oratory and big promises of prosperity, in his own state of Sao Paulo (where he was recently defeated for re-election to the governorship by a left-wing reform candidate, and where he is currently under indictment for abuse of office and graft) only 40 percent of the electorate voted for him—this being in sharp contrast to Juscelino's showing in his home state of Minas Gerais, where he got 70 percent of the votes.

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*This article was received from a South American correspondent before the recent Brazilian army maneuvers for and against the seating of the newly elected President and Vice President began; maneuvers which appear to have resulted in a defeat for the reactionary army officers who have been trying to overthrow the election results.*

**T**HE main street-corner argument in favor of Adhemar admitted his corruption, but claimed that it was better for the country to increase its income, even if half the profits went into his pockets (as happened during his reign in Sao Paulo), than to remain at current stagnant levels. But such shallow reasoning on the Tammany model got him only third place; and his business buddies will have to do without their cut in the (hypothetical) increase in Brazilian income.

2. Second place, with 3.1 million votes, was won by General Juarez Távora, the Army and Church candidate backed by a coalition of right-wing parties. He campaigned under the banners of nationalism (including anti-communism), old-time virtues (with such slogans as "Preserve the Family"), and reform (that is, removing the "crooks" still in office from the administration of the late President Vargas). His platform, in fact, closely resembled that of the Republicans in the U.S. when they got Eisenhower into office in 1952.

The dice were carefully loaded in favor of Juarez, including such last-minute devices as changing the type of ballot used, turning up government documents to discredit "Jango" and thereby Juscelino as well, publishing Church warnings against the close ties of the Labor Party to the "agnostic Communists," and finally, public statements by prominent military leaders threatening armed intervention if any former Vargas followers were to win. The strength of the right-wing movement can be seen by the closeness of the final results; and Juarez is still trying to get the presidency through court action, but is given little chance of success.

## *Class Solidarity in Brazil*

International business circles didn't miss the significance of the Brazilian elections, as the following comments in the Nov. 12 London *Economist* show:

**T**HE result of this election shows, as did those of 1950 when Dr. Vargas, as the "Father of the Poor" defeated two conservative candidates including the governmental nominee, that most Brazilians are loath to deposit much confidence in an aspiring leader who represents a class which they identify with employers and capital. But the average Brazilian voter today is far less susceptible to demagoguery than he was in 1950. And his reaction, despite his disillusionment with the last Vargas regime, in voting for a man who campaigned as the heir of the Vargas "true mission" and as a champion of ordinary people, is causing a good deal of soul-searching in the conservatives' ranks. Two middle-class Brazilians, one of them a minor official, made a revealing remark which appears to typify the attitude of many voters. In effect, each said: "Normally I would vote for Távora, whom I respect as a person. But as a wage earner I suspect his associations and his commitments to a class other than my own more perhaps than I do Kubitschek and his associations."

The three chief candidates differed little in their approach to the broad issues of national and economic policy. The average voter appears to have decided between them on the basis of class and his attitude towards the Vargas regime, and the election results seem to show that the Brazilian people have become neatly divided into two by these issues.

3. The fourth-place candidate, who pulled in somewhat less than a million votes and was never seriously considered in the running, was Plinio Salgado, founder and leader of the pre-World War II Integralista (Fascist)



Party. It is interesting to note that ten years after the Axis was defeated, its representative in Brazil still has so many followers. (In German-dominated Paraná and Santa Catarina, former Integralista strongholds, he got as many votes as any of the other candidates.) Even more significant for an understanding of the Brazilian political climate is the general feeling that, had he not run, virtually all his votes would have gone to Juarez, thus ensuring a rightist victory—and in fact there was a considerable pre-election movement to get him to withdraw in favor of the latter.

Thus it can be seen that the reactionary element in Brazil is strong, and was only kept out of the saddle by the uncompromising attitude of the extreme totalitarian faction and the personal ambitions of one of its Big Business leaders.

**JUSCELINO**, the winner of the contest, can be considered a “leftist” only in contrast to the opposition listed above, and because he identifies himself with the policies of Vargas. In contrast, his running mate, the real target of reactionary vitriol, is the head of Vargas’ own Labor Party, and draws considerable support from the outlawed Communists, who came through with an estimated 300-500 thousand votes.

Vargas’ followers subscribe to policies of a sort of “welfare-statism” grafted on to nineteenth-century capitalism. One of Juscelino’s campaign managers recently declared that he derives inspiration from the methods of the Roosevelt-Truman period (“Juscelino . . . will initiate his

own ‘New Deal’ for the national salvation. . . .”) and the political philosophy of Mackenzie King: “A free economy, rigorously fiscalized” (Luiz Correa, *O Jornal*, Oct. 26). This last phrase aptly sums up Brazil under Vargas: Capitalism in its most rampant form, but regulated in an attempt to placate the workers and protect them from its most glaring injustices.

Nevertheless, in a country where, less than a generation ago, a few traditional families reigned in feudalistic arrogance, where, a few years past, the workers were ruthlessly exploited, and where today illiteracy, poverty, disease and malnutrition are the rule—in such a country the continuation of the Vargas policy can be considered little short of miraculous. He himself was so hounded by Army, Church and Big Business interests that a little over a year ago he shot himself in despair. His followers have been blasted month after month with every sort of invective that could be thought up by the conservative press, and every effort short of the use of armed force was made to keep his followers out of office. And it is very likely that only an awakened and militant public opinion (for months the streets have been plastered with such signs as “Stop the Coup” and “Preserve the Constitution”) kept the Army from carrying out its threats.

**I**N short, Brazil has lifted itself out of the ranks of the “Banana Republics” and shown that the power of the people is strong enough to overcome the whims of a few powerful men and selfish-interest groups. It should be kept in mind that only the literate can vote in this country, which means that much of the pressure that was brought to bear to stop a forceful repudiation of the election results came from those whose influence could not be registered at the polls.

As we stated at the start, this election was not a victory for any kind of surging radicalism. But it was a defeat for the most reactionary elements in the country, and it has shown the working people that, through unity, they are able to make their desires and aspirations felt. In the Labor Party they have a vehicle with which to express themselves, and, as each election year passes and more young, literate workers are able to go to the polls, the party will continue to gain strength.

The workers of Brazil are not insensitive to the advantages of socialism, and as they become less dependent on alliances with more conservative groups (as with the Social Democrats in this election) some of their leaders will feel freer to campaign more vigorously and directly for the socialist ideals to which they adhere. The results of this election should give heart to many in Latin America and elsewhere as being one of the few rays of light that have shone through the angry clouds of reaction that have, in recent years, cast their shadow across the capitalist portion of the world.

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Rise like Lions after slumber  
 In unvanquishable number—  
 Shake your chains to earth like dew  
 Which in sleep has fallen on you—  
 Ye are many—they are few.

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

## Socialism and Democracy

In its November issue, *Monthly Review* published a series of five questions submitted by a reader, with the editors' answers, under the title "Socialism—USA and USSR: Some Questions for Discussion."

In their introduction, *Monthly Review* editors Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy commented: "Recent years have taught us that issues we once thought simple are complicated. The cold war and the witch hunt have made us see civil liberties in a new light. We are not absolute civil libertarians any more than we are absolute pacifists, but over the years the conviction has grown on us that a good society without civil liberty is as impossible as a good society without peace. There is no good society anywhere in the world today. But a good society is more nearly possible today than ever before, and there are powerful forces and tendencies moving us in that direction. The job of socialists is not only to encourage and strengthen them but also to keep alive and radiant the vision of the goal."

*Monthly Review* has submitted the questions to the editors of the *American Socialist* and *Political Affairs*. We print below the questions, the replies made by *Monthly Review*, and the replies submitted by the *American Socialist*.

### The Questions:

1. Under what circumstances (if any) should civil rights in a socialist America be denied to anti-socialist individuals or groups who are not practicing, actively planning, or inciting violence?

2. Many socialists, including the writer, believe that propaganda which incites racial or national hatred should be outlawed in a socialist America, or even sooner. Can this end be accomplished in a manner consistent with the First Amendment? If not, should the Constitution be amended, and how?

3. Is the leadership of all or virtually all public bodies by one party inevitable in any socialist state? If not, would it nonetheless be desirable in a socialist America?

4. Is the control of mass communications by a single party inevitable in any socialist state? If not, should some degree of access to and control of mass communications be guaranteed, in a socialist America, to non-socialist and/or anti-socialist groups and individuals?

5. In a socialist America, to what degree (if any) should the government or governing party seek to impose administratively its aesthetic and ideological standards on cultural and scientific workers and on the general public?

### "Monthly Review" Replies:

1. Under no circumstances.

2. We believe this end can be accomplished in a manner consistent with the First Amendment. The First Amendment does not protect libel or slander, and no one claims that it should. A group of people can be libeled or slandered as well as an individual, even though the fact

may not be explicitly recognized in Anglo-American jurisprudence. And what is "propaganda which incites racial or national hatred" but a vicious form of group slander? What is needed here, it seems to us, is new law based on assured scientific knowledge and almost universally accepted ethical principles. We do not for a moment minimize the practical difficulties in all matters of this kind where lines must be drawn and decisions made. But to deal with these difficulties is precisely the social function of the science (or art, if you prefer) of jurisprudence. We in this country are proud of our accomplishments in this field: Should we now assume that they are incapable of being extended in the future?

3. Socialist societies are not going to be built anywhere without strong and determined leadership, and it seems to be no more than a truism that such leadership will have to come from socialist parties. In backward countries threatened by outside intervention and under the iron necessity of forcing the pace of economic development, it is probably unavoidable that this leadership should for a time be the monopoly of a single party and should pervade nearly all aspects of social life. But we are not persuaded that this is necessarily so in advanced countries which, when they finally do go socialist, will be joining a community of long-established socialist societies. The truth is that we do not know enough to answer the first half of this question with certainty, but on the basis of the evidence to date we believe that a one-party state is not inevitable.

As to the second half of the question, we have no doubt that it is desirable to avoid a one-party state if possible. Too much concentration of power is a dangerous thing—the fact that capitalist hacks scream this in our ears all the time doesn't make it any less true—and competition for good ends is beneficial. We should work for a socialist America in which there is as much diffusion of power as the requirements of comprehensive economic planning will permit and in which there is plenty of opportunity for open and friendly rivalry for the honor of leadership.

4. It is in answering questions like this that one is most subject to the temptation to draw up blueprints. Say that such access should be guaranteed to all, and you will immediately be asked how it is to be done. Since there is really no way it can be done—under any form of society—you may soon find yourself, if you are not careful, devising ingenious schemes for assuring as much access as possible to as many people as possible.

In our view, this sort of thing is a waste of time. What can usefully be said in answer to the question, it seems to us, is (a) that it is not inevitable that a single party should establish a monopoly over the mass communications media (this was already implied in our answer to question number 3), and (b) that it is possible to think of several methods of making access to these media reasonably free. For example, all social and cultural organizations (political parties, trade unions, universities, and so on) might be guaranteed the right to own their own printing equipment, broadcasting facilities, and the like, and to use these facilities as they see fit. As to un-



attached individuals, why shouldn't they retain the same privilege they have under capitalism, namely, the privilege of passing the hat, starting (say) a magazine, and publishing it as long as enough people are interested to buy it and/or make up the deficit?

Here again, as in the case of earlier questions, we are under no illusions that everything is going to be plain sailing. But we see no insuperable obstacles to the solution of these problems under a socialist society. What more can one reasonably ask for at this stage of the game?

5. We do not think it should seek to *impose* them by any means, administrative or other. This does not mean that the leadership should have no standards nor that it should refrain from trying to persuade the public to accept them. But that is an entirely different question.

## "American Socialist" Replies:

1. A socialist America will bring about such a rise in living standards and national well-being, such a decline in social tensions and antagonisms, and will succeed in gaining such enthusiastic support from the population, that civil rights can be more broadly and inviolably established than ever before in our history. A socialist America should, therefore, represent an advance over the best that capitalism has had to offer in this field as well as in others.

Between the development of a fully socialist society in America and the end of capitalism, however, there is bound to be a period of transition, involving considerable social stress. Capitalist forces will retain some strength for a while, and will intrigue to overthrow socialism. During such a transition period, it is reasonable to assume some curtailment of civil liberties for active and avowed opponents of the new society. But, in an advanced country like the United States, the socialist regime would most likely be stabilized in a relatively short time, and the transition to full civil liberties for all would come quickly.

2. The reply made by the editors of *Monthly Review*—that slander and libel cannot claim protection under the First Amendment—is quite proper. But in addition, the question strikes us as being slightly artificial. When the criminal code has been altered to include stiff penalties for all *actions* of racial and national discrimination, when such laws are strictly and undeviatingly enforced, when a strong public opinion bears down as mercilessly on the practicing chauvinist as it does today on the murderer, the arsonist, the thief—then the problem of "hate propaganda" will recede into the background. There is no problem at present of legislation to prevent people propagandizing for murder, arson, robbery or cannibalism. In other words, when we stamp out the *deed*, the ideology that goes with it will die for lack of nourishment.

3. The first Russian Soviet Government consisted of a coalition of two parties. The other labor and peasant organizations outside the government were permitted to function in full freedom for almost a year. That was the original libertarian Marxist conception of how a socialist government would operate.

But the immense difficulties of trying to build socialism in a backward country ruined by war and wracked by civil strife and foreign intervention forced Lenin and his associates to abandon the experiment as impossible to execute in the given conditions, and to centralize all power in their own party. It was only later that this hardship-imposed measure was converted into a virtue, and depicted as the norm of socialist administration.

If past experience is any guide, socialist power in the United States will be won under the leadership of the one party that is sufficiently resourceful, far-sighted, and resolute. That party, it may be assumed, will take the leadership of the main public institutions (as the government parties do in Britain and the United States today). But it must be part of the socialist creed that the other labor or popular organizations will be permitted to operate with full freedom on the understanding that they do not undertake forcible action against the socialist setup.

Can such a program actually be carried out? Yes, it is reasonable to believe that socialist democracy, embodying and expanding traditional American rights, can be inaugurated even in the years of transition and turmoil. After all, capitalism is so powerful and deep-rooted in this country, it is impossible to conceive of a socialist victory without the enthusiastic support of a substantial majority of the people. It will be harder to achieve a socialist victory in this country than it was in Czarist Russia, but once there is such a victory it will be infinitely easier to defend it. The danger of capitalist restoration will be slight.

Furthermore, a socialist government, resting on the technical resources and achievements of advanced capitalism, will be able almost from the first to assure superior living standards, medical care, social security, leisure, political and cultural opportunities, etc. In these circumstances, the socialist regime can attain the necessary stability to make possible a considerable measure of democratic tolerance.

Without laying down a lot of rules and regulations to meet unknown future contingencies, socialists must strive to assure that kind of democratic system. And, most important, socialists must begin right now to combat the notion in the minds of Americans that the object of socialism is to destroy the multi-party state and set up a one-party dictatorship. That is an erroneous and harmful idea, fostered by uncritical apologists for all things Russian, which disarms socialists in the face of capitalism's strongest single propaganda claim.

4. If socialist democracy is to be a reality, the different political organizations, independent labor unions, cultural societies, etc., must have the right to operate newspapers, magazines, and other information media; without this their right of dissent becomes purely theoretical.

5. We can see nothing but harm coming from attempts to impose any official government or party line in such fields as music, drama, literature, painting or genetics. Marxists will fight for their viewpoints in various philosophical, artistic, and cultural fields in the free market place of ideas.



Left wing retains its influence in the British Labor Party ranks. But machine control in the hands of union bureaucracy faces Bevan and his associates with the critical question of what to do next.

## What Next for British Labor?

by Our European Correspondent

Margate, England

**I**N contrast with the burning interest of last year, the proceedings of the Margate Labor Party conference were relegated this year to minor league attention. The romantic doings of the Princess and her captain stole the show. In fact, the most publicized event of the conference was a resolution demanding that royalty be permitted to marry a member of the proletariat. A Bevanite remarked that he might have supported the resolution had the wording been reversed, adding that the right wing was too firmly in control for anything so "radical."

Last year's struggle over world-shaking issues had given way to a technician's report on the organizational shortcomings of Labor's electoral campaign. The big Bevanite thrust for control of the party was replaced by a squabble among right-wing aspirants for the Attlee succession. This was all the backwash of the defeat in the June parliamentary elections. The forces in conflict were the same this year as last but the issue dividing them was at once more fundamental and more abstract: What kind of party is the Labor Party and what are its basic aims?

The keynote decided for the conference was the [Harold] Wilson committee report on party organization. The report was an inquest into the election defeat. Without straying into political questions, the committee concluded from its survey that "compared with our opponents we are still at the penny-farthing stage in a jet-propelled era, and our machine, at that, is getting rusty and deteriorating with age." Entire areas were without adequate personnel in the election, some with none at all, and the enthusiasm of members was at a low ebb. The committee expressed surprise "not that the general election was lost but that we won as many seats as we did." Shocked at the state of party organization, the report af-

firms that "without putting the main blame for our defeat on the mechanics of organization . . . even a limited improvement could have won us the election if only by a narrow margin."

**H**AVING appointed the committee, the right wing hoped to reduce the conference to a discussion of the small change of organizational improvements. The calculation misfired. The committee, however, was beyond reproach, consisting besides Wilson, a moderate Bevanite, of three right-wingers. Although there was no specific indictment, the real culprit emerging from the report was Transport House itself and the General Secretary, Morgan Phillips. The very men who sneer at the importance of socialist principles and who place all their cards on the machine had utterly failed in organizing a machine when the party needed it. The very men who consider the party solely an instrument for elections—not on any conditions to be diverted to support of strikes, anti-war activity or other non-parliamentary actions—had allowed the instrument to become rusty with age. A machine, and a streamlined one, does exist, but its purpose is not to beat the Tories but to crush left-wing opponents within the party.

This unstated, but clearly derivative conclusion of the report was to cause considerable discomfiture among the right wing. After the election, they had accused Bevan of losing it by disuniting the party. But for the report, they would undoubtedly have continued and amplified their accusations at the conference. On the third day, in a private session called to discuss the report, W. J. Webber, a member of the General Council of the trade unions, gave Bevan his opportunity. Webber accused the committee of snooping behind the backs of the party officials and de-

nounced Bevan for having organized a party within a party. The fighting Welshman, with only five minutes at his disposal, rose to reply as a simple delegate from Ebbw Vale. Receiving the biggest ovation accorded to any leader at the conference, his speech rescued the conference from its torpor and put new heart into the left-wing forces.

Bevan said the real cause of the defeat was the disheartening of the rank and file by the departure of the party leadership from a socialist policy. Attempts to discuss and rectify the policy had met with disciplinary sanctions and he himself had been deeply humiliated by threats of expulsion on the eve of the election. The conference had been manipulated to evade a real discussion. It had been thus far a "charade" in which those opposition resolutions had been selected which could be knocked down like "skittles." The party would either be socialist or it would not be "damn all."

**T**HIS was, in fact, the essence of the "organization" question. The Labor Party, as one delegate described it, is like a stool with three legs: the individual membership constituency parties, the affiliated trade unions and the cooperatives (much smaller than the first two). The unions provide the funds and the moral support of the working class, but it is the devoted, self-sacrificing leg-work of the rank and file member, knocking on doors, rousing the lethargic voter, canvassing prospective members, distributing literature, that makes the wheels turn 'round. His only reward is the satisfaction of fighting for his socialist principles. Dissatisfaction arises when these principles are submerged by an opportunistic party leadership. Apathy follows when the means of changing policy is barred by an automatic five-to-one majority which the bloc vote possessed by trade union bureaucrats assures the right wing.

In the euphoria of full employment, the thinking of the right wing has moved far from socialist doctrine—even from British Fabianism, not to speak of Marxism. The rightists have landed, in all but name, in the camp of capitalist liberalism. On the eve of the conference, Anthony Crosland, one of the theorizers, wrote in the *Observer* that "British capitalism has been transformed almost out of recognition" and hence it was "absurd to go on calling this economy capitalism." And as "the economic system has been reformed," leaving behind the pre-war "pre-occupations of socialists with unemployment, instability, physical poverty and the possibility of the ultimate collapse of the whole system," the time had come for "hard thinking." Conclusion: Socialism should be redefined "in terms of a set of social and ethical aspirations," discarding nationalization and planning as "means" no longer conforming to the new circumstances.

The *Manchester Guardian* added its usual fatuous advice urging the Labor Party to get rid of the "Victorian" notions of nationalization and planning. Herbert Morrison echoed in an eve-of-the-conference speech that a "peaceful revolution" had occurred in Britain creating a "new balance of classes" with the better-paid workers evolving into a new middle class. This, he said, threw up new political problems for the Labor Party.

This so-called "new thinking" made a loud noise but

it had absolutely no support among the ranks of the party. The largest number of resolutions from the constituency parties demanded a return to socialist policy. There was war from the time the conference opened and throughout its sessions against the backsliding of the leadership. Again and again, the subject recurred in discussion on nationalization, on automation and on the functioning of the nationalized industries.

"We fought and lost the last election," said one delegate, "on a policy of consolidation. Unless we are prepared to go forward with the idea of taking industry out of the hands of the capitalists we shall never win another election." Another added: "We were told on the doorsteps that there was no difference between our party and the Conservative Party. Can you blame the workers for thinking that way?" And again: "There's no use pretending we're socialists if we say prosperity can last under private ownership."

**R**ESOLUTIONS on automation demanded shorter hours, longer holidays, and earlier retirement, and the nationalization of industry. "Automation," said the mover of one resolution, "provides the socialist movement with the technological means to transform society within a decade. If our economy is not to collapse from the contradictions of full-scale automated production the translocation of our country into a socialist one is an historic necessity." Others spoke up: "I have been told that the resolution calling for full nationalization was too sweeping. I apologize, I thought that was the job of socialism." A representative of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (auto and metal workers) said he hoped the National Executive would not water down socialism. "We want changes. We cannot stand still. If we stand still another party which shall be unnamed will take hold of the initiative."

All these resolutions went down to defeat under the massive bloc vote, roughly a million from the constituency parties against the five million from the unions. The ostrich-like union leaders weren't disturbed about automation. Everything would "sort itself out," new machines, new jobs, etc. On nationalization, the National Executive resolution, shelving the whole matter by a project to issue policy statements over the next three years, was pushed through with the usual vote. Delegates poured their scorn on this idea of "Royal Commissions" reports. "In 1958," one of them said, "we might know where we are going." Bevan branded the method as a subversion of party democracy. But the steam-roller ground down the protests.

For all its valiant effort the left wing had been beaten, yet the struggle it had waged was far from being futile. The right-wing leaders squirmed under the ever-recurring charge that they had abandoned socialism. They knew it came from a majority of the party as well as from the rank-and-file trade unionists if their votes could ever be properly counted. Besides, Morrison and Gaitskell, rivals for Attlee's mantle, had to think of membership support to buttress their claims. So after the resolutions went down to defeat, the conference was submerged by their effusive declarations of faith. Gaitskell literally sprouted socialist blossoms. In the *Tribune* mass meeting the same night, Michael Foot brought down the house with his jibe that



RIGHT-WINGER: HERBERT MORRISON

there had never been "so many conversions at the same time since a Chinese general baptized his troops with a hose."

**B**EVAN'S address at the meeting, gentle, non-controversial in tone, shrewdly sought to commit the right wing to its verbal declarations in contrast with its delaying evasive resolutions. Did the party want unity? Then what better basis was there than the alleged common socialist agreement in public ownership? For socialists it should not be necessary to investigate what industries should be exempt from nationalization but which should not; it was capitalism, not socialism, that needed to justify its existence. "One of the first objectives is to establish this principle and carry it out so that the publicly-owned sector of society must be so broad, so massive as to dominate the rest of the economy." Our fault was not too much socialism but too little. Even now the Tories, whose election policy is approaching bankruptcy, are wondering whether they really won the election. Everywhere crisis is knocking on the doors of the chancelleries, at Butler's in Britain, at Adenauer's in Germany, and in the U.S. there is a maximum of prosperity and a minimum of tranquillity. It was good, if a little late, for Gaitskell to praise the nationalized industries, but the party had to go a step further to rectify a mistake that was bringing disrepute on these industries among their employees. Control had to be taken from "irresponsible boards" and democratized by becoming answerable to parliament. Hundreds of millions of people in the world are now tackling their problems by socialist principles. Can this party do less? What we lack is not brains but guts.

As usual, the conference was preceded and accompanied by the mourners at Bevan's political deathbed. And as usual, after hearing the ovation he had been given and watching virtually the whole conference turn out to hear him in his own meeting (held in the convention hall), they found their crocodile tears premature. But the conference, revealing weaknesses, was undoubtedly a blow to many left wingers. Bevan's remarks at the mass meeting were intended to counteract this feeling of despondency.

The Bevanites, once only a minority in the constituency parties, now won six of the seven seats in the elections to that section of the National Executive. The first right-wing runner-up was a half million votes behind the last winner. Still, the Bevanite position was worse than it had been at Morecambe a few weeks ago, and at Scarborough last year. At Morecambe, there was sufficient union support to give the Bevanites a majority on some questions; and at Scarborough huge votes were piled up against German rearmament and for Bevan in his contest with Gaitskell for party treasurer. This time the Bevanites were virtually bereft of trade union support in the voting. What happened? Had the trade unionists turned away from Bevan to support the union bureaucrats?

**N**O, it would be more correct to say that with the Labor Party out of office for several years they had turned away from politics and were giving their attention to economic problems. The opposition to the union leaders is perhaps greater than it has been for a long time. At the Trade Union Congress which met in September at Southport, the opposition consistently received over three million votes to somewhat over four million for the official leadership on such questions as strike action, German rearmament, and the establishment of friendly relations with the World Federation of Trade Unions. It was therefore right for Bevan to say to the union leaders at the conference that he represented as many trade unionists as they. That this relationship of forces was unexpressed on the floor did not allay the nervousness of the union heads. They knew that leaders of rebellious unions were skating on thin ice when they bargained for positions on the National Executive in return for ignoring the opinions of their rank and file.

Charles Geddes, last year's TUC president, cried out that the attacks in the party against the union officialdom "would lead to undermining the faith of union members in their leaders." Other trade union heads bitterly objected when party delegates questioned their obstructionist policies toward "unauthorized" strikes. An uproar was caused when Norman Dinning of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, quickly ruled out of order, succeeded in telling in the conference that his union leaders, despite explicit instruction from the union's highest body, had not consulted the delegation before casting a unit vote for Gaitskell.

These multiple signs would indicate that the right-wing position in the unions is a shaky one. Big changes are in the making but it will take time and economic developments to make them felt within the party. Meanwhile doubts have naturally assailed many left wingers as to whether the party policy—and leadership—can actually be changed. This is accompanied by the let-down still felt from the near-split last May. When the Labor Party moved to the right in the thirties it cut across the sentiments of millions of desperate and unemployed workers. Socialists, who could not live within the party, thrived on the militant moods outside it. Despite a steadily maturing opinion, despite a movement to the left, there has been no such urgency behind radical policies in recent years. This is the right wing's strength and Bevan's great dilemma.

IT must also be remembered that the biggest impulse for the Bevanite movement was the danger of war. Once this receded—and the changed world situation is in some part due to Bevan's strong stand—the movement lost some of its initial momentum. At the conference itself, foreign policy aroused only minor interest. The pacifists took charge of the debate on the H-Bomb, and the chief debate occurred on a more general resolution introduced by Zilliacus calling for independence from both blocs. The right wing had also modified its position on trade with China and to a certain extent on Germany, sufficient to take the big sting of dispute out of these questions.

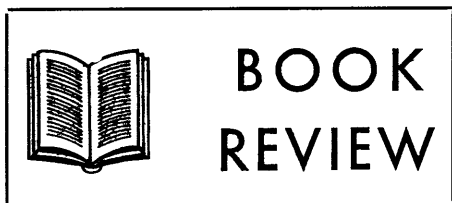
The principal difficulty of the left wing is an organizational one. It has neither a party of its own, although it is the size of a big party, nor is it able to organize within the Labor Party. This is not due to the primitive ideas on organization of some Bevanite leaders. It is because the National Executive Committee which tolerates Fabians and Zionists would quickly place a formal Bevanite grouping on the proscribed list used to ban Communists, peace movements and other groupings.

There was an echo of this at the conference where last year's proscription of *Socialist Outlook* was followed this time by a confirmation of the expulsion of several of its members. To catch the vote of naive democrats it was alleged they were a mischievous nuisance in the party. This was accompanied, however, by their indictment as "revolutionary communists." After the vote had been taken, a delegate found his way to the mike to express the general alarm of the conference that holding views contrary to the National Executive should be cause for expulsion. He was ruled out of order. Another intrusion on party democracy was the abolition of the Labor League of Youth. The leaders had held forth at great length on the need to attract the youth, and the predominance of grey and bald at the conference showed how great was

this need. But the youth league, with even limited autonomy, had already been a revolutionary thorn in the side of Transport House. So the first measure to attract the youth was to dissolve its organization.

TO say that the left wing is unorganized is not entirely accurate. In control of the majority of constituency parties, they have official organization on a local scale. The right wing will not permit any unofficial linking of these parties in fear that a new center of leadership would quickly replace its own. In short, the difficulties of the Left arise from its being too strong to be a faction, but not yet strong enough to inherit the party which rightly belongs to them. That will come in time, perhaps "British time," and possibly sooner. The pessimists had no sooner proclaimed the end of socialism, ushering in an era of pleasant harmony with the Tories, than the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the British people were buying too much, and eating too much. A series of measures now awaiting the new parliament would cut food subsidies (raise prices), cut building grants (to raise rents), end new building, eliminate installment buying and other measures to end the "riotous welfare-state" living of the British working class. The revolt will start in the unions because no one wants to return to the shabby twenties or the grim thirties, and will spread into the party.

One final observation: Whatever its other faults, the one fault the conference didn't suffer from was red-baiting. Except for the brief incident in the expulsion of the *Socialist Outlook* supporter, the label communist was rarely if at all used as an epithet in debate. Despite all the bureaucratic manipulation, the retreat from socialist principles, it was a clean conference. The chairman in her closing remarks attributed it to the "British tradition." This writer gives more weight to the corrective influence of a powerful left wing.



### *An American Abroad*

*PARIS TO PEKING*, by Joseph Starobin.  
Cameron Associates, Inc., New York,  
1955, \$3.75.

THE author of "Eyewitness in Indo-China" rounds out in this volume his observations as the *Daily Worker* foreign correspondent in France, Italy, and China in 1952-53. The account is pretty interesting at times, but is cursed with the occupational ailment of so much Communist-influenced writing—it is two-dimensional.

Mr. Starobin has a strong sense of history, and like other American writers on China, knows that what is transpiring in

that country today will alter the aspect of mankind tomorrow. He conveys something of the excitement that has gripped people who are participating in this gargantuan upheaval. Nevertheless, he finds it very difficult to say anything fresh and new about the New China. He asked Chinese officials the stock questions and received the stock answers; and time and again the narrative slips into the stereotype of a modern pastoral idyll.

The earlier chapters on France and Italy have a little more verve and tang than the bulk of the book which concerns China. Here also the author reveals his acute understanding of the essence of the political relationships and class dilemmas in these two countries, but takes his stand unhesitatingly on the official Communist Party line.

The Communist Party is the largest party in France. The Communists and Nenni Socialists dominate labor and even middle-class ranks in Italy. Yet both organizations are at a dead end and seem to be going nowhere, and both countries are stagnating politically and economically. Why don't the Communists begin an active struggle for

socialism? Difficult as it is to believe, that is against their policy—which Starobin defends. His reasoning runs this way: "Just at the moment when France was ripe for a transition to a new social order . . . the struggle was transferred to a world plane. . . . For the Communists to have tried to realize the promise of the Resistance would have risked civil war, that would either have to become world-wide or fail." He quotes Billoux, one of the French Communist leaders, who said: "We might have taken power at almost any time in 1944, but the question was—how long would we have held it?"

The author clearly is not disputing that these parties have the influence to launch an active campaign for socialism, but argues against such a course lest it provoke a world-wide conflict. Under this theory co-existence is interpreted to mean for the present time something like this: "Let's go along with the *status quo* because we don't dare rock the boat." But if this *status quo* notion is correct, why is it only correct for France and Italy? Why didn't it apply to Mao Tse-tung in 1949 when he got involved in civil war? Were there no risks

attached to that action? Why didn't it apply to Ho Chi Minh, whose forces attacked the French positions last year and provoked people in high office in the United States to make proposals about dropping atom bombs in retaliation? Why doesn't it apply today to Russia, whose leaders just permitted arms to be shipped to Egypt?—an act which has thrown the Near East into great tension, and may yet result in a local war. If one wants to argue for a policy of *status quo*, one has to be consistent.

Socialists cannot ignore, of course, the relationship of forces in their calculations, and should not embark on any adventures. But no big venture is without some risks, and strategic planning is supposed to be designed to achieve your aims with maximum effectiveness, not to immobilize and paralyze your own forces.

**MR. STAROBIN** is frank to admit that the French Communist Party cannot grow with this kind of a policy, and that it is problematical how long it can even hold its present strength. "The Left could not do better than hold its own, and there were foreseeable circumstances in which that, too, might be very difficult. For there were emerging political leaders like Pierre Mendès-France, who were determined to compete with the Left far more effectively than the petty politicians in the shifting combinations of unstable majorities." But we are left with no better solution to this conundrum than a quotation from Walt Whitman's "O Star of France."

There are a number of passages in the book which unmistakably suggest that Mr. Starobin is dissatisfied with either some or many features of the American Communist movement, and that he is seeking a new solution for the American Left. This impression is reinforced by the kind of review the *Daily Worker* ran of the book. It is difficult to say, however, what precisely the author has in mind, as he expresses his critical comments with extreme caution and reserve.

B. C.

## *The Finest Are None too Fine*

*THE TROUBLE WITH COPS*, by Albert Deutsch. Crown Publishers, Inc., New York, 1955, \$3.

**ABOUT** ten years ago Albert Deutsch wrote an explosive and widely influential series of articles for the late New York newspaper, *PM*, on America's terribly backward mental hospitals. These articles helped focus enough public interest on the subject to enable some interested groups to get more money for these institutions. Now Mr. Deutsch has written another of his fine reportorial studies of a complex social problem. He gathers together much up-to-date information on the history of law enforcement agencies in America from Colonial times, on the methods developed by our police systems, on the training of police-

men, on special police problems like juvenile delinquency, and, most important, on the nation-wide phenomena of police involvement with organized crime.

**JUST** a random run-through of recent police news will back up the assertion which one of the experts on this subject made of there being a general "breakdown in police service" today in the United States. Members of the Miami and Birmingham police forces have, in 1954 and 1955, been convicted of being members of burglary rings. In June 1954, the newly nominated attorney-general of Alabama, Albert L. Patterson, was shot to death. He was nominated partly on a platform of cleaning up Phenix City, a notorious wide-open town where the take from prostitution and gambling annually was estimated at \$100 million. A deputy sheriff was convicted of complicity in the slaying. In New York, in 1953, the testimony of Harry Gross, a Brooklyn bookie, led to wholesale dismissals and resignations from the police force, numbering up to 200 men—men who were getting a cut of Gross' \$20-million-a-year gambling operations. Also in 1953, the New York city police were charged with repeated acts of brutality. Bruce Smith, a nationally known expert on police affairs, supplied much of the documentation showing how, over a period of many years, a systematic effort was made to cover up brutality, and how extremely light penalties were given cops who got into off-duty brawls where civilians were hurt or murdered, or who were exposed during court trials as inflictors of cruel treatment. It was at this time also that an incredible secret agreement between the FBI and the New York Police Department was uncovered, in which New York's "finest" were given illegal immunity from FBI intervention in case of police brutality.

Mr. Deutsch describes the phenomenon of the "bag-man," or "captain's man," whose duty it is to make the rounds each month to collect standardized fees from gamblers,

brothels, and others who are being protected by the police of that precinct or even by the chief. This is an old character in police annals—Lincoln Steffens had much to say about him in his classic studies of American municipal corruption 50 years ago. Then there is the "clout" or "rabbi," an influential politician or powerful businessman who intervenes for a cop who wants a promotion. Frequently, pull of this sort is essential for an advance of any kind up through the ranks. These practices prevail in most of our cities, despite the existence of such fine trappings as civil service examinations.

**WHAT** kind of people are allowed to become cops? There is a lack of any kind of rational screening system in most of our big police forces. A few advanced localities run all police applicants through psychiatric tests. Oakland and Berkeley, California, are outstanding examples. These are revealing, because they have shown that roughly one-third of all applicants should be rejected as being emotionally unfit for the exacting job of police work. It is just too easy for simple Neanderthal types to become cops.

One characteristic of police mentality that Mr. Deutsch emphasizes is the resistance shown to all outside criticism; a closing of ranks to deny the findings of outside investigators even when the case against the cops is watertight. The author spends a great deal of time trying to allay this resentment against criticism by including in his report all the good, exceptional, features of American police systems he can find. He believes that the trend is toward progress, that more and more desirable principles are being adopted by police administrators: recruiting juvenile officers from the graduates of social work schools, perfection of crime-detection techniques, the growing use of all kinds of experts in the many facets of criminology, and the improvement of police training schools.





**B**UT Mr. Deutsch begins his book by promising to try to answer questions as to causes of the "general breakdown in police service," and to suggest measures for improvement. It is here that the book offers little satisfaction to the reader looking for analytical depth. **Lincoln Steffens** is the great original worker in this field, and Deutsch pays tribute to him many times. In "The Shame of the Cities," Steffens gave us a very different type of writing. He was always looking for the repeated patterns of municipal corruption and their causes, and was building up theories to explain what he was digging out. In his autobiography he tells of the talks he had with Iz Durham, the boss of Philadelphia, where he expressed amazement that Durham's machine could pull off five separate big-time grabs of public resources at one time. Durham explained that it was possible because it was a blitzkrieg, no one had any hope or spirit left for reform if so much revelation of corruption came at once. And then Steffens began to think out loud: "Political corruption is, then, a process. It is not a temporary evil, not an accidental wickedness, not a passing symptom of the youth of a people. It is a natural process by which a democracy is made gradually over into a plutocracy. . . . If this process goes on, then this American republic of ours will be a government that represents the organized evils of a privileged class."

It is this kind of challenging analysis which is missing from Deutsch's book. His proposed remedies are pretty tame: The public is to blame. "Every community gets the kind of police forces it deserves, wants, and pays for." This statement rests on the dubious notion that the public is a solid unit, and that all sections of it are capable of attaining their wishes.

**H**IS failure to really hit hard on this level of analysis has other effects too. When the book treats of the subject of most concern in recent years—the growth of the police's ability to spy on, intimidate, and curtail the rights of private citizens—Deutsch only skirts the edges of the issue.

Those who developed the lie detector apparatus, Deutsch reports, regret having anything to do with it. They feel that it is grossly overplayed and largely used by charlatans and clever interrogators to simply frighten confessions out of suspects. He is uneasy about the use of paid underworld informers, and the widespread use of the trapping method of making arrests. This involves engaging an officer in an illegal act with a sex pervert or prostitute, thus ensuring an arrest that will stick. A person is thus encouraged to perform an illegal act by law enforcement officers, a practice of dubious moral implications, according to Deutsch.

The police have managed to spread a greater cloak of immunity over themselves since 1945. J. Edgar Hoover can dispute publicly with Harry Truman, and be almost automatically assumed right, the political leader assumed wrong, by the public—or more correctly by the press. This is the most telling feature of what the police have become—Hoover, who is just a cop,

being treated as an omniscient being. The growing powers of the police, the encroachments upon traditions of democracy, the ever-more dominating police-state theory that no citizen's rights stand above the requirements of the police—this is the real trouble with cops.

C. J.

## What Makes Intellectuals Run?

*INDIVIDUALISM RECONSIDERED*, by David Riesman. The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1954, \$6.

**D**AVID Riesman has been a vogue, now perhaps somewhat waning, among many of the intellectuals for some years. The deadly seriousness with which he takes himself, his demonstrative erudition, his habit of qualifying almost every assertion, his leaden style and his sociological jargon have given him a reputation for profundity. More important, what he has to say is eminently suited to the temper of those intellectuals who have grown fat and conservative during our armaments prosperity but who have remained, under their layer of complacency, dissatisfied with contemporary society, or like to pretend they are.

The volume reviewed here, Riesman's latest, consists of thirty essays collected from his writings of the last seven years. They cover a number of subjects: individualism, freedom, popular culture, Veblen, Freud, totalitarianism, and method in the social sciences. This review will concern itself with the essays which have been most influential, those on individualism and freedom in America.

What Riesman has to say about individualism versus "groupism" in America and the nature of the appeal he makes to many intellectuals today can best be conveyed by a summary of his essay "The Saving Remnant." Borrowing heavily from Erich Fromm's "Escape from Freedom" but using his own terminology, Riesman traces the shift in the character structure of modern man, particularly middle-class man, from the predominance of "inner-directed" types to the predominance of "other-directed" types.

"Inner-directed" persons are persons governed by drives acquired in their childhood. Impelled to work hard, to get ahead, to conform unquestioningly to such models as George Washington and Andrew Carnegie, such "inner-directed" persons were suited to the conditions of an earlier capitalism, which within limits encouraged individual initiative. "Other-directed" persons are persons dependent on external authority. They have no deep inner drives directing them to long-term goals and make others their chief source of direction. Concerned with showing that they are team-players, such persons are suited to the conditions of contemporary monopolistic capitalism, with its vast managerial bureaucracy. They have an underlying sense of powerlessness in the face of the power of the social group and of their need to con-

form to its behests, derive little satisfaction from work and spend their leisure in preparing themselves to meet the expectations of others.

However, there are today some few "autonomous" persons, those who are capable of conscious self-direction, not being dependent on either internalized authority or external authority. "By showing how life can be lived with vitality and happiness even in a time of troubles, the autonomous people can become a social force, indeed a 'saving remnant.'"

**I**T is worth noting the most important points where Riesman has departed from Fromm. Fromm emphasized that a prime source of the feeling of powerlessness and insignificance of modern man is the threat of unemployment through the operation of the impersonal laws of the market, and of war through the actions of governments that seem beyond his control. Riesman, however, minimizes these as factors. Moreover, Fromm asserted that "the psychological problem cannot be separated from the material basis of human existence, from the economic, social, and political structure of society," and that therefore the realization of positive freedom and individualism is dependent on the establishment of socialism, a social order that would provide a planned economy which would function through the active control and cooperation of each individual. Riesman, however, counsels the "potentially autonomous person" not to "bemoan as a tragedy his isolation from the masses and from power" but to "develop his individuality" and thus to break down "the whole shaky mode of adaptation of the majority." In short, he counsels those who "have largely transcended prejudices of race or time or class"—i.e., the intellectuals—to cultivate their own gardens amid the arid stretches of the wasteland of contemporary society, seeking to show how roses may be made to grow in the desert, instead of joining with others to irrigate and transform the soil.

Behind this counsel is the implicit belief in the stability of monopolistic capitalism. "Our expanding economy," he says in his title essay, has brought about "a steady reduction in hardship and injustice." Exaggerating the gains made by the masses as a result of the economic boom and not doubting its continuance, he is concerned with improving the quality of life without changing the social structure. "Though in America we are near Condorcet's dream of the conquest of poverty, his dream of the conquest of happiness seems ever more remote."

**W**E must, he keeps repeating, "skeptically question the demands for greater social participation and belongingness among the group-minded. . . ." The demands for greater social participation he mainly concerns himself with are those made by such groups as intellectuals, liberals and racial minorities. "These," he comments, "are my principal audiences," and so he bravely lectures them on "the tyranny of the powerless' over their group" rather than

on "the tyranny of the powerful, who probably do not read me." Organizations of the racial minorities and of workers and farmers, he says elsewhere, following Galbraith in his theory of the stabilization of capitalism through the balance of giant counterweights, have established "countervailing power," but, although they have benefited the group as a whole, they have further submerged the individual within the group in doing so.

Complacent about the gains made by these groups, Riesman's standard argument to the "group-minded" of his audience is a soothing "things aren't that bad." Concerning the attack on intellectual freedom, he remarks, "In a way, the attention that intellectuals are getting these days, though much of it is venomous and indecent, testifies to the great improvement in our status over that of an earlier day. . . . Perhaps, like any rising class, we do not feel we are rising quite fast enough, and momentary setbacks unduly dismay us." Of Jews organized to combat anti-Semitism, he says, "Many Jews, like many other Americans, do not know how to be happy. . . . Despite, as things go, a fair degree of security, despite very considerable material abundance, we find it somehow easier to be miserable."

Some of his remarks along this line could be used by those opposed to the immediate destruction of Jim Crow bars in education. "Children have the right to be prejudiced," he comments, "and to move at their own pace across class and ethnic lines. . . . They should not be compelled by psychic surgery to move at a pace not of their own choosing," and again, "The lot of Negroes, let alone Jews, in America is not always so utterly desperate as to call for the ruthless sacrifice of protective prejudices." It is little wonder that Riesman complains that his stuff has been stolen by the reactionaries.

**R**IESMAN'S questioning of "the demands for greater social participation" is a more sophisticated version of the contempt for politics of the intellectuals of the booming nineteen-twenties. At a time when the rulers of capitalist society have it in their power to wreak untold destruction, he justifies the political apathy of the masses on the ground that it is a means by which the individual "hides from ideological pressures, hides from 'groupism'"; he justifies the purely academic interest in politics of intellectuals on the ground that by keeping clear of "groupism" they are setting a desirable pattern.

Undoubtedly, political apathy is an expression of sales-resistance to slogans that the masses hear constantly dinned in their ears, but which they sense have little in reality to do with them. The problem, however, is that they learn to act consciously in their own behalf. Individuals in labor unions and racial minority organizations are often subject to pressures that impede independent thinking and contribute to feelings of individual insignificance. Yet, in the last analysis, such organizations are great liberating forces for the individual by preventing him from feeling completely at the

mercy of the powerful. What is necessary is to enlist the members in making these organizations stronger by being based on the active cooperation of all and by being designed to call forth the best powers of each. A "group" can help to foster individualism. Indeed, it can be said that there were more "autonomous personalities" in the Socialist Party of Debs than among those who follow Riesman as the latest intellectual fashion. T. M.

## Capitalism Through French Eyes

*ECONOMICS AND ACTION*, by Pierre Mendès-France and Gabriel Ardant. A UNESCO publication, Columbia University Press, New York, 1955, \$3.50.

**P**IERRE Mendès-France, the former premier of the French Government, with his collaborator, who is French General Commissioner for Productivity, has written this study of the economic policies which governments may choose in attempting to keep a capitalist economy on an even keel. The book is dedicated to the proposition that the general measures recommended by the British economist John Maynard Keynes might, in the hands of competent statesmen, insure stability. Supplementary to the thread of theoretical argument—which may prove a bit thick for the average reader who doesn't know the terminology—there is a considerable amount of factual material designed to show how various economic nostrums have stood the test when tried out in a number of capitalist countries during the depressed thirties. This latter feature gives the volume a usefulness that another recapitulation of Keynesian theory would not have.

**C**APITALIST economic crises, as this book makes abundantly clear, take place because of the very nature of the capitalist system, and not because of any mistaken computations on the part of some guilty individual, or mis-estimates by planners, government officials or technicians. Our authors own up to this when they talk about what they call "collectivist" (socialist) economy: "Since the state fixes the volume of investment, it can do so according to the quality of available resources—manpower and means of production—and to the volume of goods that it considers should be put at the disposal of consumers. It has no reason to leave idle a part of its personnel or a part of its machinery. . . . It is thus understandable that the Soviet economy, for example, for all its difficulties of every kind, has been spared the crises of capitalist economy."

In a socialized economy, the planners may overestimate the need or demand for a specific commodity, and produce too many shoes or electric toasters in a certain year, leaving an unsold surplus. But the only harmful result of that is that some labor and materials have been used in that year which could have more advantageously been applied to other tasks. However, in a capi-

talist economy, a surplus of goods means layoffs, a falling-off of profit, a decline in new investments for more factories, further unemployment and thus further decline in purchasing power, and, in the end, the possibility of a full-scale crisis.

Our authors are aware of this contrast between planned and capitalist economy, but with Keynes, they pin their faith on a number of measures. These include tinkering with the rate of interest in order to affect investment, state investment measures to make up for any lag in private investment, and deficit budgets on the part of the state in order to put a greater amount of purchasing power into circulation when it is needed.

**A**S to results, Mendès-France and Ardant are by no means satisfied that the Keynesian theories have "outmoded"—as the saying goes these days—depressions, and the book sounds a rather inconclusive note. They examine the results when Keynesian methods were applied during the depression of the thirties in four countries: U. S., Great Britain, Sweden, and—although this may sound strange—Hitler Germany. Of these four, the most decisive gains made as a result of governmental expenditures and investments was in Germany, which thus captures the honor of having, under Hitler, been the prime example of the Keynesian welfare state. The solution to this paradox is simple: Never have the measures recommended by Lord Keynes been applied on a sufficiently massive scale to affect decisively the course of the economy, except in the form of a military program. And, since Hitler Germany was the first capitalist nation in Europe to undertake armaments preparations for World War II on a large scale, recovery came there first. Our authors feel impelled to remark: ". . . full employment is more easily achieved through war, or even through an armaments policy, than through a program of expenditure on welfare projects."

In the end, Mendès-France does not feel able to answer his own question: "Is a capitalist economy or a mixed economy capable of achieving full employment?" He can merely insist upon the importance of the matter: "This is a key question. The workers are no longer prepared to tolerate long-term mass unemployment of the kind they have known in the fairly recent past." This book is honest in not trying to assert a confidence which the authors obviously do not feel.

Mendès-France is a believer in an essentially capitalist economy, with a few trimmings and modifications. He can thus be properly called a capitalist politician. But, in contrast with our American capitalist politicians, he shows the effects of the European atmosphere of political sophistication, greater learning and experience, and . . . a shaken faith in the capitalist system. The result is a book which stands upon an incomparably higher intellectual level, and can boast a far greater realism and honesty, than anything an American politician, including even the most elongated of our egg-heads, could conceivably turn out.

H. B.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Let Us Start to Act . . .

It would be a great privilege to be in New York on November 28 to attend the Eugene V. Debs Centennial meeting. Why can't an American socialist party be started right then? When can we boldly and proudly start giving information of a political party which stands for all the things people inherently want . . . ?

Let us start to act, trying to profit by the mistakes we have made, but seizing the opportunity when neither political party can give the answers people need and need desperately. The appeal should be to common sense and to the issues which touch us all but seem insoluble, as indeed they are in the irresponsible anarchy under which we live. . . .

We should try to show simply and tirelessly that socialism is not static and dogmatic, won't be perfect but is efficient, sane, and beautiful. We should say, and live, the idea that means and ends are the same. That truth is the strongest weapon in the world.

We need a mass base. We can't get it by eternally meeting with each other. We need new methods and new ideas based on the rock of the principles for which socialism stands. We need to all say (as Debs said): "While there is a lower class I am in it. While there is a criminal element, I am of it. While there is a soul in prison I am not free."

B. A. Calif.

## One More Argument

The Census Bureau, according to the daily press, reports a population figure of more than 160,000,000 for the country, an increase of 10,000,000 in the four years since the 1950 census. Since automation and the farm-to-city squeeze indicate that the peak of employment under our capitalist system has been reached, each new member of the population is one more argument for a sane economic order.

One way toward realization of an optimistic picture would be for every reader of the *American Socialist* to become active in some way for OUR magazine. The organization of a booster group or a Eugene V. Debs club should be possible in an increasing number of communities.

T. M. M. Chicago

## The Till Case Did It . . .

I enclose a picture of my mother's 1888 public school class in the Bible belt of the deep South. In the center of that class stands a Negro boy. I asked my mother about this, and she told me: "It was the custom and there were no ill feelings. No one ever mentioned it, and no one seemed to know the difference."

Also enclosed, a photostat of a list of taxable property in the state of Alabama in 1859, showing the tax rates on slaves, and the assessments for the "fund for slaves executed."

Please enter my subscription. . . . The Till case did it. A country can be no better than its people—and to hold man down you must stay down with him.

O. C. M. Alabama

Enclosed you will find the sum of \$10 which I am contributing to the *American Socialist* magazine. I think the *American Socialist* is doing a great job in bringing the principles of socialism as well as the truth about capitalism to an ever-widening section of the American people.

W. K. St. Paul

## Intellectuals and Masses

Having been a confirmed socialist for more than fifty years, I have certain convictions. . . . If you are satisfied with the growth and success of your publication you will of course pay no attention to my friendly criticism. . . .

For illustration I have in mind Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" in which he stated that he didn't care a damn to try to influence the intellectual class, as they were so few and far between that their cooperation or lack of it did not count: "If I can influence the riffraff I have won my battle as they constitute so great a majority." Now nobody wants to be a Hitler but we must admit he made quite a rumpus in only a short time.

My comparison between your work and his is that you are doing just the opposite line of propaganda work, and are appealing to the few intellectuals in the labor movement. You are doing a wonderful work to console the few intellectuals, and your historical writeups are second to none. However, I feel that your course is like the encyclopedia or the classics: entirely outside the depths and understanding of the common herd like myself who must be aroused more by emotionalism and individual excitement than by logic.

W. D. Michigan

(This important matter will be discussed fully in a coming issue.—THE EDITORS.)

## Against Sensationalism

I wish to comment on the Debs Centennial issue of the *American Socialist*: All the material on Debs was a waste of space (except for Martin P. Gahagan's "We Must Learn from Debs"). If I learned anything from the issue, it is this: The Sentimental and Sensational Success of the *Appeal to Reason* collapsed as sensationally and bombastically as it jumped to its height of 600,000 circulation, not leaving one sound socialist behind.

I too admire Debs, but by the standard that I admire all other sentimentalist-humanitarians. But to try to build a movement in this scientific age by sensationalism is an effort in vain.

S. D. Penna.

I have been very well pleased with the *American Socialist*. We need a few more like it in these times of reaction and fear. It is none too far to the left for me.

T. J. B. Joplin, Mo.

## Socialist Speaker

I look forward especially to the articles by Harry Braverman, who impresses me as the most lucid writer on the scene today. Does he ever accept speaking engagements outside New York City? I am trying to get the American Friends to sponsor a socialist speaker in their winter institute at Syracuse. . . .

F. O. R. New York State

## New Acquaintance

I recently became acquainted with the *American Socialist* through a friend who loaned me a couple of copies. I was very pleased with it. I found it interestingly written and containing much information that was new to me. Please start my subscription. . . .

D. J. Detroit

## Magazine America Needs

Thank you for consistently producing a magazine which America needs. We recommend it highly to all our friends. Enclosed find a gift subscription for a friend in Minnesota.

E. V. R. London

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