

# *The American* **Socialist**

JUNE 1957

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Historical Review:

## **The Birth of American Communism**

## ***Flank Attack on Labor***



**Prayer Pilgrimage to the Nation's Capital**

**Did Gandhi Have the Answer?**

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Americans *ought* to be alienated, not from "their" government, for it has never been theirs, but from *the* government produced by the spirit of business enterprise.

Arthur W. Calhoun *Kansas*

## No Apologetics

If I were you, I would have printed the article "What Zionism Wants" that appeared in your last issue in your Opinions pages instead of as a straight article. I know you don't go in for that kind of apologetics.

D. H. *Minnesota*

[It was not our intention to endorse the viewpoint of the article in question, particularly Israel's role in the imperialist attack on Egypt. The article was headed "a Zionist viewpoint," which is one we do not share.—THE EDITORS]

After reading all the discussion about what has happened to socialist efforts in America, I am reminded of Thoreau's words: "There are a thousand striking at the branches of evil, to each one who is striking at the roots."

For more than a quarter century the technical personnel in the radio-electronics industry have found conditions hellish! So much so, that for a long time the UE was described as "the largest Communist-controlled union in America."

During all this time absolutely nothing was done to make living conditions any less hellish for the weary men in this business, and now the CP has lost control of this union. The men simply got tired of the "You give, we take" philosophy, similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church.

"Tomorrow" promises may work for a while, but we feel that *today* is the "tomorrow" you talked about yesterday.

I suggest that it might be recalled that in Germany a huge number of communists deserted to Hitler because they wanted *action*—not endless words!

A thoroughly disgusted electronics service engineer.

Senator Douglas recently told the world that there is a Big Business administration in Washington. His conclusion is not likely to be disputed—neither will it get him a place among noted discoverers.

The chain-store element are devouring the little store-keepers, and the bankers, mortgage foreclosers and Benson followers are determined to hang the small farmer's hide on the barn door. Apparently, the administration is inclined to write off the farmers and storekeepers, and depend on a coalition of Dixiecrats and Northern small-town people, whose only common interest is a mixture of prejudices: the Southern whites against the Negroes, and the Northern small-towners against Southerners, both black and white, and against the big cities.

As long as Dixiecrats vote in Democrat conventions as Democrats and in Congress as Republicans, confusion can continue worse confounded, and the status quo remains indefinitely. If the Northern Democrats

cut loose from the Dixiecrats, the millions of small-town voters in the North will have to choose between their prejudice against the South and their prejudice against the big cities of the North; the Negro voters will no longer be in doubt about their natural alliance; the Democratic Party would, ipso facto, become the Labor Party.

There are millions of people now living who will starve their families and themselves to feed their prejudices, and work themselves to death to produce wealth for those who give them nothing but a chance to nurse those prejudices.

Frank B. Tuttle *Mich.*

As to W. J. H.'s letter in the May issue: "The political genius" of our "own people" is middle-class, nineteenth-century Populism. That, mistaken for socialism, was the core of the Socialist Party in its big days, and in 1924, when the SP surrendered to Populism by endorsing LaFollette, and thus sacrificed its soul and its life. If now a new movement arises with ambitions to be "American," the folly will be compounded.

It is too bad if the old movement really got no deeper than to regard Marxism as a "crude single-factor analysis." Marxism recognizes fully all the contemporary social forces, but traces them back to their origins, and we'll never have a worthwhile movement unless we root it in such ultimate insight.

Nothing is to be gained by appeal to "American idealism." "Idealism" has always been a phony, inasmuch as it was never anything more than sentimental admiration for something that it would be too much trouble to try to achieve. Fabianism gave little beyond that.

I have supported the socialist movement for nearly fifty years; I quit the party about 20 years ago, it being pretty well dominated by the Norman Thomas type of approach, and was using more than half the paper in attacking the Communists. (Not that the Communists did not need some type of exposure, since they were quite ruthless in their activities.)

It appears to me that the purpose of our propaganda should be to show the unconvinced public that socialism is the answer to most of our problems. To do so we must speak a language they can understand. Too much attention is given to world affairs, too little to building socialism in this country. Our slant on world affairs, while of interest and importance to the converted, means nothing to the non-socialist.

Our slogan should be: "The best things in life are socialized," and we should show that this is so, through the various public services such as schools, fire and other departments, but most importantly the instances of public ownership such as electric power and water, and the benefits they are now giving the people. Here in my town, twenty miles from Sacramento, the small householder pays twice as much for electric power as in Sacramento, the only difference being that Sacramento distributes non-profit the power from the same source. There are many other instances, country-wide.

W. F. S. *California*

Your discussion of socialist leadership ["Socialism, Power Elites and Bureaucracy," by Bert Cochran, February 1957] interests

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## The American Socialist

June 1957

Vol. 4, No. 6

Published monthly by American Socialist Publications, Room 306, 857 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y. Telephone: Watkins 9-7739. Subscription rates: \$3.00 for one year; \$5.50 for two years. By first-class mail: \$5.00 for one year. Foreign rates: \$3.50 for one year; \$6.50 for two years. Single copy: 35 cents. Second-class mail privileges authorized at New York, N. Y.

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## The Flank Attack on Labor

**T**HE McClellan Senatorial hearings are grinding on relentlessly. Day after day, the American people are being treated to the spectacle of key sections of the labor movement being run by crooks, punks and larceny artists. Of course, the Senators themselves make pious asides that this derogatory testimony does not apply to the majority of unions, and the labor leaders are loud in their protestations of purity. But it is not these disclaimers that are impressing themselves on the public mind. The flank attack on the labor movement was of diabolical cleverness in its conception, and consummate virtuosity has been displayed in its execution. It was expecting miracles, after

all, when years of witch-hunt had built up to national power the McClellans, McCarthys, Mundts, and Goldwaters, that they would not, sooner or later, turn on the stable of corrupt and pliable trade union officials, and try to make use of their vulnerability to get their hooks into the whole labor movement.

After the first brief flier which saw paraded before the public gaze bawdy-house keepers, ladies of easy virtue and pin-ball entrepreneurs, the Senate hearings got down to more serious business. The record soon was built up to show what every serious student of the labor movement has known for years—that labor corruption basically boils

down to two propositions: collusion with the employer, and bleeding the union treasury for the personal benefit of a clique of labor bureaucrats. This kind of “labor leader”—God save the mark!—keeps the work force in line and keeps union demands “reasonable.” In return (in addition to occasional personal payoffs) the boss helps the labor official maintain a dictatorship over the union, and if the latter decides to dip his hands into the union till, well, that’s his affair.

**W**E had the testimony of an interesting character by the name of Nathan W. Shefferman. This individual is head of a labor relations firm which has employers for its clients, and is obviously doing pretty well, as the concern operates separate offices in New York, Chicago and Detroit. Also, for thirteen years he had been labor-relations consultant for Sears, Roebuck & Co. Here is an employers’ representative who has had and continues to enjoy the closest relations with numerous labor officials.

He bought at least \$85,000 worth of stuff for Dave Beck at wholesale prices (which good old Dave paid for with Teamsters’ dues money). He also told of making some \$156,000 for himself, his son, Dave Beck’s son, and Beck’s wife’s cousin, by selling toy trucks, headquarters furniture, and office materials to the Teamsters. The Senate Committee cashed in on this headline stuff but carefully skirted around the more important issue: What is the nature of Shefferman’s business and what kind of services does he sell the employers? The Committee religiously stayed away from probing into what is common knowledge in union circles: that outfits like Shefferman’s specialize in devising techniques for “softening up” labor officials and converting unions into semi-company outfits. But our Senate investigators are intent on exposing the prostitute; they care nothing about the white slaver.

Others might simply make speeches about building cooperation between labor and capital; Dave Beck was one of those men who went out and *did* it. It is part of the great American know-how which has made this country what it is. The beautiful friendship that ripened between himself and Roy Fruehof of Detroit’s Fruehof Trailer



HOFFA AND BECK OF THE TEAMSTERS UNION

Company will long remain a model of its kind. In 1953, Beck used \$1½ million of union funds to help Mr. Fruehof win a proxy fight. Later, Mr. Fruehof helped square the obligation by arranging for Beck a \$200,000 loan as well as assorted smaller favors, like putting a car and chauffeur at the disposal of Beck and a party of women in Europe for six weeks, and providing refrigerated trailers for a beer supply company that Beck was interested in.

When Senator Ives tried to get funny with the witness by demanding to know, "Had it dawned on you that Dave Beck might not be reliable?," Fruehof shot right back that at a dinner given in honor of Beck by Eric Johnston, head of the Motion Picture Association, Johnston had recited a poem to Beck: "If I had a ticket to heaven, And you didn't have one, too, I'd throw away my ticket, And go to hell with you." Fruehof announced beligerently, "As far as I know, Mr. Beck was a highly respected gentleman." Not only respected, but persuasive enough to convince the Anheuser-Busch (Budweiser beer) people to grant Dave Beck's son the largest beer-distributing territory in the country in return for which the company enjoyed smooth labor relations as well as tips on the doings of its competitors.

**T**HE labor leaders are unquestionably right when they say that crookedness and under-the-table financial deals such as these are to be found only among a minority of union officials (although by no means the negligible minority that they pretend). But their brave insistence that the bulk of the unions are "honest" and "clean" glosses over the essence of the problem.

The belief in the partnership of labor and capital, the conviction that personal success is measured in terms of money and of acceptance and approbation in the dominant capitalist circles—this general philosophy is accepted by most Auto Union officials as well as all Teamster officials, it is the lodestar of David McDonald's machine as it is of the old rail crafts. The same goes for the signing of "sweetheart agreements"—the technique by which many of the Teamster locals were organized, especially when they sold employers "respectable" "American" unionism at bargain rates as against the

"foreign" "Communist" unionism of the CIO (with its higher demands). This was not a new evil introduced by Beck, or his predecessor, Tobin. For years and years, it has been the going philosophy and practice of the respectable AFL hierarchs, and for that matter, was uninterruptedly employed by no less a progressive than Sidney Hillman.

The point is that while the Steel Union may be clean as a hound's tooth in the formal sense that no one has raided the welfare funds or stolen monies out of the treasury, of a greater moment is that its leaders try to practice the same kind of unionism of collusion accompanied by cosy personal relationships between the bureaucracies of labor and management. (Naturally, labor is more assertive and on its toes in the big industrial setups and the unions are necessarily more progressive. But that is another matter.)

That this often adds up to the creation of a privileged labor bureaucracy and nothing less than a conspiracy against the rank-and-file members was recently brought out indirectly by no less an authority than Louis Hollander, President of the New York State CIO and leading Amalgamated Clothing Union official. Speaking to a group of union executives, he declared:

*In many unions there is little sign that the leaders are even trying to maintain contact with their membership. Some seem to feel that union shop contracts and compulsory check-off of union dues have made it unnecessary for them to know what the members want or need. Too many such leaders live in a world apart—a world in which the badges of achievement are high salaries, expensive automobiles, membership in country clubs, and other appurtenances of wealth.*

**I**N the wake of the Senatorial hearings, some of the newspapers and magazines have begun carrying lurid accounts how in one local situation after another the union is but the creature of the employer, with the union officials in the role of servile quislings. Murray Kempton, the liberal columnist of the *N.Y. Post*, after reciting a particularly malodorous tale about a sweetheart contract that herded a number of

Puerto Rican workers into a local of the Jewelry Workers Union, declared: "We, all of us who call ourselves loyal to the labor movement, will have to accept the fact that this town is a jungle of authorized union locals who apparently deny to the man who pays them dues his rights as a union member. It is time for every one of us who cares about human freedom to stand up against this grinding of the poor and the helpless under the union label."

It is doubtful that many of the members of the McClellan Committee could qualify as loyalists of the labor movement. As a matter of fact, they are hard-bitten reactionaries who can scarcely control their impatience to get their sharpened knives into labor's flesh. The late, unlamented McCarthy was wangling in recent weeks to get Reuther and the Auto Union on the chopping block. McClellan has already slapped an open-shop "right-to-work" amendment on the Civil Rights bill; Goldwater wants to outlaw political action for unions. We can expect the introduction of a new spate of punitive legislation ostensibly aimed at protecting unions from racketeering but actually designed to get the unions tied into a straitjacket of state regulation.

But every cloud has its silver lining. And this fat, over-indulgent, lumbering, and in places corrupt, hulk of a labor movement needed the whip of the union-busters to cuff its members out of their lethargy, and to lash its officials with fear, lest the structures upon which they depend for their privileged status be splintered and broken under them. We don't mean to suggest that any day now we are likely to see a rank-and-file movement surge through the Teamsters and other unions which with one heroic gesture will sweep the boards clean of collusion and corruption. Only those who have worked in unions can comprehend the enormous difficulties and dangers involved in trying to oust an entrenched leadership, no matter how exposed and despised. Only those who have tried know how long it takes to get a new concept going, where masses of people are concerned. But the Senatorial attack definitely constitutes one additional historic pressure—others are building up—that is shaking the stodgy labor unions and preparing the way for important changes that will come later on.



# Prayer Pilgrimage to the Nation's Capital

WASHINGTON, D.C.

**T**HE Prayer Pilgrimage held here in front of the Lincoln Memorial on May 17, on the third anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision outlawing segregated schools, has tied up the various segments of recent Negro struggles into one all-national effort.

The size of the crowd—25,000 at the best count—was disappointing; it was much smaller than anticipated. But it was a historic convergence of Negroes from all over the country on the nation's capital for all that. It dramatized the fact that the Negroes are in the midst of a new historic push to secure first-class citizenship.

Garvey's old battle cries for emigration to Africa have long since been forgotten. The Communist Party's fantasy of self-determination for a Negro Republic is gone with the snows of yesteryear. The banners of the rejuvenated Negro movement demand not separation, but insist on in-

Washington pilgrimage of Negro deputations showed the all-national scope of the fight against segregation. New contingents from the South and a new Southern leadership have joined the struggle, and are giving their imprint to the character and program of the Negro movement for equality.



tegration into American society and complete equality between black and white.

It is part of the new twist of present-day American affairs, with its strong leaning toward conformity, that this new upsurge on the part of the most oppressed and deprived minority should take place under the aegis, not of Communists, or socialists, or even Left unionists, but of middle-class churchmen.

It is worth examining this feature of the movement as it gives us a profounder insight into the nature of the current struggle and line-ups. What has apparently happened is that the traditional Negro leadership, the "Talented Tenth," institutionalized into the NAACP, and resting on the church leaders and professional elements of the Negro community, has now been powerfully augmented by the church leaders of the South. While the latter have previously been part of this traditional leadership, they now speak with a voice of special authority in the national councils, and have come up with a leader—Martin Luther King—who enjoys the greatest moral standing of any one man among his people.

**S**OUTHERN church leaders have moved to the forefront because they now head superbly organized Negro communities that are in the van of the battle to tear down the ramparts of Jim Crow. Furthermore, they have attained a more imposing stature because as individuals many of them covered themselves with glory in the battles that began with the Montgomery bus boycott and have not ceased to this day.

The new leadership is more than a mere augmentation of the old in still another way. The NAACP has through most of its recent years depended in the main on legal battles and maneuvers, and the organization of moral and financial support to see them through the courts. Now their officials are part of an enlarged leadership that stands at the head of a massive resistance movement in the South, and one whose struggles have electrified Negroes all over the nation.

Now, a word might be in order about the philosophy and tactics of the new movement—for such it can truthfully be called. While Martin Luther King and the Southerners have emerged as heads of a movement of mass action, and have thus advanced the battle to the most impressive heights it has ever attained, they also deepened the already decidedly conservative traits and approach of the existing leadership.

Even in the North, with its powerfully urbanized, strongly unionized and culturally more advanced Negro communities, leadership rests in the hands of the middle-class professional groups, and particularly the clergy, as the church plays a unique social, communal and spiritual role in the Negro's life. All the more inevitable was it that the role of leadership be assumed by the Negro clergymen in the more backward and semi-rural South.

Let it be said at the outset that much of the tactical approach of Martin Luther King and others fits present conditions like a glove.

The fact is that despite all the diplomatic talk about the so-called liberal white element of the South, the Negro is by and large isolated down there. He faces a white popu-

lation more or less united or intimidated behind the resolve to uphold Jim Crow, and which has all the power of local governments, economic wealth, and social status at its disposal. (In the North, it's different in many ways. The support thrown to the Pilgrimage by unions like auto, ladies garment, packinghouse, District 65 of New York etc. is part of an important alliance that will have transcendent importance as time goes on.)

To try to meet white supremacy under these conditions in a head-on offensive would be sheer adventure and madness. But King and his co-workers have gone beyond carefully devised and skillfully organized tactical prescriptions and organization. They have sublimated and generalized their tactics into an over-all philosophy and program of Gandhian-Christian "moral suasion."

**O**F course, "moral suasion" has an honorable place in American history. It was the doctrine of the dominant Garrison-Phillips wing of the Abolition movement. But the "moral suasion" of the Abolitionists came out of Isaiah and the Prophets who scourged their foes with whips and scorpions. The "moral suasion" of King and the Southern preachers is of the Gandhian variety, with a considerable striving for respectability.

Thus it has come about that the emergent Southern Negro movement, which has inspired and rejuvenated the Negro struggle throughout the country by its magnificent display of unity, purposefulness and discipline, has also put its special stamp of middle-class piety and philistinism upon the national program and leadership.

The considerable lengths to which they have carried this approach is underlined by the arrangements for the Washington affair. A. Philip Randolph organized sixteen years ago the movement for a March On Washington to challenge the powers-that-be. Now the march is re-christened a "Prayer Pilgrimage" which aims to "arouse the conscience" of the nation.

The day before the event, King told the press that the





"Prayer Pilgrimage" at the Lincoln Memorial was to be the sole activity, that there would be "no picketing, no poster walking and no lobbying" in connection with the gathering.

Moreover, the activities were set up in order to emphasize and re-emphasize the "prayer meeting" character of both the occasion and of the movement. The afternoon's program included no less than one invocation, four Scripture readings, three prayer addresses and one benediction. Charles C. Diggs, the Negro Congressman from Detroit, who urged political action upon the audience, was led to remark that prayer alone wouldn't do the job; that if all that was necessary was to pray, they didn't have to come to Washington; everyone could have stayed home and prayed at his private altar.

While the international situation is far different today from what confronted the administration in 1941, still one cannot help but note the difference between the reaction to A. Philip Randolph's 1941 movement and the present pilgrimage. Roosevelt's representatives moved heaven and earth to stop the march and finally Roosevelt capitulated by signing a presidential order setting up the FEPC. The Eisenhower administration pointedly ignored the prayer pilgrimage, and it can be argued that the play for ultra-respectability very possibly dampened even some of the Negro's response and affected the attendance.

**S**OME of the clergymen, particularly from the South, showed in the course of the afternoon that they are agitators and orators of a high order. Martin Luther King

is an impressive figure with complete command over himself; he apparently knows what he is about and is very clear as to what he aims to do. The deliberate emphasis on the religious nature of the crusade and the role of the clergymen as the leaders unquestionably helps disarm opposition in many places and makes easier the movement's acceptability in numerous quarters. Probably only a movement of this type could get the ball rolling in the beleaguered and benighted Southland.

But the Negro movement is of the North as well as South. And to keep masses in motion and yet disciplined, and maintain the philosophy-program of praying and loving your enemies in the teeth of the bombings and shootings, of the South's open defiance of legality, will tax the ingenuity of the leaders and the patience of the ranks.

Up to now the leaders have built up a lot of moral capital. The NAACP's years of legal battling were crowned with the winning of the historic Supreme Court decision. In the three years that have elapsed, quite a bit of progress toward school and other integration has been recorded in the border states.

But even there it has been very spotty, and in the deep South, the white communities have replied with a wave of terror against the Negroes, their leaders and their organizations. In Washington, civil rights legislation is rotting in Congress, and the chances of even piddling reforms getting adopted at this session are not good.

If the Negro people are able, by various pressure moves, and aided by outside events, to wrest meaningful concessions in the next year or two, the present leadership will consolidate its hold on the people's imaginations and loyalties, and the Negro movement will harden within its present ideological mold.

If however the South's counter-offensive stops the Negro advance cold, and the Negro movement finds itself floundering without an adequate program for new advances, then the present Gandhian philosophy will have proven to be a transient phenomenon in the Negro's long struggle for emancipation. It will in that case give way to other approaches and methods which will prove more practical in the changing realities of the American political scene.

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**I**T doesn't take too much of a mental shake to realize that the harassing scarcity of people willing and able to use their heads is only one side of the coin.

Looked at from the other side, the coin shows, for the first time in history, the picture of a society that is forced by its own necessities to treat all of its members as in the fullest sense thinking, imagining human beings. In every past society, sheer physical need has required that a large proportion of the people be reserved for use as beasts of burden, as machines, as attachments for machines, you might say. Even now, much of the world is still struggling to attain those human freedoms already achieved in highly industrialized countries.

Yet today we are well into an era that invites everyone, literally everyone, to share the variety and freedom and challenge which in the past a small elite group, a minority of intellectuals and professionals, have always claimed as their own.

—"Top Problem for U.S.—A General Shortage of Brainpower," *Business Week*, April 27.

# The Birth of American Communism

by Bert Cochran

The early Communist movement went through some involved convulsions as it tried to get its bearings in the United States. At the same time, its admiration for the achievements of the Russian Revolution was being transformed into subservience to Soviet dictation.

IT speaks volumes about the American radical movement that it has produced no authoritative works concerning its own history. What it has issued is either so skimpy as to constitute propaganda tracts, or so overladen with cant, pharisaical humbug and special pleading as to be worthless for nurturing and educating a new generation of socialists. The pre-World War I Socialist movement, which has been rightly considered so empty in its ideological contribution, was even better off than the more recent Communist movement in this respect. The former did produce works by Hillquit and Laidler, which, while pedestrian, have a measure of originality and usefulness. The American Communist movement, for all its constant vamping about theory, has not even left this satisfactory a legacy behind.

Recently, several very good histories of the Socialist movement have been written by university people (Howard Quint, Ira Kipnis, Daniel Bell, David Shannon). Their works are of a superior quality, the results of painstaking research and careful scholarship. All of them are to be recommended to students of the movement. But they are wanting as authoritative, much less as inspirational, guides, because their authors either have special axes to grind, like proving the utopianism of socialism in America or the stupidity of the people who engaged in its promulgation, or cannot recapture the spirit of the events and the essentials of the struggles because their knowledge is too exclusively academic.

While more remains to be done in illuminating the story of the Debs-Hillquit Socialist Party, we are not even in this good shape with regard to the Communist movement, which is the more recent and of greater moment for the present. Up until the issuance of Draper's book,\* there were only two studies that pretended to the authority of histories: "American Communism" by

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\**THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM*, by Theodore Draper. The Viking Press, New York, 1957, \$6.75.

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The illustrations in this article are sketches by Art Young, made at the first Communist conventions in 1919.

James O'Neal and G. A. Werner, and "History of the Communist Party of the United States" by William Z. Foster. The O'Neal book is a hysterical propaganda tract and apologia for the Social Democratic end of the battle. It has a certain amount of worth to the professional student for its factual material, but even this is limited as O'Neal's study ends in the middle twenties and the later chapters added by Werner are of little interest. Foster's history has importance to the professional historian or student simply as source material. As an objective history it is beneath contempt. Foster has absorbed the worst traits of the Stalinist historiographers, under whose pens history has little to do with telling what happened.

IRONICALLY enough, this gap in the history of American Communism is now being filled because of the decision of a section of the American capitalists. An enlightened and sophisticated set of the industrial and banking fraternity have decided that American imperialism, for its own orientation, is in need of more accurate and objective knowledge about American Communism than can be supplied by Congressional inquisitors, stool pigeons or police agents. Responding to this climate of opinion, the Fund for the Republic has subsidized an ambitious inquiry, under the direction of Professor Clinton Rossiter, into various phases of Communist history and activity, and numbers of competent scholars, some of them ex-radicals, have been hired. The findings are due to be published over the next few years in a series of independent books. Theodore Draper's "The Roots of American Communism," which is the first volume of a general history of the American Communist movement and takes us up to 1923, is the first book to be published under this project. A concluding volume, due in 1958, will carry the story up to 1945.

Let it be said at the outset that Mr. Draper has performed an expert job of reconstruction and has produced an important book. The author unravels a complicated and confusing series of splits and obscure struggles, sets people and events in perspective and place, explains cogently the relationships between the pioneer Communists and the



Russian officials, and tries to probe the underlying causes for radicalism in its various manifestations. The interested reader can grasp the mainsprings and see the workings of the inter-related parts of the mechanism. Considering the scattered and obscure nature of the documentation, and the deliberate concealment and distortion of many of the facts, this is no mean achievement of scholarship. The book,



The platform at the Communist convention

moreover, is readable and self-contained. Whatever its several deficiencies—and we will touch on them at the conclusion—Mr. Draper tries to relate and explain the facts as he sees them on the basis of an enormous amount of research and study.

AS we had outlined in our writings on the Socialist Party (See *American Socialist*, January and February 1955) a new left wing arose in the course of the war opposed to the Hillquit-Berger leadership that had triumphed in 1912 and succeeded in lopping off Haywood's old syndicalist Left. The new left wing gathered coherence and support slowly. Draper traces with care the various personalities and strands that went to make up the later powerful faction: the Socialist Propaganda League formed in Boston in 1915; Louis Fraina's emergence as chief contributor to the *New Review* whose editorial board included Louis B. Boudin and Ludwig Lore; the lecture tour under the auspices of Ludwig Lore's German Socialist Federation of Mme. Kollontay (collaborator of Lenin and later commissar for Social Welfare); the activities of Trotsky and Bukharin, both of whom worked for a while on *Novy Mir*, the paper of the Russian Socialist Federation, etc.

While the left-wing position was welcome in the pages of the *International Socialist Review*, *The New Review* and the *Masses*, these magazines were not limited to any single point of view. It was only in the spring of 1917 that the left wing could boast the possession of its own press: a four-page propaganda newspaper, *The New International*, and a theoretical magazine, *The Class Struggle*, with Louis Fraina (who later wrote under the name of Lewis Corey) as the guiding genius of both. The circulation of both was negligible, but they exercised a great influence on leading Socialist militants, and when the first showdown came at the St. Louis convention in April 1917, Hillquit could only maintain his leadership by temporarily pushing to the head of the Left parade. It is true, as Draper says, that this maneuver prevented the left wing from emerging at the convention as a fully developed independent political force. But it is doubtful that the maneuver was as clever as Draper thinks. It mas-

sively lined up the ranks behind the Left position and helped disgrace the Hillquit crowd when they afterwards violated the spirit of the decision.

WHILE the new left wing arose and gathered strength at first around the war issue it was the Bolshevik revolution that knocked it into a Communist mold and gave it the audacity to strike out on its own. The effect of the Bolshevik revolution upon the left wingers, indeed upon radicals of every vintage, is beyond the power of mere words to convey. Such enthusiasms come only once in many decades, and sometimes, centuries. Up to that moment, international socialism, after a half century of humdrum parliamentary routine and snail's pace organizational progress, had succumbed to the chauvinist war frenzy. Its banners dragged in the mud. Its gods had revealed their feet of clay. Suddenly, in the darkest hour of socialism's humiliation, a band of revolutionists, but yesterday obscure journalists, had seized power in the old empire of the Czars, had flung their defiance at the capitalists of the whole world and saved the honor of socialism, had shown that workers' rule was not a dream of utopians, but the greatest reality of the age. Is it any wonder that the left wingers were ecstatic? Is it to be marvelled that everything Russian took on the air of indescribable glamour and supreme desirability? The road was paved for the Russian conquest of the international Left with all the inevitability of a geological thrust.

The only thing that would have cut across Russian hegemony was socialism's triumph in some other countries. But for many years there were no other victories. Draper writes, "The contrast between the collapse of the Social Democracy in Germany and the triumph of Bolshevism in Russia was so overwhelming that the choice did not even seem debatable to many left wingers. They jumped to the conclusion that the Russian path was right and the German path was wrong, not that there was one path for Russia and another path for Germany—and perhaps a third one for the United States. The Russian Bolsheviks did not need to organize a great international propaganda campaign to rub in this revelation. It went around the world before they were able to make any propaganda abroad."

The fact that the left wingers went over lock, stock, and barrel to the side of the Russian Bolsheviks did not automatically make them Lenins and Trotskys, or even Zinovievs and Bukharins. They added to their previous meager equipment, which included a melange of half-syndicalist concepts, some poorly digested notions of Bolshevism, with the totality adding up to a burlesque of Leninism and a fantastic misreading of the American scene. On innumerable practical evaluations of American problems, the Hillquit socialists were far more sober and realistic. The left wingers were impatient with anything but the most drastic and rapid-fire solutions as they went on the theory that the decks had to be cleared for action since the revolution was just around the corner.

Given their intoxication, and the unfathomable chasm that was developing between Social Democrats and left wingers internationally, the split of the old Socialist Party became a foregone conclusion. But the formation of the

new Communist Left was not only botched by impatience, arrogance and factional delirium; in the midst of the fight with the Hillquit-Berger leadership, the left wingers split three ways and demonstrated their inability to organize an organization of their own. The Communist movement made its appearance in this country as three squabbling sects shrieking incomprehensible accusations at each other. It was a premature and inauspicious birth, and for a couple of years it was touch and go whether the infant would survive.

**A**FTER the smoke cleared following the emergency convention of the Socialist Party held in Chicago on August 30, 1919, this was the shape of the movement which at the beginning of the year had had a membership of about 110,000. There was a Communist Party, which consisted primarily of the Russian and other language federations which had dragged along with them Louis Fraina, Charles E. Ruthenberg and a thin contingent of American ranks, with a membership by generous count of approximately 27,000. There was a Communist Labor Party whose leading figures included John Reed, Benjamin Gitlow, Alfred Wagenknecht, with a possible membership of 10,000. There was the Michigan organization of 800 which set up its own splinter outfit under the name of the Proletarian Party. The membership of the entire Communist movement was overwhelmingly foreign-born. One can generalize that American Communism started out as a predominantly Slavic movement with a thin veneer of American or English-speaking members.

When the Communists went underground after the Palmer raids, the membership was reduced to possibly a quarter of the pre-raid average. In the next two years of underground existence, the figure was further cut in half. As for the Socialist Party, after the split its membership fell to less than 27,000. Thus, of the 70,000 Socialists who backed the left wing in the summer of 1919 and were summarily expelled by the Hillquit leadership, 33,000 at a minimum figure dropped away almost immediately. An additional 13,000 on the SP rolls disappeared out of sight within a year, disregarding those who left after the Palmer witch-hunt. All told, a going Socialist movement (even though of a minority status) was ripped apart and reduced to a set of enfeebled and wrangling sects.

The Communist split with the Hillquit crowd was based on deep-going political differences, for all of the Left's insanities and excesses. But the wrangle between the two Communist organizations was mainly over "control" and "power." It was a sticky, miserable fight, which raged on for almost four years and pretty nearly destroyed the Left's effectiveness for a while. The avowed political differences between the two sides were negligible, as both based themselves on the original left-wing program and both were smoking the same pipe of revolutionary opium. But the language federation leaders were the worst culprits and aggressors of the factional free-for-all. "The Russian Federation's leaders had begun to develop unmistakable signs of delusions of grandeur—as if the genius of Lenin or Trotsky had rubbed off on all Russians." They organized the federations into a tight faction

machine and confronted the Communists with the demand for their absolute control under the theory that only they were equipped to guarantee the purity of the movement. It was some time before the Left worked itself clear of this madness.

**I**N the four months before the Communists were driven underground, they applied their ultra-revolutionary line in this fashion: The job of Communists in the great strike wave that was sweeping the country was "to develop the general political strike that will break the power of capitalism and initiate the dictatorship of the proletariat." Concerning the growing labor-party movement, they opined: "Laborism is as much a danger to the proletariat as moderate petty-bourgeois socialism." The chief slogan for the 1919 elections was, "Boycott the elections!" (*The Communist* recalled that that's what the Bolsheviks had done in the elections for the Duma in 1906.) As Draper says: "The whole pattern of Communist behavior went back to the assumption that the period was revolutionary in the United States as well as in Eastern and Central Europe. . . . Half measures that postponed the cataclysm were worse than none at all."

But most of the Communists' time and energy was consumed in the internal fight and no truce was declared while they were being hounded by Palmer's agents and the police. Almost from the start, Ruthenberg and his English-speaking contingent were at odds with the federation leaders. Ruthenberg was pressing for unity with the other party and shied away from some of the worst excesses of the federation people. Within seven months,



Louis C. Fraina

things came to a breaking point and in April, 1920, Ruthenberg split away on the identical grounds that Reed had done before, and set up his own organization. With Ruthenberg went a majority of the English-speaking members and a minority of the federations. In a month the Ruthenberg wing joined with the Communist Labor Party to form the United Communist Party. While this represented a re-shuffle of the ranks, it did not bring over-all unity any closer. How little had been learned by either side was seen in their respective manifestoes to the Brooklyn

trolley-car employees engaged in the fall of 1920 in a routine strike. The Communist Party told them to "Get ready for armed revolution." The United Communist Party, which stood for a more American approach, told them to get guns "and be prepared for an armed insurrection to wipe out the government."

The left wingers had been on their own in the fight within the Socialist Party and for the first months of their independent existence. By the middle of 1920 improved communications were established with Russia, and from this point on it becomes impossible to understand American Communist policies without reference to the Comintern. The basic decisions were more often than not made in Moscow, not in New York or Chicago. Draper correctly underlines that "it would be vulgar oversimplification to imagine that American or other Western Communists submitted to direct control of the Comintern or the indirect control of the Soviet state because they were willing to be 'foreign agents.'" On the contrary, they were enthusiastic adherents of the Russians' concept that in the epoch of imperialism independent national parties were obsolete and that the international working class now needed a "world party" run by a "general staff" that can centralize and coordinate the armies on the battlefield. Zinoviev, as the official reporter at the Second Congress declared that the leadership "considers it not only permissible but as obligatory to 'interfere' in the work of the parties which adhere to or wish to adhere to the Communist International."

**T**HE concept was a grandiose one, and maybe some day in the distant future it will be realized. But this time, it produced a monstrosity in practice—and, in retrospect, given the conditions of the times, it could not have been otherwise. The Comintern was organized in 1919 with practically no significant parties outside of the Russian. (The one organization with prestige, Rosa Luxemburg's Spartacists in Germany, was opposed to the formation of a new international until solid Communist parties had been established in a number of countries.) In the circumstances, the hegemony of the Russian leaders was automatic, even if one discounts their enormous prestige; indeed their accomplishments and abilities dazzled radicals throughout the world and gave birth to feelings which can only be accurately described as idolization and hero worship. Even after a few of the Communist parties grew to sizeable proportions, the old relationship between masters and apprentices remained more or less intact.

Thus it was that once the sweeping rhetoric of a "general staff" and a "world party" was translated into terms of mundane routine, it had to spell out that the Russian Comintern leaders (and, in the final instance, the Russian state rulers) ran the Communist parties with a host of personal agents. Still, in the first years, there was a lot of democracy and interplay in Comintern affairs, and before the degeneration of the Stalinist period, the Russians thought in terms of the good of the international movement and did not try to utilize the mechanism for their own narrowly conceived national purposes.

Zinoviev had already sent a message to the United

States in January 1920 calling for unity of the two Communist parties and favoring "a mass organization and not a narrow closed circle." By the time of the Second Congress in July, Moscow was determined to get some action. The Congress voted to give the Americans two months to get together, setting a deadline for October 10, failing



Boudin walks out

which both groups would face expulsion from the Comintern. But the message didn't get back until after the deadline, and so it had to be extended to January 1, 1921. The two parties thereupon went into protracted negotiations, but when the new deadline came there was still no semblance of unity. Finally, in May 1921, the Comintern representatives arrived on the scene and forced through a shotgun wedding at a special convention held in Woodstock, New York.

While the human material remained the same as before, except that there was less of it, the formal program was now drastically revised in line with Lenin's "Left Wing Communism" and the decisions of the Second Congress. The organization now resolved to work in the AFL and to participate in elections. But lest this give birth to any notion that the party was going opportunist, it was made clear that it would continue to "propagate the idea of the inevitability of and necessity for violent revolution." The program also spelled out in black and white, to avoid any confusion, that "the Communist Party of America is an underground illegal organization."

**L**ESS than two months after the Woodstock unity convention the Russians told the American delegation to the Third World Congress that they ought to try to get out of their illegalized status into the open. It was at this Congress that the Russians concluded that the revolutionary wave had receded, and since the bulk of the organized workers were still under the influence of Social Democracy, it was necessary to patiently win over the masses to Communism. Lenin and Trotsky demonstratively called themselves the right wing at this Congress. Lenin thundered at the Leftists: "He who fails to understand that in Europe—where nearly all the workers are organized—we must win over the majority of the working class is lost to the Communist movement." If that was the job in Europe, the American Communists were pointedly told that they "are still before the first and simplest task of creating a Communist nucleus and connecting it with the working masses." In a private meeting with the

American delegates, Lenin further suggested that supporting a labor party would be a good idea.

Under this rude prodding of the Comintern, the American Communists were slowly being shaken out of their revolutionary trance. A number of influences were now at work to remold the Communist movement. William Z. Foster, who was at the time a radical figure of commanding importance because of his leadership of the 1919 steel strike, was induced to go to Moscow in July to attend the Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions (Profintern). He secretly joined the party upon his return and his Trade Union Educational League was adopted as the Profintern's American section. Responsibility in the party for trade union work was now assigned to the TUEL, located in Chicago, and Earl Browder was appointed as liaison man between the New York political center and the Chicago trade union center.

Then, about this time, a new Left group, headed by well known figures like J. Louis Engdahl, William F. Kruse, Alexander Trachtenberg, Moissaye J. Olgin, Benjamin Glassberg and J. B. S. Hardman, broke away from the Socialist Party (the Bohemian and Jewish federations also disaffiliated in the fall of 1921) and constituted themselves as an independent organization called The Workers Council. They added their weight to the forces demanding an open, legal party. As the Workers Council people saw the picture, the Russian revolution had "carried us off our feet." The American Communists "thought and acted as if the Russian Revolution had been bodily transplanted upon American soil." Now the time had come to give up "romance" in favor of "brutal realities." The world revolution had not materialized. Imperialism was temporarily "more powerful than ever before." "The fantastic dream that a small minority of determined revolutionists may overturn capitalism . . . has vanished into thin air before the bitter experiences of the German and Italian Communist uprisings."

Why, one may ask, did an influential group of publicists, and additional language federations, break away from the Socialist Party in 1921 and approach the Communists? It was further testimony that the Socialist Party was dying, and that Communism, despite its poor showing in this country, was the main international attractive force.

**T**HE demand for a legal party threw the Communists into a new fierce faction fight, as had every previous difference of opinion. At one extreme, The Workers Council, standing outside the party, wanted a legal party and no underground. In the middle were seven of the ten members of the party's Central Committee whose formula was maintenance of the underground party, but accompanied with the launching of a new Communist-controlled legal party. At the other extreme were the three minority members who wanted only the illegal party—but this Central Committee minority was backed by a strong majority of the rank and file.

The debate grew so frenzied as to promise a new split. The undergrounders, knowing they commanded a majority of the membership, demanded a convention to settle the issue. The Central Committee majority, fearing it would be outvoted, rested on the authority of the Com-

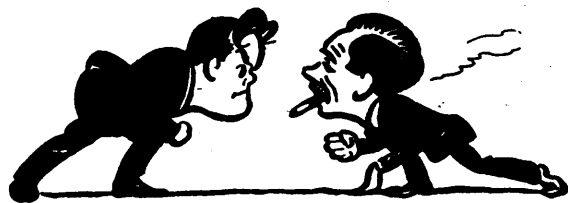
intern's instructions to set up a legal party. These leaders were "determined to draw in a new and broader rank and file, even if a large portion of the old one would be sacrificed." At the height of the controversy, on November 2, 1921, they suspended the three leaders of the Left Opposition (as the undergrounders called themselves) for breaching discipline. All the American leaders had by now fallen into the habit of referring everything to Moscow for approval. Both factions had their representatives in Moscow who promptly began pulling wires to get a decision in their favor. On November 14 a coded telegram arrived from Moscow with instructions to go ahead with the formation of a legal party. On December 8 the Comintern handed down its ruling approving the suspensions but leaving room for reinstatement of the three if the rebels agreed to obey the new line.

After the suspension of the undergrounders' spokesmen, the Communist leaders came to an agreement with the Workers Council people for a legal party giving the latter a somewhat larger representation than their membership entitled them to; but the Workers Council lost their point on the fundamental issue of liquidation of the underground. The agreement also included the plan to launch a daily Jewish newspaper to compete with the *Forward*, powerful organ of the right-wing Socialists. (The first issue of the *Freiheit* appeared several months later.) Finally, the long-awaited legal organization, the Workers Party of America, was born at the Star Casino in New York City on December 23-26, 1921. "Gone were the fantasies of 1919, the dreams of power, the illusions of grandeur." But the Communists were not out of the woods yet, as the undergrounders still had fight left in them, and many of the Communist leaders who favored the Workers Party viewed it, in Bittelman's words, as simply a "transmission apparatus"—the legal front.

**E**ARLY in January 1922, the undergrounders led by their three suspended leaders called an emergency convention and set up their own party. They claimed to represent 5,000, or about half the party, with over 80 percent of their members coming from the language federations. Again there were two Communist parties in the field with the same name, both publishing periodicals called, *The Communist*. Then, to compound the confusion, the undergrounders, in order to demonstrate that they were just as faithful followers of the Comintern line as their rival, set up their own "legal apparatus" called United Toilers of America. Moscow peremptorily ordered the United Toilers to get back into the old party or face expulsion, but it was not until six months later that the majority of the undergrounders capitulated and reunited with the Communist Party.

This did not end the matter, as the CP had since the spring been in the grip of a new faction battle. The new lineup was between the "Liquidators" who wanted to dump the underground party and the "Geese" who insisted that the underground party must remain the "directing and controlling body." The Liquidators were represented by Ruthenberg, Bedacht, Cannon, and Lovestone, and had the active sympathy of the newcomers of the trade union group, Foster, Browder, and Dunne. The chief

figures in the Goose caucus were Katterfeld, Wagenknecht, Minor, Jakira, Amter, Lindgren, and later, Gitlow, when he was released from jail. Again the Comintern sent a delegation to personally supervise "the liquidation of the factional regime" which was endangering the party's unity. The Communist Party proceeded under the direction of the Comintern plenipotentiary to organize its underground convention, held at Bridgeman, Michigan, in August 1922.



John Reed

Left and Right

Julius Gerber

While the debates were raging hot and heavy (before the convention was raided by Federal agents), another, and probably more decisive set of moves was taking place in Moscow. The regular American representative to the Comintern was Katterfeld, a leader of the Goose caucus. James P. Cannon, Chairman of the Workers Party, came to Moscow in July on behalf of the Liquidators. After months of lobbying and corridor negotiations, the showdown came in the American Commission (of the Fourth Congress that opened in Moscow November 5, 1922). Katterfeld and Cannon were given one hour to state their positions. Then the Russians went into action, first Zinoviev, then Radek, then Bukharin, in unconditional support of the Liquidators. When the Russians finished, the Goose caucus was annihilated. The American Commission then proceeded to approve 1) full legalization of the American Communist movement; 2) a labor party based on the unions; 3) return of the recalcitrant undergrounders to the Communist ranks. These decisions were declared final and ended on this warning note: "He who refuses to adopt these tactics let him leave the party."

With the Comintern decision, the underground became a dead duck, and the holdout former adherents of the United Toilers as well as the Goose caucus supporters rushed to jump on the bandwagon. The underground Communist Party went through the motions of going out of business at its convention in April 1923, and sent a communication to the Workers Party notifying it of its disbandment because the Workers Party "had developed into a Communist Party." The name of the organization was changed to the Workers (Communist) Party of America in 1925 and to the Communist Party, U.S.A. in 1929.

**D**RAPER relates a very informative incident at the conclusion of his book: Scott Nearing made a trip through the Middle West just about the time the American Communists came out of the underground. He reported that the Socialist Party was "almost extinct" and that the Workers Party "has fallen heir" to American radicalism. The one thing that was holding Nearing back from joining the Communists was fear of Moscow's "system of dictation." Nearing was officially answered by Cannon

along this line: "The fraternal union of native and foreign-born workers in our party, realistic tactics adapted to the concrete situation in America; leadership of the movement, as a rule, in the hands of the native workers—that is the sound point of view finally adopted in our party. And who said the final word in favor of it? The 'Moscow Dictators'! We who have fought for a realistic policy have found our best friend in 'Moscow.'"

The American Communists—like so many others—forgot that once the system of Russian hegemony was accepted, their own freedom of action was gone. What a benevolent, bountiful dictator can give, he can take away. They started out as revolutionary enthusiasts and idealists determined to be part and parcel of a "world party" and a "general staff." And step by step, they were sucked into the whirlpool that finally reduced both individuals and organizations into appendages of Russian state power. The American Communist movement, when it came up for air in 1923, had hardened a cadre in its murderous struggles of the past four years, had picked up some new recruits, had forged new valuable connections, and had gained a bit of experience the hard way, so that by the middle twenties Nearing's prediction had become pretty much of a fact—it was the mainstream of American radicalism. But the party in this formative period was also firmly locked into the straitjacket of Cominternism—and eventually that proved its undoing.

**I**N the early section of his book Mr. Draper writes: "The first generation of American Communists grew to maturity in a world hospitable to every variety of radicalism. A later generation, which has grown to maturity in a world hospitable to every variety of conservatism, may find it difficult to enter into the spirit of this age of unrest." Let this serve as the apologia or alibi for the book's faults, lacks and derelictions—and they are many.

Draper's attempts to connect in a direct blood lineage the Communist Left and the old historic Left are inaccurate. His running critique of socialism and Leninism should have been saved for the *New Yorker*. It is based on the proposition that socialism is equivalent to dogmatism and utopianism, and when it proposes something practical, it is breaking with its principles and hence going opportunist. From this Draper derives some mystique of conflict between the two, which turns up like a bad penny every couple of chapters in the book. In general, Mr. Draper's strong suit is description and research. When he essays analysis and criticism, he quickly gets over his head, as he has no consistent viewpoint, and lacks the ability to drive an argument through. While he obviously tries to keep a judiciousness about his comments, the cold war has so mistreated our intellectuals that his style and terminology repeatedly fall into the prevalent poses of dyspepsia and weissenheimer agnosticism, which in several spots even runs away with his scholarship. There is, in other words, precious little sympathy with the subject matter. For all that, Mr. Draper has written an informative and engrossing book, and one from which all of us can learn something. For that we have to be grateful. We eagerly await the second volume.



Most protest movements try to be peaceful, and non-violent tactics have often worked brilliantly. But peaceful resistance to oppression need not be confused with Gandhian mystiques. Gandhi himself made a mess of the job of leading India's independence movement, and his basic precepts get little more than lip service in India today.

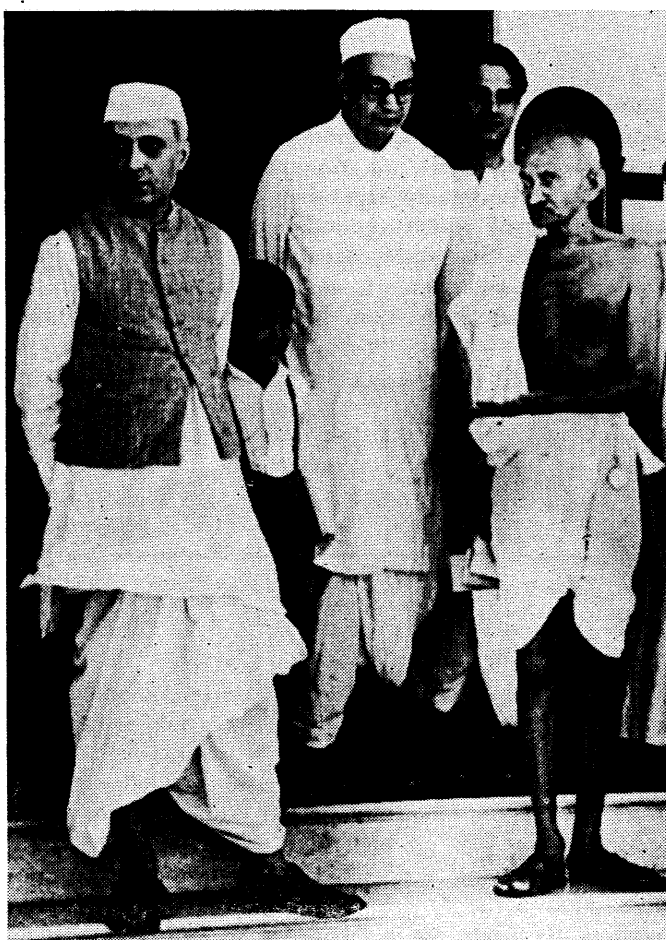
## Did Gandhi Have the Answer?

by Harry Braverman

**T**HE brilliant success of the bus boycott in Montgomery by the Negro people of that city has led to a revival of claims that Gandhian or Tolstoyan non-resistance philosophies furnish the true program to combat oppression of any kind. Certainly, the emphasis placed by the Montgomery leaders upon peaceful forms of protest has been a wise and successful tactic, and has aided in preventing the sort of terrible explosion that a spark of provocation might set off in our tense South.

But one can applaud the strategy without becoming a Gandhian. The overall philosophy which was recommended by Thoreau, deepened by Tolstoy, and raised to a high political art as well as a way of life by Gandhi, is a far different thing from simply avoiding violence, and it is doubtful that many of Montgomery's 50,000 Negroes have been converted to it, any more than Gandhi converted many among India's 400 million. In the light of the present renewed interest in the problem, it is well worth our while to refresh our memories about the most ambitious intrusion of this philosophy into modern politics and social upheaval.

Mahatma Gandhi knew how to dramatize, in his own person, the aspirations of the many-millioned Indian populace, and struck a spark in the minds of his oppressed people. He was undoubtedly a great personality around which a still greater legend grew. How much of this was due to his remarkable instincts of leadership, how much to his personal qualities, and how much to his specific doctrines, is not easily determined. A great preacher, a man of saintly attributes and habits, and an able politician were all combined in his one person, in a triumph of subtle psychology the portrayal of which would tax the powers of a Dostoevsky. But if his personality and his mystical, often self-contradictory philosophy are shadowed and labyrinthine, his political record is fairly clear.



NEHRU, PATEL, AND GANDHI on the steps of Birla House, where Gandhi lived in Bombay, in 1939.

**G**ANDHI'S first civil resistance campaign took place in South Africa, before the first World War, when he led a protest movement on behalf of the Indian population. The pattern of many of his later campaigns was clearly set in this one. Gandhi organized a resistance campaign, then suspended it during the Boer War so as not to embarrass the government. Soon after, it built up again in opposition to General Smuts' compulsory registration law. When Smuts' proposed that, in return for voluntary registration by the Indians, he would repeal the hated Asiatic Act, Gandhi credulously accepted in the face of strong opposition from his followers, and went to be the first to get himself fingerprinted, whereupon he was assaulted by a militant Indian. Soon afterwards, Smuts broke his promise to Gandhi, as his opponents had predicted.

Shortly before the first World War, the movement built up again, and Gandhi dramatized the struggle with courageous action, was imprisoned repeatedly, and finally threatened a mass march of thousands. At that moment, the white workers of all the South African railroads went on strike, and Gandhi immediately called off the march. "It was not part of the tactics of Satyagraha [civil disobedience], he explained, to destroy, hurt, humble, or embitter the adversary, or to win a victory by weakening him," writes Gandhi's sympathetic biographer Louis Fischer. "Civil resisters hope, by sincerity, chivalry, and self-suffering, to convince the opponent's brain and conquer his heart. They never take advantage of the government's

difficulty or form unnatural alliances." Why a tie with striking railroad workers should be considered an "unnatural alliance" was to become clearer as the years went by. The outcome was that no mass march took place, and a compromise agreement was agreed upon which left most of the conditions unchanged in return for several minor concessions.

Gandhi's first Indian campaign took him in 1917 to the district of Champaran, an indigo-raising region. The landowners, having learned of the development of synthetic indigo in Germany, offered to release their sharecropping peasants from their long-term contracts in return for payment of a fee. When the peasants learned how they had been cheated, they began an agitation for the return of their money, and Gandhi was called in to help. Spontaneous demonstrations of thousands flared, and Gandhi organized another of his civil disobedience campaigns. Completely out of control, the landowners soon sued for terms. Gandhi amazed them by asking for the return of only 50 percent of the money. "There he seemed adamant," a British missionary described the incident. "Thinking probably that he would not give way, the representative of the planters offered to refund to the extent of 25 percent, and to his amazement Mr. Gandhi took him at his word, thus breaking the deadlock." Gandhi justified these remarkable negotiations by explaining that the amount of the refund was secondary, and the principle all important.

**O**N March 18, 1919, instead of granting the Dominion status which had been repeatedly promised to India during the war, the Rowlatt Act, which continued the wartime regimen in India, was passed, and a fierce wave of resentment swept the nation. Gandhi called for a one-day *hartal*, a stoppage of all economic activity, to be followed by a civil disobedience campaign. The defiance opened brilliantly, with almost all of India shut down on April 6, and the British seemed in dire straits. Then followed Gandhi's first remarkable display of the kind of conduct that was to be the despair of his followers. The British repression provoked a bit of minor violence in Delhi, Bombay and Ahmedabad. Gandhi denounced his people scathingly: "We have obstructed tramcars by putting obstacles in the way. This is not Satyagraha. We have demanded the release of about fifty men who had been arrested for deeds of violence. But our duty is chiefly to get ourselves arrested. It is a breach of religious duty to endeavor to secure the release of those who have committed deeds of violence. . . . If we cannot conduct this movement without the slightest violence from our side, the movement might have to be abandoned. . . ." Within a few days, he had suspended civil disobedience, and begun a fast of repentance for the people's "misdeeds." Even while he was fasting, a British General ordered his troops to fire continuously for ten minutes into a helpless meeting of thousands of persons, who were unable to get out of the bloody trap due to the arrangement of the meeting grounds. In this famous Amritsar Massacre, 1516 people were killed or wounded with 1650 bullets, and in the sequel, the dead and dying were left all night without water or medical attention, while airplanes machine-

gunned the streets and funeral parties. Five days later, Gandhi called off the movement entirely, announcing that he had made a "Himalayan miscalculation" in thinking that the people were good enough for his mode of resistance.

In the next few years, the movement rose again to a remarkable pitch, and a magnificent non-cooperation struggle was under way at the beginning of 1922. The government feared to touch Gandhi, and the Indian Army and police were no longer considered reliable. Nehru writes that "there was thunder in the air, and the atmosphere was tense and pregnant with revolutionary possibilities." Suddenly, Gandhi announced once again that he was suspending civil disobedience; in an obscure village a mob of peasants had retaliated against some policemen by setting fire to the police station and burning several policemen in it. Nehru wrote later in "Toward Freedom":

*The sudden suspension of our movement after the Chauri Chaura incident was resented, I think, by almost all the prominent Congress leaders—other than Gandhiji, of course. . . . The younger people were naturally even more agitated. Our mounting hopes tumbled to the ground, and this mental reaction was to be expected. What troubled us even more were the reasons given for this suspension and the consequences that seemed to flow from them. Chauri Chaura may have been and was a deplorable occurrence and wholly opposed to the spirit of the non-violent struggle; but were a remote village and a mob of excited peasants in an out-of-the way place going to put an end, for some time at least, to our national struggle for freedom? . . . Must we train three hundred and odd millions of India in the theory and practice of non-violent action before we could go forward? And even so, how many of us could say that under extreme provocation from the police we would be able to remain perfectly peaceful? But even if we succeeded, what of the numerous agents provocateurs, stool pigeons, and the like . . . ?*

*Chauri Chaura and its consequences made us examine these implications of nonviolence as a method, and we felt that, if Gandhiji's argument for the suspension of civil resistance was correct, our opponents would always have the power to create circumstances which would necessarily result in our abandoning the struggle.*

**I**N the next wave of resistance, independence was actually declared on January 26, 1930; hartals were frequent, civil disobedience was again launched, and tens of thousands crowded the prisons. But after a year of turmoil, Gandhi suddenly announced that he had signed an agreement with Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India, containing the famous Clause 2, in which Indian independence aspirations were effectively blighted. Nehru wrote a few years later: "There was nothing more to be said. The thing had been done, our leader had committed himself; and, even if we disagreed with him, what could we do? Throw him over? Break from him? Announce our disagreement? That might bring some personal satisfaction to an individual,

but it made no difference to the final decision. The civil disobedience movement was ended for the time being at least, and not even the Working Committee could push it on now, when the government could declare that Mr. Gandhi had already agreed to a settlement." So Nehru pondered and repeated to himself T. S. Eliot's lines: "This is the way the world ends, Not with a bang, but a whimper."

By the early months of 1932, a murderous repression was again in full swing, and the civil disobedience movement swung into action once more. Again with great suddenness, Gandhi announced a twenty-one day fast on the "untouchables" issue: Nehru called this "the first severe blow" to this campaign, as it "diverted" mass consciousness from "the main political issue." "Early in May 1933," Nehru records in his autobiography, "following Gandhiji's twenty-one day fast, civil disobedience had been suspended for six weeks, and we waited anxiously for further developments. That suspension had given a final blow to the movement, for one cannot play fast and loose with a national struggle and switch it on and off at will."

In 1934, Gandhi once again astounded his associates by calling off another great campaign. It seems, as Gandhi himself relates it in his statement ending the movement, that "a valued companion of long standing . . . was found reluctant to perform the full prison task, preferring his private studies to the allotted task. This was undoubtedly contrary to the rules of Satyagraha. . . . I saw at once that I must for the time being remain the sole representative of civil resistance in action."

Nehru again raged: "But the reason he had given seemed to me an insult to intelligence and an amazing performance for a leader of a national movement." Gandhi's performance was repeated time without number; whenever the movement grew too massive and uncontrollable, he decided that the people were not good enough, and he would have to carry on alone by fasting, by courting arrest, or some other means. Only a man with incalculable moral authority, which Gandhi certainly possessed, could have manipulated in this way the great national upsurge that wracked an entire subcontinent for three decades. He did, of course, get unstinting cooperation from the other leaders of the Congress Party, middle-class and capitalist as they were; they may not have been able to follow Gandhi's mystical logic but were in accord with most of his moderate conclusions.

**D**URING the Second World War the Indian national struggle came to its greatest climax. The nation as a whole was in fantastic turmoil; a mass underground movement led by Socialists and unionists was in operation; the overwhelming majority of the nation was more in sympathy with the Japanese advance into Southeast Asia than afraid of it. The Congress Party was torn by internal policy conflicts, many of its leaders feared that the movement was slipping out of its grasp. These final years of Gandhi's life, coinciding with the last years of the independence fight, were years of failure and confusion, as his program came to have less and less relevancy to the needs of the struggle.

All of India exploded in a revolution in 1942, with



the British actually being ejected from power in a number of regions so effectively that they did not return for two years. In their last desperate shifts the British incited traditional Hindu-Moslem antagonism, so that hundreds of thousands were killed in communal riots, and literally millions became refugees. They forced partition upon the country before withdrawing from a situation which had become completely uncontrollable for the weakened British Empire, which was in a process of liquidation throughout Asia. In all this, Gandhi travelled the country in a state of distraction, bewailing his failures and his loss of authority. The Socialist leaders, the more militant Congress leaders, and the underground leaders who hoped to achieve independence by working with Japan supplanted him in authority over the masses. At the end, he was assassinated by a Hindu terrorist who believed that Gandhi had sold out to the Moslems.

With one or two minor and localized exceptions, not a single one of the Mahatma's many civil disobedience campaigns was carried through to a clear-cut decision. Nor did any of his personal efforts, his fasts and marches, succeed in putting an end to communal discord, or in any of their other general objects. A "tyrant faddist," as one follower called him, his various food crazes, sex views, anti-industrialization notions, and other specialties created a tremendous stir of publicity in his lifetime, but left modern India completely cold; despite frequent pious references to his memory, his recommendations are hardly being followed in India's current strivings. "Millions obeyed Gandhi," Louis Fischer wrote, "myriads adored him, multitudes accounted themselves his followers, only a handful did as he did."

When he came out of prison in 1944, "It was a strange India that met Gandhi," Claire and Harris Wofford Jr. write in "India Afire." "The heroes of the day were the Socialists of the 1942 underground who had suffered severe torture in British fortresses and also the veterans of Subhas Bose's Indian National Army who were going on trial as traitors to the King. The country cheered fervently when the Indian seamen of the Royal Navy mutinied almost to a man and fired shells over Bombay." Gandhi had failed to find a way to unite Hindu and Moslem (Nehru writes that he thought a militant campaign of struggle would have brought unity, rather than Gandhi's preachments and fastings). When Independence

Day came in 1947, Gandhi spent it in fasting and penance, refusing to take part in the celebration. After his assassination, he was given a military funeral from the new Indian Army, behind armored vehicles, tanks, infantry riflemen, and under the low-flying planes of the Royal Indian Air Force.

**N**OTHING could be more foolish than to question Gandhi's sincerity and personal integrity—a man who would give up a very large income to live in poverty, who would refuse to feed his son the eggs and chicken broth that the doctor prescribed when the child lay ill with a fever of 104 degrees, who spent so much of his life in prison, and in dangerous fasts many of which were undertaken at an advanced age. But, apart from his exceptional personal qualities and popularity, he did not furnish the Indian independence movement with the best strategic or programmatic leadership.

Gandhi's close friendship with the magnates of Indian capitalism has been thought puzzling; it is quite striking that the man who had taken a vow of poverty, spun his own loin cloth and opposed industrialization, should have been so intimately associated with the largest steel and textile monarchs of Indian industry. Practically all of the Congress budget was covered by rich Indians, and all of Gandhi's personal needs and those of his hermitages and various movements were financed by a few Birlas and Tatas. One famous quip, which Gandhi himself is supposed to have enjoyed, was to the effect that "it cost a great deal of money to keep Gandhiji living in poverty."

Politically, there is not much puzzling about it. Gandhi's program of Indian self-rule, combined with his emphasis on moderation, humility, friendship between the masses and landlords or capitalists, was eminently suited to the needs of Indian capitalists, who wanted to oust the British, or gain concessions from them, without endangering the social structure they ruled. They took Gandhi's politics without his mystical ideology. Louis Fischer relates that when he visited J. R. D. Tata, head of the big steel-chemicals-airlines-textiles-hotel trust, he saw on the magnate's desk a plaster plaque of Gandhi, and also several brightly polished two-inch anti-tank shells which Tata's plants were then turning out!

The Congress Party was thus an amalgamation of



Gandhian mysticism, shrewd big-capitalist calculation, and genuine nationalist revolutionary fervor; throughout most of his career, Gandhi's super-pacifism was the counterweight to the more militant wings of Congress, and this was understood and appreciated by India's upper classes.

"I shall be no party to dispossessing propertied classes of their private property without just cause," Gandhi once told a deputation of big landlords. "My objective is to reach your hearts and convert you so that you may hold all your private property in trust for your tenants and use it primarily for their welfare. . . . But supposing that there is an attempt unjustly to deprive you of your property, you will find me fighting on your side."

**A**LONE of all major leaders of Congress, Gandhi held to his program of converting the adversary by love. He was also distinguished among them by another important feature: Most of the Congress leaders were right-wing middle-class moderates, but Gandhi repeatedly amazed even them by the backwardness of his views. Nehru's autobiography, written in the mid-thirties when he was in his most radical period, teems with polemics against Gandhi, with anguished cries of denunciation over Gandhi's impossible program and outlook, and with bitterness against Gandhi's frequent retreats and disorienting moves. He wrote:

*Again I think of the paradox that is Gandhiji. With all his keen intellect and passion for bettering the down-trodden and oppressed, why does he support a system, and a system which is obviously decaying, which creates this misery and waste? He seeks a way out, it is true, but is not that way to the past barred and bolted? And meanwhile he blesses all the relics of the old order which stand as obstacles in the way of advance—the feudal states, the big zamindaris and talukdaris, the present capitalist system.*

Gandhi thought that some kind of communitarian socialism could be built by mutual love and trusteeship, and insisted that the East differed from the selfish West, but Nehru judged acidly from the behavior of the Indian capitalist and landlord, who "have ignored far more the interests of their workers and tenants than their Western prototypes," that the advantage was on the side of the West.

None of this has been set forth here to disparage peaceful tactics of resistance. Far from it; most popular movements are, and strive to be, peaceful in their methods. But a peaceful attitude which is motivated by normal strategic considerations, has nothing to do with acceptance of the Gandhian mystique. A movement which is led according to the precept of converting the imperialists or capitalists by love, or by self-purification, or by any other form of mysticism, is not soundly based or well led, as the history of Gandhi's work appears to prove to the hilt. It is, at its best, a disorienting element in any struggle that requires hard-headed calculation; at its worst it becomes a shield for the weak, the timid, and the interests that have a stake in keeping the mass of people quiescent and humble.

## Three Issues in France

by A Correspondent

THE three crucial issues in France, inextricably wired together, are Algeria, cost of living, and the decay of the Communist Party. Military-like raids are carried out in the Algerian quarter of Paris with regularity by the police and *Garde Mobile*; the French Right, using evangelical youth groups and para-military veterans' organizations as shock troops, are more than willing to use the slogan "*Algeria Francaise*" in as violent a manner as possible to knock other groups on the head. I was at the big Etoile riot (and incidentally had a bomb go off under me) and it is interesting to note that the fascists and rightists had Mendès' *L'Express* as their target, not *L'Humanité* or *France-Observateur*.

In the struggle within France over Algeria, the Communists play a devious and astonishingly neutral role, and pose no threat to the colonists or the Right generally. The Communists' only slogan is "Peace in Algeria," but on what or whose terms they remain silent. The campaign against Nazi General Speidel (just appointed to a high post in NATO) is a fizzle. The CP is in bad shape, paying for sins of inertia, bureaucracy and opportunism, less in resignations and dramatic declines in various votes (though this too happens) than in apathy which eats away at the heart of the party. There are some necessarily underground publications which aim at rejuvenating the party, but privately the intellectuals who spearhead the reform movement admit they have very small hope of wresting power from an arrogant and bankrupt Central Committee. Things drift; wait and see is the attitude on all sides.

The main points emphasized by the anti-Stalinist intellectuals currently battling or opposing the leadership are 1) the party's chauvinism in regard to Algeria; 2) the party's opportunistic tactics in Parliament culminating in the decision to vote special powers to Mollet; 3) the party's basic reformism toward French capitalism, however clothed in revolutionary phraseology, a reformism dictated by greater awareness of the requirements of Soviet foreign policy than of the interests of the French working class; and so on. In other words, the Central Committee is being attacked, and heavily, from the left. Hervé has discredited himself with party people and many others by his shocking nationalism and is more or less ineffectual. The best intellectuals within the party thus far refuse to resign and insist their job is to reform from within.

THERE are signs that the Central Committee is prepared to bend but not buckle. In December a private conference between opposition intellectuals and a representative of the Central Committee was held, climaxed by the intellectuals being bluntly told, "Get out. We don't need

you." This is a direct and attributable quote. But cooler heads at the top have prevailed now that the extent of disaffection is known. At the recent conference of delegates from Paris Fifth Arrondissement, the party bureaucracy and in particular Laurent Casanova, reputed to be in line for the ailing Thorez' job, were mercilessly belabored from the floor on a whole range of questions. I am assured by those present that this sort of democracy has not been seen in the present lifetime of many members.

Hampering the oppositionists is the terrible chasm which exists within the party between the intellectuals and the workers, a gap deliberately maintained and exploited by the Central Committee, and the fact, astonishing for me when I came here, that so little Marxist analysis has been used to examine the urgent national problems. Intellectuals and workers rarely meet, even more rarely talk together, though I am informed worker delegates help put out *L'Etincelle*, the chief opposition publication. The workers are unquestionably suspicious of the intellectuals, a suspicion fostered by the bureaucracy, and the intellectuals are correspondingly very despondent.

I have yet to meet one who holds out any hope for the party in its present state, though obviously the existence of such phenomena as *L'Etincelle* belie to some extent, at least, this deep pessimism. Communist discipline amongst intellectuals is a some-time thing; some of the most important of these men and women of the CP have freely admitted to me, on first acquaintance, how glad they are that the CP is not in power in France today because if it were they should all be in the *Cherche Midi*, Paris' version of Lubianka. It is no exaggeration to say that today the active French party intellectual regards the Central Committee as an enemy. The basic strength of the party comes from the working class, of course, which is kept in a state of political mal-education and upon whose patriotic, rather than class, sentiments the party makes its appeal. Marxism is a dead letter. *L'Humanité* must be read to be appreciated; it is the *Los Angeles Times* of European Communism. (Incidentally, Tillon, who along with Marty, was expelled from the CP, called every sort of name and accused of embezzling funds, was quietly re-accepted into the party the other week.)

A LEFT-WING opposition is active inside the Socialist Party which, without anyone actually coming out and saying so, it is hoped can, when "circumstances are ripe," blend in some organizational way with the anti-Stalinists within the CP. The hinge would be Algeria, perhaps.

There is little question that very many of the French people genuinely believe in *Le Presence Francaise* in Algeria, and it is precisely this sentiment which the Communist and Socialist chiefs have refused to buck. It is a suspicion of mine that some of these Left wing leaders, far from supporting the fight of the Algerian people, heartily wish it had never happened, and in fact personally believe the French have some rightful business in North Africa. Equally clear, if less evident, is that the mass of



French people are beginning to lose their stomach for the Algerian war. More and more I hear sentiments such as, "Let us get out of Algeria and leave the natives to stew in their own juice"; the general supposition being that the Algerians have neither the talent nor will to govern themselves without French overlordship.

Though there are many Algerians in Paris, they have virtually no contact with the French, including leftwingers. Until recently, the Algerian CP was under instructions to lend the "terrorists" no aid, but this policy is being belatedly brought up to date. Servan-Schreiber, whom Mollet foolishly sent with the army to Algeria as political punishment, has written a series of blistering articles for *L'Express* and is threatened with court-martial.

Frenchmen of all persuasions are openly suspicious of American intentions toward North Africa, and I have heard both radicals and conservatives speak darkly of secret American subsidies to the FLN, the Algerian resistance movement.

**T**HE government is having conniptions seeking ways to keep the cost-of-living index to a prearranged figure. An extra one percent and the whole crazy-quilt structure of the French economy goes toppling as the workers demand wage increases.

The fact that there were no real protests against General Speidel is a rather forceful reminder of the current political numbness of not only the people but the leaders. But under the surface something is happening. I am too new here to clearly spell it out, but I do know that one of its characteristics is a growing tendency to violence, an almost taste of violence in the air, an increasing quickness of temper, a building up of pressure. Now, even when the students demonstrate on non-political matters, the police and *Garde Mobile* are brought out as for an armed invasion. The police are very nervous.

One final comment: From what I have seen of the French Left, the *American Socialist* can keep its head up with the best and is even ahead on some points.

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## OPINIONS

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### The Israeli-Arab Conflict

by A Jewish Socialist

**T**HE writer of this communication is a Jewish socialist who participated in the Jewish labor movement before the war in Poland. I fled from Hitler and then from Stalin. Being now in the "land of the free and the home of the brave," I am reluctant to reveal my name.

I am very much interested in the problems of socialist revival in this country and hope these thoughts can be a small contribution on my part to this effect.

I attended a forum in New York on the subject of the Israeli-Arab conflict where I. F. Stone and Harvey O'Connor were the speakers. Mr. Stone represented, as he put it frankly, a "biased" view in favor of Israel. He stressed repeatedly that, being a Jew, he had to support Israel in its conflict with the Arab countries. He admitted magnanimously that there is a natural conflict between the two sides, each having its own rights, but felt that the Jewish people all over the world and in this country have to take the Israeli side, while Arab progressives might view it from the Arab side.

Having been a Jewish socialist all my adult life, I was shocked by the presentation of this case, which seems to me runs against all the principles of socialism. Doesn't it occur to Mr. Stone that there cannot be a Jewish socialist point of view as against the Arab socialist one, but that there is *one* international socialist point of view for Jewish and Arab socialists alike, and for other socialists as well?

To amplify my question, let's take a few instances pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

There is a problem of the very existence of the state of Israel. There are Arab rulers who proclaim their aim to destroy Israel by a new "holy war." It seems to me that there cannot be an "Arab socialist point of view" in support of such a war because as socialists they have to recognize the right of every nation to independence. If there are Arab socialists who nevertheless favor a war to abolish Israel, it shows only that as a matter of fact they are nationalists who betray the idea of socialism. Or, if some Arab socialists were to favor the slogan of their rulers to throw the Jews into the sea, it would show that they have nothing to do with socialism or any progressive movement which is against genocide and for freedom of all peoples.

By the same token, we are entitled to ask the adherence of Israeli or Jewish socialists in other countries to the basic principles of socialist ethics and policy.

**L**ET'S examine the problem of Arab refugees who live in extreme destitution on the border of Israel. The Jews were victims of the Nazi idea of "living space," which held that one nation has the right to build its prosperity at the expense of others. We were opposed to this theory, not only because we were on the receiving end of the stick, but because we considered it barbarism. We appealed to all progressive forces, and to Germans among them, to resist it. Is it not a shame that the former victims of this "philosophy," having the opportunity, didn't hesitate to apply the same principle—of course not in the same barbaric manner—to their Arab neighbors? The Israeli government, which is very much concerned about the persecution of Jews in other countries, is callous in regard to the former inhabitants of the Israeli part of Palestine. The rectification of this through repatriation, resettlement, and indemnification of the Arab refugees is not an "Arab point of view" but in the first place the obligation of Jewish socialists.

Or take the situation of the Arab minority in Israel,

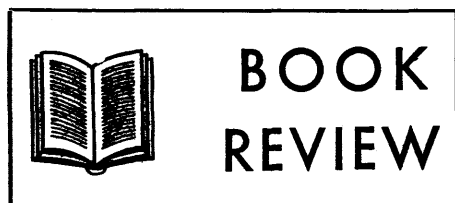
which lives under martial law with all discriminations, or the denial of the right to vote to the Arab workers in Israeli trade unions. Is it not the duty of the Israeli socialists to protest?

Now take the criminal adventure of the Israeli government (headed by "socialist" Mapai) in attacking Egypt in collusion with British and French imperialism. Is it possible to talk about "Israeli," or "Arab," or any other differing socialist policies? Or the right of Egypt to the Suez Canal against the policy of the former foreign exploiters. The Socialists who supported imperialist robbery against Egypt represented the interests of their own capitalists, but not the interests of the working class, or the colonial people, or socialism. The British Labor Party, after some vacillation, opposed the Tory government and thus served well the cause of British socialism. The French Socialist Party, by its involvement in this adventure, covered itself with shame and will repay for its policy bitterly in the future. Can we say that there was a British versus

a French socialist view, each right in its own country? I think the nationalist way of looking at things is not real socialist policy.

I am old enough to remember the first World War, when there were "socialists" on opposite sides supporting "their" rulers in slaughtering millions of people. There was then talk of a "German socialist position" as against the French one. This was the greatest catastrophe of socialism. Fortunately, there were groups which didn't surrender their internationalist socialist point of view to the conflicting nationalist policies of the leading socialist parties, and they saved the honor and future of socialism.

Hitlerism flooded the world with the dirty waves of nationalism, contaminating even its victims. Even now, we feel the receding foam of nationalism, but let's not overlook the swelling waves of the socialist future. And the socialist future means not only the abolition of the exploitation of one class by another, but also the exploitation of one nation by another.



## *Rebels All*

*AMERICAN RADICALS: SOME PROBLEMS AND PERSONALITIES*, edited by Harvey Goldberg. *Monthly Review Press, New York, 1957, \$5.*

**T**HIS book consists of fourteen essays, each by a different author, about American radicals of the past century, plus two additional chapters on repressions against radicalism, and on renegades from it. The fourteen men whose lives are sketched and achievements appraised are John Jay Chapman, Theodore Dreiser, Heywood Broun, Henry Demarest Lloyd, Robert M. LaFollette, John Brown, John Peter Altgeld, Vito Marcantonio, Eugene V. Debs, William Haywood, Daniel De Leon, Walter Weyl, Thorstein Veblen, and Charles A. Beard.

There are bound to be complaints against any such selection, and one can sympathize with the editor's problem of cramming into manageable size an anthology of persons representative enough to satisfy numerous critics. It can be claimed with justice that, as one of the broadest streams of American radicalism up to the twenties was the constantly renewed rebellion of the farmer, some of the farm radicals, for example that dynamo salesman of a socialist farm program Arthur C. Townley, should have been included. It is hard to see how, if Theodore Dreiser is included, writers of fiction like Jack London or Upton Sinclair, or for that matter Edward Bellamy, can be left out, unless one is to take as his

criterion artistic excellence rather than broad national impact. No one can quarrel with the choice of the three socialist leaders—Debs, Haywood, and De Leon—but it would be immensely profitable for some writers of the Left to grapple today with figures like Hillquit and Berger; they were less colorful, and their careers may be less sympathetic to us today, but the job of taking account of their line of thought in some detail and with sobriety is long overdue.

And finally, again with deference to the editor and his many problems, it is pretty hard to justify the absence of Wendell Phillips, one of the grandest figures in American history, and the man in whom Abolitionism and labor radicalism of the post-Civil War era found their living link. Even Richard Hofstadter's "The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It" includes Phillips as the sole rebel in its galaxy of eight presidents, two cabinet officers, and the Founding Fathers.

**I**T is startling, when one considers it, that although the labor movement is universally considered to be the indispensable foundation for modern radicalism, most of the figures considered in this book (outside of the three socialist leaders) had no connection with organized labor. The accent is on middle-class radicalism, both personally and doctrinally. In this case, there is no criticism of the editors intended. It is a reflection of the sharp cleavage between middle class radicalism and the labor unions which never organized their own political structure. Some middle class radicals attached themselves of course, to the Socialist and Communist movements, but these always remained minority currents in the nation.

It is noteworthy in this connection that some of the writers in this book put a somewhat different interpretation upon the policies of the radical movement of the thirties than we have been accustomed to. Thoughtful people on the Left are starting

to re-evaluate the policies which aided the complete subordination of the labor movement, and of the radical movement in great measure too, to the middle-class reform program of the New Deal, and hence rendered itself extremely vulnerable when that phase of our history ended abruptly. "In the '30s and early '40s," write Harvey Goldberg and William Appleman Williams in their introductory essay, "the pitfalls were deep and the failures great for American radicals. Abandoning the independence and vigor attached to the rich tradition of the men described below, many sincere men and women were tempted into the easy solution. Either they became Russophiles, or they cast in their lot with the liberals and sought to change America by using the power of the existing national government." It is this thought that contains some of the reasons why, at the very moment when an independent labor radicalism seemed ready to emerge at last in America, it was dissolved back into New Deal liberalism. The radicals in the best position to aid and lead at least a section of labor along a new great path doubled the unions back on their tracks in alliance with the older union leaders.

**T**HE quality of the essays in the book is very uneven, and an overall judgment is pretty much out of the question. A number of essays catch the spirit of their subjects strikingly. Richard Sasuly's sketch of Vito Marcantonio, for example, despite an unsuccessful half-attempt to rationalize Marcantonio's changes of line at the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact, is a fine picturization. Also of professional skill is John Lydenberg's perceptive portrait of Theodore Dreiser. Some other essays, notably those on Lloyd, LaFollette, and Altgeld, effectively re-create a slice of our history.

Only a few of the essays are of the probing variety. Bert Cochran contributes an acute evaluation of Debs and his role, far more rewarding than the ceremonial rhetoric which Debs has inspired over the

years. David Herreshoff's outline of De Leon's work is of importance in describing how the man who possessed the most brilliant mind and most complete theoretical equipment in the history of American socialism effectively worked himself and his followers into a total dead end.

What is especially impressive and important about this book is the collaboration of fifteen authors, most of them young men, many of them in our universities, upon a thoughtful project of scholarship and inspiration in the interest of a new American radicalism. There are those who think such a new radicalism can be created by doing together the same things we used to do separately; this reviewer is far from sharing that opinion. A new American radicalism will require a new and better foundation in ideology, and it is work of this kind that helps to supply it.

H. B.

## Our Affair with Hitler's Friends

VICHY—POLITICAL DILEMMA, by Paul Farmer. Columbia University Press, New York, \$5.50.

**T**HIS book is a dreary attempt to whitewash the Vichy collaborationist regime of wartime France, and with it America's policy towards Vichy. The author, who belongs to the history faculty of the University of Wisconsin, apparently believes that the best way to make Vichy look more attractive is to present it as the product of a dilemma, and that where no dilemma exists it is necessary to invent one.

The record of American dealings with Vichy is one of sordid failure perhaps unmatched in our history. It leaves Mr. Farmer understandably disturbed. But trying to explain away this record makes for a bad book without putting a more favorable aspect on events.

General de Gaulle's war memoirs appeared too late to be used by the author of this book, but the general's official papers were available, and are ignored. The war memoirs fill gaps which are left by the present narrative, and suggest an answer to the big question which Farmer leaves dangling: Why did the United States go so far in its support of Vichy?

France was split into two zones by the armistice of 1940 concluded after the German victory. The occupied zone, comprising the northern and western parts of the country, was under German military government. The southeastern zone was under a nominally independent French government, having its capital at Vichy. The Vichy government consisted of arch-conservatives and fascists. It lost no time in trying to remodel southern France in the image of Hitler's Germany. Farmer assures us that this was entirely spontaneous, without pressure from the Germans. Except for variations in censorship, no substantial differences are pointed out between the behavior of the German occupying govern-

ment and that of Vichy. The author admits: "In practice, however, the French government would have to accede to whatever demands the Germans might impose, provided these did not surpass the bounds of endurance."

**A**S the war went on, Vichy became more and more openly the agent of the Germans. The author goes into complicated psychology to explain why the French conservatives (as distinguished from the fascists) should have sided as much as they did with the interests of Germany as against those of France. He omits mention of the traditional "treason of the Right," running from the time when General Dumouriez went over to the Austrians in the French Revolution, through Marshal Bazain's surrender of the fortress at Metz in the Franco-Prussian War to free the Prussian army for the more important business of crushing the Paris Commune, down to the slogan "Rather Hitler than Blum," which preceded World War II and the surrender of 1940. Such a reminder would mar the whitewash.

The author concludes with some observations which are best set down without comment: "In an age gone by, anyone could readily distinguish between patriotism and treason; the distinction was sharp and plain. For most peoples today, the distinction between treason and patriotism has become uncertain, mobile, contingent upon a number of factors."

The United States gave full diplomatic recognition to the Vichy government, and in January 1941 sent Admiral Leahy as ambassador. It even beat the Soviet Union, then friendly to Germany, which did not give its *charge d'affaires* ambassadorial rank until two months later. When the United States landed troops in North Africa in November 1942, it was Vichy which broke off relations with the United States, not *vice versa*. Even after de Gaulle emerged clearly as the probable authority in post-war France, the United States shunned dealings with him.

This reluctance has been explained on the supposition that President Roosevelt took a personal dislike to de Gaulle, and mistrusted him as a would-be twentieth century Joan of Arc. But mere clash of personalities does not explain the long courtship of Vichy, a government which (1) was weak and under the enemy's thumb, (2) practised almost everything to which the United States was officially opposed, and (3) proved to be a loser. Either the United States was acting from extreme timidity, or the Vichy flirtation was part of a scheme which went awry, and has become a skeleton in the closet. It is here that de Gaulle's war memoirs fill out the gaps left by Farmer's book.

**O**NE of de Gaulle's bitterest and most persistent complaints is that the British tried to grab the pieces of the French colonial empire while France lay prostrate. The British resorted to direct military occupation, according to the accepted pattern of European colonialism. In a more muted

key, de Gaulle also assails America's steady tendency to favor pro-Vichy governments in the French colonies. During 1939-41, it was sometimes bruited about that American opposition to Japan stemmed from the ambition of U.S. interests that they, and not Japan, should succeed to the colonial rule which Britain would soon have to relinquish in the Far East. Likewise, there were newspaper articles saying that the United States might have to acquire Dakar (in French West Africa) for "defense."

But modern American colonialism is far more efficient than the old-fashioned European kind. The United States did not approach the problem by way of military occupation. If Vichy were as ready to comply with Nazi wishes as Farmer claims, it might be equally anxious to comply with the wishes of any other conquering power. The United States, as such a power, would not demand internal reorganization—it would ask only bases and concessions in the French colonies. Such a scheme of taking over Axis puppets lock, stock, and barrel, while maintaining their formal "independence," has been carried out in other cases. For instance Thailand (Siam), nowadays often called the only reliable anti-Communist country in Southeast Asia, is described by de Gaulle as a Japanese puppet during the war.

So, with a cooperative French government such as Vichy, the French colonies could be expected to fall like ripe apples, without even seeming to fall. It is precisely here that de Gaulle did not fit into the picture. Stiff-necked like Churchill, he had his own plans for France and the French Empire. The United States tried every alternative before being compelled to recognize de Gaulle. With that recognition, any schemes of becoming a holding company for French colonies were temporarily dropped.

No amount of beautification can make America's policy toward Vichy anything but sordid and reprehensible. In its day, the annexation of Texas was roundly denounced as unprincipled, greedy, and imperialistic—but it succeeded. The courtship of Vichy did not have even that saving grace. Nor can credit go to the author for his pathetic attempt to gild the nettle. Scholarship merely furnishes him with articulate reasons for taking the wrong stand.

The book reflects the uneasiness which our affair with Vichy has left in many American minds. But if the subject is to be re-examined, it would be better to face the facts squarely.

GEORGE OLSHAUSEN

## Two Who Clashed

THE UNAMERICANS by Alvah Bessie. Cameron Associates, New York, 1957, \$4.75.

**M**R. Bessie is himself a veteran of both the Spanish War and the more recent McCarthy Wars. As a volunteer in the International Brigades he fought in Spain and as one of "The Hollywood Ten" he served

a year in prison for refusing to testify before the House Un-American Activities committee. These two experiences he has utilized to fashion a fictionalized attack on government by thought control which has become so familiar a feature of the past decade.

The result is, at its best, slashing political journalism coupled with poignant scenes evoking the atmosphere of Spain in the thirties. The sections which depict the operation of the House Un-American committee are particularly compelling, both for their force and their indisputable authenticity.

The remainder of the novel is, unfortunately, less moving.

Its central device is the conflict on the witness stand of two Americans who have both been affected by the Spanish war. One of them—the news commentator Francis X. Lang—has nurtured over the years a romantic radicalism which is ultimately corrupted by alcohol, neuroticism and the ubiquitous pressure of big money. His decline from Communist to informer is traced in odious detail—indeed, in so much detail that one sometimes feels that Mr. Bessie, like Milton, is rather more fascinated with Lucifer than he is with the angels.

On the side of the angels stands Ben Blau, veteran of the International Brigade and *Daily Worker* staff member. There can be no doubt that Ben Blau is considered the hero of the book, but in the process of “humanizing” him, Mr. Bessie has only succeeded in producing a singularly unpleasant character. His positive qualities may be quickly enumerated: he is courageous, loyal, principled and sincere. But what a wealth of negative qualities to round out the portrait! He is perennially unemployed, rootless, ugly, given to chronic self-doubt, apparently hostile to artistic experience, incapable of love, gloomy, doctrinaire and utterly joyless. His political horizons are bounded by the editorials of the *Daily Worker*, his contact with ordinary Americans limited to his brother and his landlady, and his extra-curricular activities appear to be confined to sexual liaisons without love.

I have no doubt that many such lumpen-radicals as Ben Blau exist. But it is an ironic commentary on the state of the Communist movement in America that they can be presented with a straight face as its heroes.

GEORGE HITCHCOCK

## No Ultimate Ends

SEVENTY YEARS OF LIFE AND LABOR  
by Samuel Gompers. E. P. Dutton, New York, 1957, \$5.

SAMUEL Gompers' famous autobiography, written in the early twenties shortly before his death, has here been republished in a revised edition by Philip Taft and John A. Sessions.

Gompers was born in London in 1850 of Dutch-Jewish parentage, and came to this country with his family in 1863; he

worked as a cigarmaker, first helping his father and later as a journeyman. After becoming active and then prominent in his union, he was instrumental in launching a new form of American unionism on a broad scale, which took shape in the American Federation of Labor. Gompers served as the president of that organization for almost every year from its foundation to his death.

During the 1870's, events had thrown the labor movement into a considerable turmoil. The depression of 1873-78, with its bitter hardships, decimated union membership, lowering the number of organized workers from something above a quarter of a million to only about 50,000 by Gompers' estimate. The great national strike wave of 1877 against wage cuts, born of desperation at existing conditions, had very little union structure to back it up, and makeshift local leaderships. The Knights of Labor suffered from much infantilism and confusion of purpose, as it was trying to be a cross between a grand industrial union and a secret political society, and its objectives were anything but clear. At the same time, with unionism temporarily stymied, the workers, as has often been their wont, turned their attention to the political field in the hope that something could be done that way, and parties and candidates sprouted in dozens of labor centers. And finally, the socialists, who numbered a great many of the active unionists and laborites among their number, were divided into Lassalleans and Marxists. Lassalle's followers (the struggle was in good measure transplanted from Europe and the Lassalle here referred to is the German socialist leader) were against trade union activity and held out hope only for political endeavors, while the Marxists wanted to revive and build the union movement as a necessary pre-condition to a political socialist movement, as, they said, socialism could not be an article of faith which the workers would swallow on anyone's authority, but something they would work up to by their experiences.

GOMPERS was associated with the New York socialists; he claims that the “Communist Manifesto” “brought me an interpretation of much that before had been only inarticulate feeling,” and that he learned German in order to read Marx, Engels, Lassalle, and the other European socialist writers. But he also fell in early with a group of cigarmakers, German immigrants who were ex-socialists, or perhaps more accurately at that time, socialists who despaired of making Marxism practical in America and were casting about for a workable plan for unionism. It appears to have been largely because of their influence that Gompers did not throw himself into socialist activity as did so many others of his background.

Together with these German-origin cigarmakers, men like Adolph Strasser and Ferdinand Laurrell, Gompers transformed the union of his craft into an efficient and businesslike institution (at least by the

standards of those days), with the emphasis on dues, contracts, fraternal benefits for members, and concerted efforts to gain small immediate gains. “Trade unionism,” Gompers writes, “had to be put on a business basis in order to develop power adequate to secure better working conditions.” The use of the strike was to be placed upon a far more restrained basis, relegated to a weapon of last resort, and then only when the organization was considered to have sufficient resources to back it up. In Gompers later practice as it developed over the years, this came more and more to mean that strikes were called when forced by employers, and rather seldom on union initiative.

Gompers' efforts in the cigarmakers' union precipitated an internal battle and a split with the socialists. In those early struggles, Gompers appealed to Marx and to Engels, as he found in the writings of the two founders of socialism a lot of ammunition against the views of the Lassalleans, and a lot that he interpreted to mean that socialists should not try to intrude their views into the unions. Once, he appealed to Engels to support him in his view that a “socialist political party, as a political party, cannot be represented in a trade-union congress.” In the cigarmakers' conflict, the socialists at first had a big majority supporting their union against that of Gompers, but any early elation was soon dispelled, as Gompers proved to have hold of a notion with a great future in American labor. The reorganization of the cigarmakers' union was actually the beginning of a new craft unionism which was to sweep the field and dominate the labor scene from the nineties of the last century to the thirties of this one, and even after the rise of the industrial unions of the CIO, has still furnished many of the basic principles of American unionism, although in greatly modified form.

THE new idea in unionism, which seemed such unimaginable heresy to the laborites of that turbulent day that Gompers had to cloak it in protestations of loyalty to socialist ideals, was expressed in Gompers' famous phrase, “unionism, pure and simple.” When Adolph Strasser was asked by the Senate Committee on Education and Labor what the ultimate objectives of the new unionism were, he answered plainly: “We have no ultimate ends. We are going on from day to day. We fight only for immediate objects—objects that can be realized in a few years.”

Unions of this kind banded together in the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada in 1881, which changed its name to the American Federation of Labor in 1886. Despite the fact that the new AFL was the big comer in labor affairs, let no one suppose that it had a flashy or inspiring rise. It is not on record that the pedestrian objectives and methods of the AFL affiliates brought out huge throngs, or lit up the sky with a crusading glow. Most of the big events that stirred the nation and the work-

ing people took place outside its jurisdiction. Socialists, IWW men, and other radicals and progressives took the lead in the soul-stirring crusades and spectacular battles, but through it all the AFL unions continued to make steady, plodding, contractual gains, and what is more important consolidated their gains in dues-paying locals that burgeoned into a big union structure in the various crafts. There is no question that the atmosphere of militancy and struggle which others were inspiring facilitated the growth of the AFL, but it was the unions that followed the cigarmakers' pattern, which Gompers spread around the country with indefatigable energy, that consolidated a union structure.

Throughout most of his life, Gompers' new craft form of unionism was fought by

the socialist and IWW movements, sometimes outside and sometimes inside the AFL, often with considerable success in convincing large bodies of workers. Looking backward today, it is clear that the battle was weighted in Gompers' favor. The stage of American development and the temper of American workers was eminently hospitable to the kind of institution that Gompers fostered. The earlier forms of unionism, far more radical and sweeping as many of them were, were an anticipatory glimpse of a movement which was to be reborn in partial form in the CIO of the thirties, and which remains to be fully realized in coming movements of American labor.

Gompers' book is sketchy and a lot of it is routine making-with-the-words without

saying much. There are interesting sidelights on how much labor leaders have changed, particularly with regard to civil liberties. One statement by Gompers ought to be painted in ten-foot-high letters, illuminated with neon, and put in the office of George Meany, who contributes a reverent foreword to this book. Gompers says:

*Inasmuch as the Haymarket bomb in Chicago destroyed our eight-hour movement, we trade unionists had no reason to sympathize with the cause of the anarchists as such. However, labor must do its best to maintain justice for the radicals or find itself denied the rights of free men.*

H. B.

## LETTERS

(Continued from page 2)

me, but I wonder whether it is an adequate approach. As long as most people are ignorant and selfish, I assume the state which expresses their morals will be similar.

I suppose the great majority of Americans would not be disturbed too much if they woke up tomorrow and found a socialist state in full swing, but I'm sure the administrators of the new socialism would be forced to be bureaucratic, if for no other reason than that people would be too lazy or fumbling if they were asked to participate in the new state.

A basic flaw inherent in attempts to view human society by means of this or that theory is that no theory can take into account all the significant factors, because no human being can know them all. In addition, no one can foresee what new conditions may arise or what new personalities may enter the picture.

It seems to me that the problem of bureaucracy will end only when the values of our society no longer stress the importance of the leader, the President, the foreman, the boss, the champion, the whole concept of *ruling* as opposed to a democracy of universal participation.

A. H. Michigan

I believe that the *American Socialist*, perhaps more than any other current publication, has managed to bring some semblance of unity to all of us who are anxious to further the cause of socialism in our country.

I do feel, however, that in the recent past you have been unjustly critical of the Communist Party. It seems to me that for several months this organization has been making tremendous efforts to correct past mistakes in policy and tactics. Shouldn't such people be complimented and encouraged? Certainly I do not mean that the Communist Party should be embraced as "long lost brothers" but neither are they helped, nor is the cause of so-

cialism helped, by calling for their dissolution at this critical time.

R. M. T. Miami

I was happy to read the *American Socialist*. I was more than overjoyed to find letters from your readers with thoughts similar to my own.

There is no specific dogma to social progress. We need not study Marx and the others any longer. For there are circumstances in America that alter concepts. The working class in our nation is well off compared to other lands. Despite certain evils, despite the inefficiencies, despite the rivalries, and the ever-present propaganda dividing workers, dividing union members, dividing people into races and classes opposed to each other.

There is lack of purpose among socialists. I wonder if they adhere to those higher principles outlined by Tom Paine, the true patriot of our Revolution? Tom Paine knew what freedom meant. He certainly would comprehend it in our time. We must dedicate American socialism to our highest definition of democracy, and make it alive in socialism.

M. K. Brooklyn

Dr. Edward Teller, "father of the H-bomb," the man who fingered Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer and was temporarily ostracized by the scientific community for this act, is having his reputation refurbished, is receiving favorable newspaper publicity and build-up and has just received the Joseph Priestley Memorial Award for his "outstanding contributions to mankind through physics."

Teller's activities during and since the Oppenheimer case brand him as a madman on the loose, but the circumstances of his build-up mean that those who hire him and applaud his activities are not beyond playing with the possibilities of H-bomb war.

During the controversy over H-bomb testing prior to last year's presidential election, Teller and Ernest O. Lawrence of the University of California Radiation Laboratory issued a statement calling for more H-bomb tests, claiming that "past tests

have not put into the atmosphere an amount of radioactivity which is harmful in any manner."

In February of this year, Teller testified before a Congressional committee, favoring an immediate multi-billion dollar mass shelter program so the population could go underground for a week or more to escape radioactive fallout in case of atomic attack.

Teller told a University of California audience recently that a new age of peace and plenty is on its way, saying, "I am absolutely certain this will happen in the next 100 years, perhaps after a violent and bloody war, I don't know. But if there is a next war, it will not be the end of civilization but the beginning of a new age."

Teller and his associates will next be telling us that increased radioactivity in the atmosphere and a judicious explosion of properly placed H-bombs will be a benefit to mankind since they will provide a new evolutionary selection of new men for Teller's new radioactive age of peace and plenty.

A rational society would lock up such dangerous characters. I don't think any amount of conditioning à la Teller will convince anyone, or soften anybody up for an H-bomb war.

P. S. San Francisco

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# Many Thanks to All Who Contributed to Our Fund

**W**E have completed collections on this year's fund appeal. As we informed our readers in making the appeal, our budget is out of kilter by a couple of thousand dollars. While our reader-contributions did not fully make up this deficit, they ran sufficiently above last year to make a dent in it. If we continue to get your support, especially from those who have promised regular donations, we can see our way clear for the coming year.

As a whole the response was very gratifying, as were the notes that accompanied many donations. "Here is \$5," one reader wrote, "for 'the cause that lacks assistance, for the wrongs which need resistance, and the future in the distance.'" Most of the contributions were in the \$5-\$10 range, and more readers contributed than ever before. We extend our heartiest thanks to all, and hope we can continue to prove worthy of your trust.

Our monthly boosters' club can prove to be an important innovation if we get enough backing for it. A number of readers joined and started their contributions in the course of this fund appeal, and we hope that many more will. The way it works is this: You send us your pledge for whatever amount you can manage on a regular basis; anything from a dollar on up. We will invoice you each month, enclosing our return envelope, and all you do is mail it back with your contribution.

By placing our support on this kind of a regular basis, and by making it possible for supporters to donate more than they could in a single lump sum each year, this setup can enable us to balance, and eventually to enlarge, our budget. We really need an enlarged budget for the kind of promotion and advertising that should be done.

**W**ITH the fund appeal over, we hope that every reader will cast about for ways to spread the **AMERICAN SOCIALIST**. Increased subscription lists are, after all, the best way to aid the cause, both financially and educationally.

One way to spread the good word is to organize house meetings and get a speaker down. In the New York area, one of the editors will always be glad to come and talk about the magazine and its purposes. Elsewhere in the country, we will do our best to send a competent representative as a speaker. Some house meetings have been held recently both here and on the West Coast, and have proved successful and interesting for all concerned. Readers and friends are now arranging more of them, and we hope others will follow suit.

Meanwhile, go through the list of your friends and get some subscriptions for us now, if possible. Use the attached form.

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