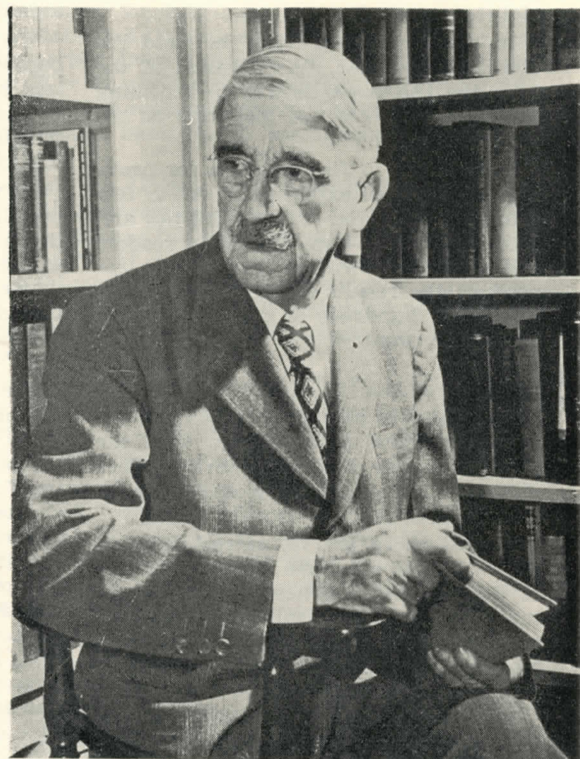
Winter 1960 #150

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

Deutscher's Biography of Leon Trotsky

— A Review —

JOHN DEWEY'S THEORIES OF EDUCATION



James P. Cannon

ON AMERICAN RADICALISM

35 CENTS

Welcome to Our New Readers

If you hear the sound of happy chuckling these days it is possible that you are within earshot of our editorial office as we thumb through a batch of new subscriptions. Nothing is quite so pleasing to the staff of a socialist publication as the knowledge that they are finding a new audience.

To each of the 315 who have newly subscribed to the *International Socialist Review* since our last issue: Greetings and welcome!

The major share of the credit for this increase in our readership belongs to Dan Freeman and Jim Robertson, the "Socialist Trailblazers." These two young men toured a few of the eastern university campuses selling subscriptions to the ISR and two socialist newspapers, the *Militant* and the *Young Socialist*.

In a communique from the field the Trailblazers wrote, "As a result of the tour, the ISR is on its way to becoming *the* recognized Marxist magazine on the campuses visited."

Our thanks to Jim and Dan for proving with their experiment on a few campuses what the real possibilities are. Is it too much to hope that other readers and supporters will be inspired to reproduce the results made by the Trailblazers on hundreds of campuses across the entire country?

* * *

Perhaps it is only fair, right from the start, to warn new readers that the ISR is radically different from any other magazine one is apt to pick up on the newstand.

For us there are no sacred cows in this world of ours. We reject the credo of the "stultified fifties" that to freely inquire is a kind of subversion. On the contrary we insist that all institutions, movements, parties and theories are fair game for scientific analysis.

We state frankly, and indeed proudly, that we base ourselves on the accumulated body of knowledge and method of social analysis known as Marxism. We consider ourselves the modern exponents of the theoretical approach put forward by Marx and Engels and further developed by Lenin and Trotsky. Through the writings of these men and others in the Marxist movement we have available a remarkable distillation of the experience of the international labor movement for over a century.

We attempt to use that experience as a guide to our own analyses and, by so doing, add to the knowledge that the socialist movement so vitally needs.

We promise you controversy with no holds barred; and something even rarer, a pronounced lack of deference to all the powers that be. Nothing less than that will do for a movement that aims at the construction of a truly humane and rational society.

At any rate, that's our point of view and we're confident enough of it to take on all comers. And because we like everything open and above board we've made this little introduction of ourselves to our new readers.

* * *

In this issue we take note of two important centennials: John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry and the birth of John Dewey. As different as these two men were, they both remind us of the vigorous radicalism which is very much a part of the indigenous American tradition. They also typified what was viable and bold in the middle class movements of their time before the advent of the organized labor movement.

We are interested in these men in part because their dreams could not be realized by the movements they sponsored. It becomes incumbent on the modern socialist movement, we feel, to take up the jobs they started.

In fact, the connection between the populist radicalism of the eighteen hundreds and the socialist movement arising at the turn of the century is one of the themes of James P. Cannon's speech, published in this issue, "American Radicalism: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow."

For those whose interest is aroused by Joseph Hansen's thoughtful review of Isaac Deutscher's *Prophet Unarmed* we recommend the January 1960 issue of the *Young Socialist* which carries an exclusive interview with Deutscher. The historian gave the interview during his recent stay at Harvard University where he completed his investigations in the Trotsky Archives in preparation for his final volume of the Trotsky biography, *The Prophet Outcast*. The interview gives some important insights into how Deutscher will handle this third volume. You can get your copy by sending a dime to: The *Young Socialist,* P.O. Box 471, Cooper Station, N.Y.C., 3. Better yet, subscribe. It's only fifty cents for six months, a dollar for a year.

* * *

The mailman not only brought us the new subscriptions but some very much appreciated comments and suggestions from our old readers.

C. R. Hedlund writes, "The article on Alienation is one of the most informative that I have ever read." We are glad to see that our high opinion of William Warde's *Alienation* in the Fall 1959 issue was shared by many readers. For those that missed it and can't get a copy locally, just send thirty-five cents to our business office.

Jack B., from St. Paul, suggests that we carry ads in subsequent issues on such important articles as Alienation. Jack writes, "For some time now I have been wanting to write you some suggestions for the *International Socialist Review,* but because I have been working a fifty-eight hour work-week I have had neither the time nor the mental energy to do it. I have a few extra hours today so I am hastily writing this letter . . . The following articles, I am convinced, would be very good: Science and Socialism . . . Must We Sacrifice to Compete with the USSR . . . The Cuban Revolution . . . Historical Materialism and Stalinism . . . Norman Thomas and Socialism."

These are excellent suggestions and certainly will be considered as we map out the coming issues. One big problem we have is that we are cramped within the confines of thirty-two pages. This means that much fine material gets squeezed out as happened with this issue.

* * *

The future holds some exciting prospects for ISR readers. William Warde just wrote us, "I have been completing a comprehensive piece on the odd but relevant topic of 'Philosophy and the American Labor Movement.' It starts with the fact that official labor and academic philosophy have nothing whatever to do with one another and are both content with this estrangement. I then pose the question: is this a permanent feature of our culture? . . . I had in mind striking sparks in the minds of alert students interested in both the prospects of American Labor and the problems of American philosophy and their perspectives in their lifetime."

* * *

New readers mean more to us than just an enlarged audience. It means, we hope, two-way communication. We are eager to hear how you react to *ISR,* what your own views are on the topics we discuss, what criticisms and suggestions you may have. Why not make a habit of sending us a note after reading your issue?

Potentially an enlarged readership means the growth of our Marxist quarterly in many ways, among them the development of a new group of Marxist writers and research workers. The American Marxist movement is certainly in need of new blood, fresh and vigorous fighters and writers for socialism.

In this connection, while we are of course proud of the veteran Marxist contributors to this issue: James P. Cannon, William F. Warde and Joseph Hansen, we are equally proud and encouraged by the newer and younger writers that appear in these pages: Shane Mage, Arthur Jordan, Tim Wohlforth and others.

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Editorial

The "Thaw"

THESE are not yet balmy days, but they are certainly less frigid than before the Eisenhower-Khrushchev agreement to exchange personal visits. To be sure, the American arms budget is not being reduced, and the United States government is building an intermediate-range missile base in Turkey to further menace the cities of European Russia and the vital centers of Soviet Central Asia. Nevertheless, the diplomatic moves have aroused profound hopes throughout the world.

Are these hopes justified? Will the diplomatic "thaw" become pervasive, lead to disarmament, and bring lasting peace?

In our opinion, the "thaw" does indeed represent a major setback for the side that started the cold war, then tried unsuccessfully for fourteen years to turn it into a third world war. The side in the world conflict which has been driving towards war, and has simultaneously been prevented so far from unleashing it on a world scale is the big business power elite that rules this country.

On this score we reject as utterly worthless the "middle ground" view that the blame must be equally distributed between the Soviet Union and the United States. The facts are unmistakable: it is our own capitalist rulers who bear the responsibility for the war danger. Moreover, according to all observers and even casual tourists, this truth is known to the vast majority of people in other countries and expressed by their universal fear and hatred of the Wall Street plutocracy and its "Ugly American" representatives abroad.

The American capitalist rulers have been pushing towards a full-scale war because they are determined to save the capitalist system of private profit, a system in which they are the most solid pillar and the principal beneficiary. The mortal sickness of world capitalism arises from the incapacity of our planet to accommodate the inexorable requirement of capital for ever new markets and ever new fields of investment in order to survive. The world has its limits, and by 1914 capitalism reached these limits. Thereafter, capitalist development was marked by a series of profound convulsions, including two world wars, the Great Depression of the thirties, fascist barbarism in Germany, Italy and Spain and the drive to World War III. These catastrophes forced the working people in many parts of the world to take the road of revolution as the only way out of the unbearable misery and privation that descended upon them.

Revolutionary successes, in turn, have further constricted the area for capitalist investment and exploitation. The Russian Revolution of October 1917, the expansion of the Soviet Union into Eastern Europe after World War II and the October 1949 revolution in China removed one third of the world's surface and close to one billion people from the orbit of capitalism.

Throughout Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, the colonial people have raised the banner of national independence and threaten to deprive the imperialist powers of the "right" to their countries' wealth. Though in Western Europe revolutionary working-class movements were prevented by the Stalinized Communist parties and the reformist Social Democracy from finishing off capitalism at the end of World War II, the workers remain powerfully organized and hamstring repeated attempts to transform their countries into secure bases for a war against the Soviet Union.

The workers of the United States, although they never attained the radical consciousness of the European workers, are nonetheless unwilling to accept the burden of war preparations in the form of reduced living standards. Instead they display combativity and resistance to such reductions and compel the corporations and Washington to virtually extend the front of the cold war to include the American unions.

To the extent that they win their demands and press their struggle, the colonial masses and the workers in major capitalist countries further narrow the already constricted opportunity for capitalist profit making.

American big business began preparing for a global showdown with all these class forces that assail its rule even before the second world war had ended. The bombs exploded on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were a warning to all who opposed its plans to rule the world: Submit! Or you too can be wiped off the face of the earth.

But side by side with American big business' war preparations, the ability of its foes to resist has grown in equal proportion. The American imperialists learned this to their sorrow during the Korean war.

The victory of the Chinese revolution had goaded the American power elite to seek an early showdown in Asia. The outbreak of the Korean civil war provided the pretext. Truman plunged the country into the war in June 1950. Nine months later, after the Chinese had entered the fray, the Americans equipped with the latest weapons, including a stock-pile of A-bombs held in reserve, had been fought to a standstill by the much more poorly equipped Chinese and North Koreans.

A major factor in the U.S. decision not to try to break the stalemate was the declining morale of the GI's who could not be sold on the notion that they were waging a just war. The American troops were bewildered by the hostility that the Korean people, for whose freedom they were supposedly fighting, displayed toward them. All the way south to Pusan, the people were "South Koreans by day and North Koreans by night." Every village was a potential enemy base.

The mood of the GI's spread to the American people at home. The Korean war became the most unpopular in American history. To seek to break the Korean deadlock by carrying the war to Chinese territory risked multiplying the

disaffection of the American troops and the resistance to war at home.

The U.S. power elite had to agree to an armistice in Korea. The American brass hats and politicians had sought to intimidate the Asian masses by a demonstration of their ruthlessness and armed might. They found themselves unable to make their will prevail against an insurgent people even in the small Korean peninsula. Sobered by this experience, American big business policy makers began to make more careful plans, beginning with a reappraisal of the international relationship of forces. Besides the strength of the Asian revolution and the anti-war temper of the American people, they had now also to weigh the Soviet Union's ever-growing military potential. They had to reckon first with the Soviet Union's A-bombs, then its H-bombs, then its superiority in rocketry. The scales, American big business found, were constantly tipping against the prospects of victory. To redress the balance would require time and the development of a whole series of favorable political and military factors.

In the period, following the settlement of the Korean "police action," the U.S. government several times verged again on war. Secretary of State Dulles' pronouncement that the art of statesmanship consists in going to the brink but avoiding the plunge, expressed American big business' ineluctable drive to war in only a slightly more restrained manner than did Truman's policy of "calculated risk" in Korea. But Washington's time-table for world conquest was badly disrupted. The odds piling up against American imperialism began to be given recognition in Washington's foreign policy. Peace gestures began alternating with war threats in U.S. diplomacy.

The U.S. government found it inexpedient to try to keep the American people at a high tension of war preparedness when big business could not risk actually taking the country to war. A relaxation of tensions had to be provided for. The American people's growing fears of the government's foreign policy had to be calmed. Furthermore, as we have noted, the majority of the people even in countries allied to Washington reviled the United States as the source of the war danger. In the hope of lining up these peoples in the future on the side of American big business, the U.S. government sought to screen its war preparations by seeming periodically to pursue a peaceful solution of its conflict with the Soviet Union.

Thus the "thaw" testifies to the strength of popular movements throughout the world. It indicates that American imperialism can be further slowed down and paralyzed by new advances of the international working class until, finally, the world-wide victory of socialism frees the world permanently of the menace of a third world war.

But are the members of the American power elite really still preparing for war? Doesn't the fact that both the United States and the Soviet Union have sufficient nuclear bombs to "overkill" mankind sixty or seventy times deter U.S. big business from ever precipitating the holocaust?

Khrushchev and the leaders of the Communist party in this country, are among those who would have us believe that the American capitalists and their politicians can be turned away for good from the warpath by appealing to their fears of atomic annihilation.

The fear that the hydrogen bomb will not spare their lives or possessions is certainly present among the Amer-

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5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was (This information is required from daily, weekly, semiweekly and triweekly newspapers only.)

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 23rd day of September, 1959
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Notary Public, State of New York
No. 31-9598925
Qualified in New York County
Commission Expires March 30, 1960

John Dewey's Theories of Education

by William F. Warde

OCTOBER 20, 1959 marked the one-hundredth anniversary of John Dewey's birthday. This eminent thinker of the Progressive movement was the dominant figure in American education. His most valuable and enduring contribution to our culture came from the ideas and methods he fathered in this field.

Dewey won a greater international following for his educational reforms than for his instrumentalist philosophy. Between the two World Wars, where previously backward countries were obliged to catch up quickly with the most modern methods, as in Turkey, Japan, China, the Soviet Union and Latin America, the reshapers of the educational system turned toward Dewey's innovations for guidance.

Most broadly considered, Dewey's work consummated the trends in education below the university level initiated by pioneer pedagogues animated by the impulses of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This was especially clear in his views on child education which built on ideas first brought forward by Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel in Western Europe and by kindred reformers in the United States.

In its course of development on a world scale the democratic movement forced consideration of the needs and claims of one section of the oppressed after another. Out of the general cause of "rights of the people" there sprouted specific demands voicing the grievances of peasants, wage workers, the religiously persecuted, slaves, women, paupers, the aged, the disabled, prisoners, the insane, the racially oppressed.

The movement to reform child education must be viewed in this historical context. Children as such are not usually included among the oppressed. Yet they necessarily compose one of the weakest, most dependent and defenseless sections of the population. Each generation of children is not only helped but hindered and hurt by the elders who exercise direct control over them.

Just as society may deny satisfaction to the physical, educational and cultural needs of the young, so their parents and guardians may slight or ignore their rights. Most adults cannot be held individually culpable for such misdeeds; they, too, have been shaped by the society around them and are goaded by its necessities. Through them and others around them the rising generation suffers from the inadequacies of their social inheritance and the evils of their surroundings.

Growing children are normally unaware of the remoter social causes of their misfortunes and miseries; even their elders may not know about them. So they direct their resentments, as well as focus their affections, upon the members of their immediate circle. The novels of the past 150 years provide plenty of pathetic tales and tragic descriptions of family conflicts at all age levels.

Children cannot formulate their grievances collectively, or conduct organized struggle for improvements in their conditions of life and mode of education. Apart from individual explosions of protest, they must be helped by spokesmen among adults who are sensitive to the troubles of the young and are resolved to do something about remedying them.

However, the impulsion for educational reform does not come in the first place from any abstract recognition of the deprivations suffered by the young. It arises from reactions to widespread changes in the conditions of life which affect all age groups. Their new situation forces both parents and children to seek new ways of satisfying the new demands thrust upon them. The child brought up in a tenement or an apartment in crowded city streets has different needs and faces more complex and perplexing problems than the child on a family farm. The families who have migrated from Puerto Rico to Manhattan since the end of the Second World War can testify to this.

The problems of readjustment differ somewhat according to the child's social status. The class structure quickly impresses its stamp upon the plastic personality, conditioning and regulating the relations between the sexes, the rich and the poor, the upper, middle and lower classes. This determines both the characteristics of the educational system and of the children tutored and trained under it.

EACH broad struggle against antiquated social and political conditions since the French Revolution has evoked demands for the reconstruction of the educational system. The kindergarten and child-play movement now incorporated in our public schools was part and parcel of the ferment created by the French Revolution. Thomas Jefferson first called for national free public schools to defend and extend the newly won American democracy. The utopian socialists, in accord with their understanding that people were the products of their social environment, gave much thought to the upbringing of children and introduced many now accepted educational innovations.

The communist colony in New Harmony, Indiana, founded by Robert Owen in 1826, pioneered a pattern in free, equal, comprehensive and secular education that had yet to be realized throughout this country over a century later. From the age of two the children were cared for and instructed by the community. The youngest spent the day in play school until they progressed to higher classes. There the Greek and Latin classics were discarded; practice in various crafts constituted an essential part of the program. The teachers aimed to impart what the children could most readily understand, making use of concrete objects and avoiding premature abstractions. They banished fear and all artificial rewards and punishments and appealed instead to the spontaneous interest and inclinations of the children as incentives for learning. Girls were on an equal footing with boys.

The educational reformers of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries dealt with the two distinct aspects of children's problems. One concerned the claims of childhood as a specific and independent stage in human growth. This perennial problem arises from the efforts of adults to subject growing children to ends foreign to their own needs

and to press them into molds shaped, not by the requirements of the maturing personality, but by the external interests of the ruling order. Rousseau had protested against this when he wrote:

"Nature wants children to be children before they are men . . . Childhood has ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling, peculiar to itself, nothing can be more foolish than to substitute our ways for them."

The other involved efforts to reshape the obsolete system of schooling to make it fit the revolutionary changes in social life. These two problems were closely connected. The play school, for example, was devised not only to care for the specific needs of very young children but also to meet new needs which had grown out of the transformations in the family affected by industrial and urban conditions; it was no longer a unit of production as in feudal and colonial times but became more and more simply a center of consumption.

Dewey's theories blended attention to the child as an individual with rights and claims of his own with a recognition of the gulf between an outdated and class-distorted educational setup inherited from the past and the urgent requirements of the new era.

The educational system had to be thoroughly overhauled, he said, because of the deep-going changes in American civilization. Under colonial, agrarian, small-town life, the child took part in household, community and productive activities which spontaneously fostered capacities for self-direction, discipline, leadership and independent judgement. Such worthwhile qualities were discouraged and stunted by the new industrialized, urbanized, atomized conditions which had disintegrated the family and weakened the influence of religion.

IN THE city the training of children became one-sided and distorted because intellectual activities were dissociated from practical everyday occupations. Dewey wrote:

"While the child of bygone days was getting an intellectual discipline whose significance he appreciated in the school, in his home life he was securing acquaintance in a direct fashion with the chief lines of social and industrial activity. Life was in the main rural. The child came into contact with the scenes of nature, and was familiarized with the care of domestic animals, the cultivation of the soil, and the raising of crops. The factory system being undeveloped, the house was the center of industry. Spinning, weaving, the making of clothes, etc., were all carried on there."

"As there was little accumulation of wealth," Dewey continued, "the child had to take part in these, as well as to participate in the usual round of household occupations. Only those who have passed through such training, [as Dewey himself did in Vermont], and, later on, have seen children raised in city environments, can adequately realize the amount of training, mental and moral, involved in this extra-school life . . . It was not only an adequate substitute for what we now term manual training, in the development of hand and eye, in the acquisition of skill and deftness; but it was initiation into self-reliance, independence of judgement and action, and was the best stimulus to habits of regular and continuous work."

"In the urban and suburban life of the child of today this is simply memory," he went on to point out. "The invention of machinery, the institution of the factory system, the division of labor, have changed the home from a workshop into a simple dwelling place. The crowding into cities and the increase of servants [!] have deprived the child of an opportunity to take part in those occupations which still remain. Just at the time when a child is subjected to a great increase in stimulus and pressure from his environment, he loses the practical and motor training necessary to balance his intellectual development. Facility in acquiring information is gained; the power of using it is lost. While need of the more formal intellectual training in school has decreased, there arises an urgent demand for the introduction of methods of manual and industrial discipline which shall give the child what he formerly obtained in his home and social life."

The old schooling had to be renovated for still another reason. The curriculum and mode of colonial education had been largely shaped by medieval concepts and aims. The schools were controlled by the clergy and access to them was restricted to the favored few, the wealthy and well born. The teacher tyrannized over the classroom, imposing a schematic routine upon a passive, obedient, well-drilled student body.

In *The School and Society* Dewey pointed out how haphazardly the existing school organization had grown up. It was composed of oddly assorted and poorly fitting parts, fashioned in different centuries and designed to serve different needs and even conflicting social interests.

The crown of the system, the university, had come down from medieval times and was originally intended to cater to the aristocracy and train an elite for such professions as law, theology and medicine. The high school dated from the nineteenth century when it was instituted to care for the demands from commerce and industry for better-trained personnel. The grammar school was inherited from the eighteenth century when it was felt that boys ought to have the the minimum ability to read, write and calculate before being turned out to shift for themselves. The kindergarten was a later addition arising from the breakup of the family and the home by the industrial revolution.

A VARIETY of specialized institutions had sprung up alongside this official hierarchy of education. The normal or teachers' training school produced the teachers demanded by the expansion of public education in the nineteenth century. The trade and technical school turned out skilled craftsmen needed for industry and construction.

Thus the various parts of our educational system ranged from institutions of feudal formation like the university to such offshoots of industrial capitalism as the trade school.

Trotsky's Tribute to Dewey

Credit for the definitive exposure of the infamous Moscow frame-up trials engineered by Joseph Stalin, goes to the "Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials." This impartial body was headed by John Dewey and conducted hearings in Coyoacan, Mexico, from April 10 to April 17, 1937, hearing the testimony of Trotsky and examining a massive amount of documentary evidence. After nine months of work in consultation with its legal advisor, John Finerty, of world-wide fame in the defense of Tom Mooney and of Sacco and Vanzetti, the Commission made its report which was published in 1938 by Harpers & Brothers under the title, "Not Guilty." At the hearing, in one of the great speeches of our time, Trotsky summarized his defense, concluding with a tribute to Dewey and the Commission:

"Esteemed Commissioners! The experience of my life, in which there has been no lack either of successes or of failures, has not only not destroyed my faith in the clear, bright future of mankind, but, on the contrary, has given it an indestructible temper. This faith in reason, in truth, in human solidarity, which at the age of eighteen I took wtih me into the workers' quarters of the provincial Russian town of Nikolaiev — this faith I have preserved fully and completely. In the very fact of your Commission's formation — in the fact that, at its head, is a man of unshaken moral authority, a man who by virtue of his age should have the right to remain outside of the skirmishes in the political arena — in this fact I see a new and truly magnificent reinforcement of the revolutionary optimism which constitutes the fundamental element of my life.

"Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission! Mr. Attorney Finerty! and you, my defender and friend, Goldman! Allow me to express to all of you my warm gratitude, which in this case does not bear a personal character. And allow me, in conclusion, to express my profound respect to the educator, philosopher and personification of genuine American idealism, the scholar who heads the work of your Commission."

But no single consistent principle or purpose of organization unified the whole.

Dewey sought to supply that unifying pattern by applying the principles and practices of democracy, as he interpreted them, consistently throughout the educational system. First, the schools would be freely available to all from kindergarten to college. Second, the children would themselves carry on the educational process, aided and guided by the teacher. Third, they would be trained to behave cooperatively, sharing with and caring for one another. Then these creative, well-adjusted equalitarians would make over American society in their own image.

In this way the opposition between the old education and the new conditions of life would be overcome. The progressive influences radiating from the schools would stimulate and fortify the building of a democratic order of free and equal citizens.

The new school system envisaged by Dewey was to take over the functions and compensate for the losses sustained by the crumbling of the old institutions clustered around the farm economy, the family, the church and the small town. "The school," he wrote, "must be made into a social center capable of participating in the daily life of the community . . . and make up in part to the child for the decay of dogmatic and fixed methods of social discipline and for the loss of reverence and the influence of authority." Children were to get from the public school whatever was missing in their lives elsewhere that was essential for their balanced development as members of a democratic country.

He therefore urged that manual training, science, nature-study, art and similar subjects be given precedence over reading, writing and arithmetic (the traditional three R's) in the primary curriculum. The problems raised by the exercise of the child's motor powers in constructive work would lead naturally, he said, into learning the more abstract, intellectual branches of knowledge.

Although Dewey asserted that activities involving the energetic side of the child's nature should take first place in primary education, he objected to early specialized training or technical segregation in the public schools which was dictated, not by the individual needs or personal preferences of the growing youth, but by external interests.

The question of how soon vocational training should begin had been under debate in educational circles since the days of Benjamin Franklin. The immigrants, working and middle classes regarded education, not as an adornment or a passport to aristocratic culture, but as indispensable equipment to earn a better living and rise in the social scale. They especially valued those subjects which were conducive to success in business. During the nineteenth century private business colleges were set up in the cities to teach the mathematics, bookkeeping, stenography and knowledge of English required for business offices. Mechanics institutes were established to provide skilled manpower for industry.

THESE demands of capitalist enterprise invaded the school system and posed the question of how soon children were to be segregated to become suitable recruits for the merchant princes and captains of industry. One of the early nineteenth century promotors of free public education, Horace Mann, appealed both to the self-interest of the people and to the cupidity of the industrialists for support of his cause on the ground that elementary education alone could properly prepare the youth for work in the field, shop or office and would increase the value of labor. "Education has a market value; that it is so far an article of merchandise, that it can be turned to pecuniary account; it may be minted, and will yield a larger amount of statutable coin than common bullion," he said.

Dewey, following his co-educator, Francis Parker, rejected so commercial-minded an approach to elementary education. They opposed slotting children prematurely into grooves of capitalist manufacture. The business of education is more than education for the sake of business, they declared. They saw in too-early specialization the menace of uniformity and the source of a new division into a master and a subject class.

Education should give every child the chance to grow up spontaneously, harmoniously and all-sidedly. "Instead of trying to split schools into two kinds, one of a trade type for children whom it is assumed are to be employes and one of a liberal type for the children of the well-to-do, it will aim at such a reorganization of existing schools as will give all pupils a genuine respect for useful work, an ability to render service, and a contempt for social parasites whether they are called tramps or leaders of 'society.'" Such a definition did not please those who looked upon themselves as preordained to the command posts of the social system.

Each stage of child development, as Gesell's experiments and conclusions have proved, has its own dominant needs, problems, modes of behavior and reasoning. These special traits required their own methods of teaching and learning which had to provide the basis for the educational curriculum.

The kindergarten was the first consciously to adopt the methods of instruction adapted to a particular age group. Dewey extended this approach from pre-school age to primary and secondary schooling. Each grade ought to be child-centered, not externally oriented, he taught. "The actual interests of the child must be discovered if the significance and worth of his life is to be taken into account and full development achieved. Each subject must fulfill present needs of growing children . . . The business of education is not, for the presumable usefulness of his future, to rob the child of the intrinsic joy of childhood involved in living each single day," he insisted.

Children must not be treated as miniature adults or merely as means for ministering to adult needs, now or later. They had their own rights. Childhood was as much a period of consummation and of enjoyment of life on its own terms as it was a prelude to later life. The first should not be sacrificed to the second on penalty of wronging the child, robbing him of his just due and twisting his personality development.

Socially desirable qualities could not be brought forth in the child by pouring a ready made curriculum into a passive vessel. They could be most easily and fully developed by guiding the normal motor activities, irrepressible inquisitiveness and outgoing energies of the child along the lines of their greatest interest.

INTEREST, not outside pressure, mobilizes the maximum effort in acquiring knowledge as well as in performing work. The authoritarian teacher, the cut-and-dried curriculum, the uniform procession from one grade to the next and the traditional fixed seats and desks laid out in rows within the isolated and self-contained classroom were all impediments to enlightened education. Whenever the occasion warranted, children should be permitted to go outdoors and enter the everyday life of their community instead of being shut up in a classroom "where each pupil sits at a screwed down desk and studies the same part of some lesson from the same textbook at the same time." The child could freely realize his capacities only in an unobstructed environment.

The child learns best through direct personal experience. In the primary stage of education these experiences should revolve around games and occupations analagous to the activities through which mankind satisfies its basic material needs for food, clothing, shelter and protection. The city child is far removed from the processes of production: food comes from the store in cans and packages, clothing is made in distant factories, water comes from the faucet.

The school has to give children, not only an insight into the social importance of such activities, but above all the opportunities to practice them in play form. This leads naturally into the problem or "project method" which has come to be identified with the essence of the progressive procedure.

Children soak up knowledge and retain it for use when

they are spontaneously induced to look into matters of compelling interest to themselves. They progress fastest in learning, not through being mechanically drilled in prefabricated material, but by doing work, experimenting with things, changing them in purposive ways.

Occasionally children need to be alone and on their own. But in the main they will learn more by doing things together. By choosing what their group would like to do, planning their work, helping one another do it, trying out various ways and means of performing the tasks, involved and discovering what will forward the project, comparing and appraising the results, the youngsters would best develop their latent powers, their skill, understanding, self-reliance and cooperative habits.

The questions and answers arising from such joint enterprises would expand the child's horizon by linking his immediate activities with the larger life of the community. Small children of six or seven who take up weaving, for example, can be stimulated to inquire into the cultivation of cotton, its processes of manufacture, the history of spinning devices. Such lines of inquiry emerging from their own interests and occupations would open windows upon the past, introduce them naturally to history, geography, science and invention, and establish vivid connections between what they are doing in school and the basic activities of human existence.

Participation in meaningful projects, learning by doing, encouraging problems and solving them, not only facilitates the acquisition and retention of knowledge but fosters the right character traits: unselfishness, helpfulness, critical intelligence, individual initiative, etc. Learning is more than assimilating; it is the development of habits which enable the growing person to deal effectively and most intelligently with his environment. And where that environment is in rapid flux, as in modern society, the elasticity which promotes readjustment to what is new is the most necessary of habits.

DEWEY aimed to integrate the school with society, and the processes of learning with the actual problems of life, by a thoroughgoing application of the principles and practices of democracy. The school system would be open to all on a completely free and equal basis without any restrictions or segregation on account of color, race, creed, national origin, sex or social status. Group activity under self-direction and self-government would make the classroom a miniature republic where equality and consideration for all would prevail.

This type of education would have the most beneficial social consequences. It would tend to erase unjust distinctions and prejudices. It would equip children with the qualities and capacities required to cope with the problems of a fast-changing world. It would produce alert, balanced, critical-minded individuals who would continue to grow in intellectual and moral stature after graduation.

The Progressive Education Association, inspired by Dewey's ideas, later codified his doctrines as follows:

1. The conduct of the pupils shall be governed by themselves, according to the social needs of the community.
2. Interest shall be the motive for all work.
3. Teachers will inspire a desire for knowledge, and will serve as guides in the investigations undertaken, rather than as task-masters.
4. Scientific study of each pupil's development, physical, mental, social and spiritual, is absolutely essential to the intelligent direction of his development.
5. Greater attention is paid to the child's physical needs, with greater use of the out-of-doors.
6. Cooperation between school and home will fill all needs of the child's development such as music, dancing, play and other extra-curricular activities.
7. All progressive schools will look upon their work as of the laboratory type, giving freely to the sum of educational knowledge the results of their experiments in child culture.

These rules for education sum up the theoretical conclusions of the reform movement begun by Colonel Francis Parker and carried forward by Dewey at the laboratory school he set up in 1896 with his first wife in connection with the University of Chicago. With his instrumentalist theory of knowledge as a guide, Dewey tried out and confirmed his new educational procedures there with children between the ages of four and fourteen.

This work was subsequently popularized by the leading faculty members of Teachers College in New York after Dewey transferred from Chicago to Columbia University. From this fountainhead Dewey's ideas filtered throughout most of the teachers training schools and all the grades of public instruction below the university level. His disciples organized a John Dewey Society and the Progressive Education Association and have published numerous books and periodicals to propagate and defend his theories.

* * *

Dewey's progressive ideas in education have had a curious career. Despite the criticisms they have received from the right and from the left, and even within Progressive circles, they have no serious rival. Today, on the century of his birth, they are the accepted and entrenched creed on education from Maine to California.

Yet this supremacy in the domain of educational theory has not been matched by an equivalent reconstruction of the educational system. Dewey's ideas have inspired many modifications in the traditional curriculum, in the techniques of instruction, in the pattern of school construction. But they have not changed the basis or the essential characteristics of the school system, and certainly not the class stratification of American society.

Such restricted results are not a very good testimonial for the principal product of a philosophy which demands that the merits of a theory be tested and judged by its ability to transform a defective situation.

How is this ineffectiveness in practice to be explained? If Dewey's procedures, ideas and aims are so admirable — as they are — why after fifty years haven't they succeeded in accomplishing more in the spheres of educational and social reform? Why have they fallen so far short of expectations and even become one of the favorite targets of reaction?

[First of a series of two. Next: "What Happened to Dewey's Theories?"]

Which Way for Labor:

Democratic Party or Labor Party?

By Murry Weiss

The Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation and the Communist party leaders advocate that socialists support "labor-endorsed" candidates of the Democratic party and work inside the Democratc party. This pamphlet examines their arguments for such a policy. It outlines an alternative road, the building of a labor party and the achievement of socialism in the United States.

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American Radicalism: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

by James P. Cannon

THE biographical information which the Chairman provided in his introduction doesn't necessarily qualify anyone to give a coherent account of what happened in the past fifty years or so in the movement of socialist and labor radicalism. The woods are full of people who have been through at least a large part of this experience, but their accounts of it may vary widely. The stormy events of American radicalism during this century may be compared to a long series of explosive and catastrophic experiences after which every survivor tells a different story.

It is not only necessary to have been a participant and an observer to explain the ups and downs of American radicalism in this century. It is equally necessary to have understood what was happening in the world over that period, and to relate it all to a consistent historical theory. You'll be better able to judge at the end of my speech than at the beginning whether I, in part at least, meet those qualifications.

This is a very big and complicated subject to be compressed within an hour or so. But we need a general view of the preceding events of the present century as a means of giving us some perspective on the years that remain in it.

The Great American Contradiction

Let's begin with the present reality, with what might be called the great American contradiction. Here we live in the most advanced country in the world from the point of view of its technological and industrial development and its productivity. Because it is the most advanced country in these respects, it is the country where the material conditions and foundations for the socialist transformation of society are prepared to a degree not yet existing anywhere else in the world.

Marx explained that capitalism not only greatly advances the forces of production and is therefore a more progressive stage of society than the feudal past, but, in developing the forces of production and proletarianizing the great mass of the population, capitalist society prepares its own gravediggers in the person of the industrial proletariat. That also has been provided in the United States to a greater extent than anywhere else in the world. The gravediggers of capitalism are more numerous here, and, in some respects, better organized than elsewhere on a trade union level. It is potentially the most powerful working class in the entire world.

The contradiction to all these prerequisites for the socialist transformation of society is the other side of the picture which we all have to recognize. We have here the most conservative political climate of any country in the world, at least among the great powers, and the weakest movement of labor radicalism and socialist consciousness. Despite all the rich experiences of the working people in the rest of the world which should have come to our aid and eventually inevitably will — despite all the favorable developments for socialism on a world scale, the situation of American radicalism today, from the point of view of socialist consciousness, socialist organization and socialist morale is worse than it was thirty years ago. It's even worse than it was sixty years ago at the turn of the century, when the first modern movement of socialist and labor radicalism in this country began to get a popular hearing.

There are objective causes for this tremendous depression of the radical movement at the present time. They are well known and don't need to be elaborated here. The unprecedented boom, prosperity based on war expenditures and preparations for war and so forth, have had a tremendously conservatizing influence. In any case, radicalism would very likely be on the defensive in this country under such conditions. But our concern today is not with these *objective* causes of the present conjuncture in the development of the historical movement toward socialism. I propose to deal mainly with the *subjective* causes of the present weaknesses of American radicalism: above all, the failure of leadership which has made conditions ten and a hundred times worse than they needed to be, and which makes our problem of preparing the great socialist revival more difficult.

The present situation which I have briefly sketched can change very rapidly into its opposite. That's what

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This speech was given at the West Coast Vacation School and Camp, Labor Day, 1959. James P. Cannon is the National Chairman of the Socialist Workers party. He was a founder of the Communist party of the United States and a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International until 1928 when he supported the Trotskyist Left Opposition in the Soviet Union. Before World War I, Cannon was active in the Industrial Workers of the World and the Socialist party.

happened in the thirties, in the decade following the first postwar boom of American capitalism with the concomitant decline of radicalism in the twenties. Very few of you may remember that we went through a period in the 1920's after the rise of radicalism in the first twenty years of this century, when the unprecedented boom of American capitalism on the one side and the inadequacies of the revolutionary leadership on the other produced a collapse, and almost dispersal, of the previous radical movement. But within the next decade that entire situation turned upside down in a few years' time.

The subjective reasons for the current depression of United States radicalism cannot be understood without a critical analysis of the inner history of the American socialist and labor radical movement in the sixty years since the turn of the century. We can learn something from this review of the past that will be useful both for the present and for the future. Of course, in a single lecture we can only hit the high spots and must omit many interesting and significant details. But such a condensed review may make the main aspects of the historical development stand out more clearly.

In our century we have seen two widespread and popular movements of socialist and labor radicalism. If we examine what they were, how they came into existence, what they did and failed to do, and what happened to them — we can draw some useful conclusions about the prospects of a new revival of American radicalism and about the nature of our problems and our tasks in preparing the way for it.

The Debsian Movement

At the turn of the century, there was a great upswing of radicalism in this country prompted by the objective conditions of the time — the accelerated development of industrial and monopolistic capitalism, the dispossession of small businessmen and farmers, the unbridled exploitation of the workers who were without organization, and so forth. This rebirth of American radicalism got its big impetus in 1901 with the formation of the Socialist party of America as a fusion of different socialist currents, which up to that time had been isolated groups without any wide popular influence. The distinctive factor which made possible the development of this new socialist movement at that time was the turn of a number of influential individuals and groups away from the policy of class collaboration in politics to the policy of independent socialist action.

Many of you have heard of the great role played by Debs and the *Appeal to Reason,* the socialist agitational paper which had a half million and more circulation. What is perhaps not so well known by comrades of the younger generation is that Debs, the *Appeal to Reason* and a very large percentage of the people who were influential in giving the Socialist party its start in the first years of this century had previously been Populists. They had supported the Populist movement and then in 1896, when the Populist party was swallowed by the Democratic party, they went along with it. Debs, the *Appeal to Reason,* Victor Berger and others who promoted the formation of the Socialist party in 1901, had supported Bryan and the Democratic party in 1896. But by the turn of the century, they broke out of that blind alley and had come to the conclusion that it was necessary to have an independent socialist position. That's what made the big difference.

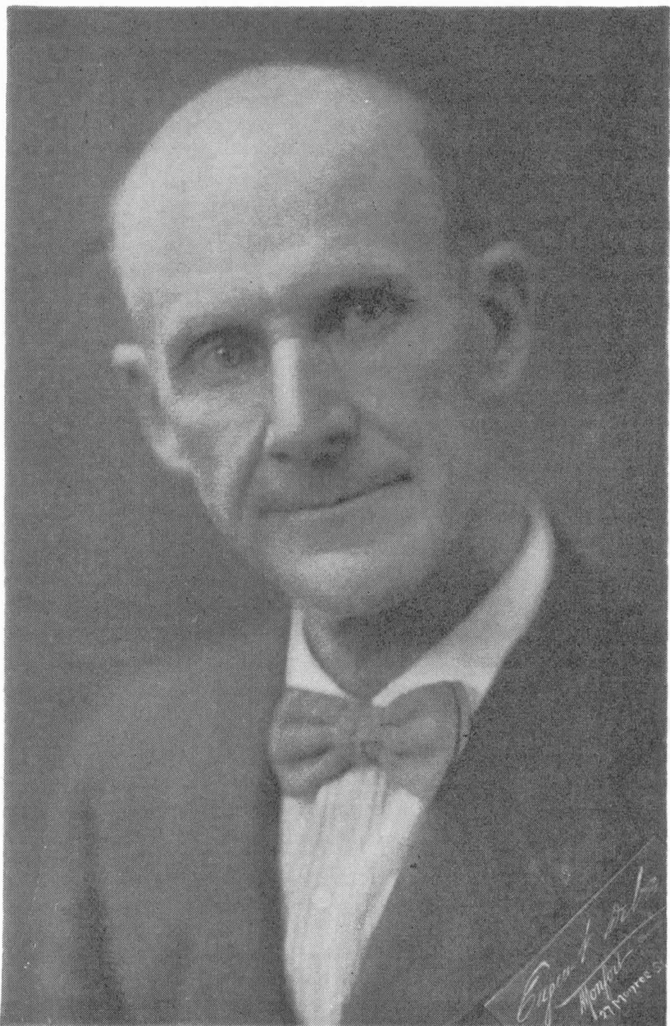
The most significant change in the attitude of these influential people, and of tens of thousands of others who supported them, which made possible the emergence and growth of the Socialist party in the first years of this century, was their break with capitalist politics altogether and their espousal of socialism. They emphasized and acted on the fundamental principle that a socialist movement must have its own party and its own candidates and cannot combine with or support any capitalist party, whether Republican, Democratic, Progressive or Populist. This new revelation inspired the emergence for the first time of a popular socialist movement in this country.

The Socialist Labor party and other socialist sects which had existed prior to that time had never gained a popular hearing. But the Socialist party brought into its ranks a great number of people who had had their fill of experimentation in one form of capitalist party politics or another. They gave a great impetus to the new Socialist party. So much so that, by 1912, the Socialist party of the United States had a hundred thousand members and got almost a million votes in the Presidential election. That was before women's suffrage, and was about six percent of the total vote cast. This would be equal to between three and a half and four million votes at the present time. That gives you an idea of the popular appeal of the Socialist party in that period.

The IWW, which was a very militant organization on the industrial field, was a part of this first popular *movement* of American radicalism. It is important to recall that the IWW was founded by socialists. At the Founding Convention in 1905 all the leading figures were from a socialist background: they came from the Socialist party, the Socialist Labor party, some Anarchists and other kinds of radicals. This sentiment predominated in the IWW throughout its first twenty years of existence. It called itself not merely an industrial union, but a *revolutionary* industrial union.

In these early years of our century socialist and labor radicalism attained some proportions of a mass character in this country. The movement had its weak sides. In the course of its electoral activities, as we look back on it now, we can see that it placed too much emphasis on municipal politics and reform. The reformist tendency within the Socialist party was quite strong, although I believe a fair assessment of the history would show the majority were revolutionary.

The composition of the party was also unfavorable in some respects. Comrade White told us last night that the Populist movement in the South was deflected into a reactionary channel. But there was another part of this Populist movement which was drawn into the Socialist party. The Socialist party in many parts of the country consisted of a very large percentage of former



EUGENE V. DEBS

Populists. The composition of its membership in the western part of the country was very heavily weighted on the side of the petty bourgeoisie in the cities and in the countryside. At one time the largest single state membership of the Socialist party, and, if I'm not mistaken, the largest socialist vote proportionally, was in the state of Oklahoma. In the other western agrarian states also the hard-pressed tenant and mortgaged farmers and desperate petty bourgeoisie streamed into the Socialist party from the Populist movement and swelled its ranks. So the class composition of the party was not as proletarian as an ideal Socialist movement should be.

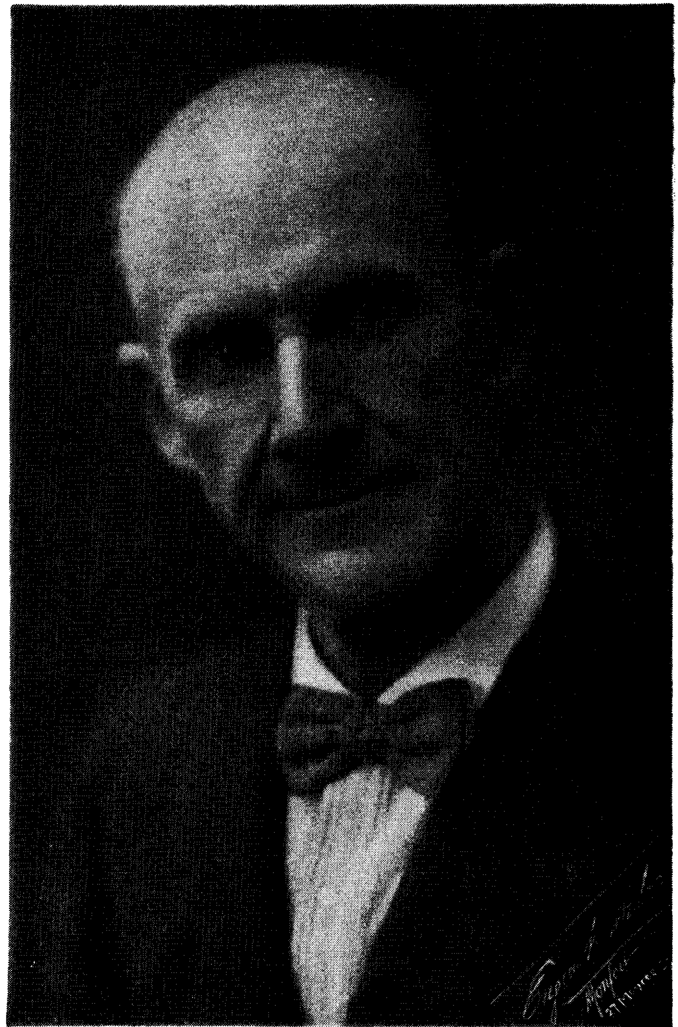
Another terrible defect of the socialist and radical movement of that time came from the weakness of the organized labor movement. The great mass production industries in this country were completely without trade union organization. Trade unions were limited almost entirely to the skilled crafts, and were very weak in many places even in that field. Outside of the mines and the railroads, it was very hard to find a single union in the big industries. As I listened the other night to the report about the present steel strike, a general strike shutting down all the mills of the country, with the union so strong it doesn't need to send more than token pickets — I recalled a very different steel strike in 1913 that I participated in as an IWW organizer. There we ran up against company thugs dressed up in police uniforms who sometimes outnumbered the pickets. And that was a single local strike on the ore docks in Duluth and Superior.

This was a common experience of the IWW and socialist attempts to organize in the steel industry or any place else. The most you could do was conduct a guerilla attack at a single locality. The idea of a general strike, which was our ideal and our program, was far from realization. Yet that's taken as a matter of course today.

This weakness of the trade union movement naturally was a weakness also of the socialist movement of the time. Without a strongly organized working class in the basic industries, it is quite futile to expect a socialist and revolutionary transformation of society. The IWW which had played a prominent part in the general radicalization of the period, turned to syndicalism and that was a big defect of the movement too. The unfavorable class composition of the Socialist party, the weakness of the trade union movement, the mistakes of syndicalism and reformism — all these defects prepared the way for the decline and eventual collapse of the first big experiment in socialist labor radicalism after twenty years of upswing.

The real trouble began with the First World War and then with the Russian Revolution. The movement as a whole proved unable to assimilate the lessons of these world-shaking experiences. They produced a deep division in the socialist movement, a split in 1919, the formation of the Communist party as a separate organization and the great weakening of what was left of the Socialist party.

This split in the forces of American socialist and labor radicalism, beginning with 1919, was followed by the tremendous post-war boom of the twenties.



EUGENE V. DEBS

The Communist Party in the Twenties

Of course this wasn't anything like the current boom. But considering the conditions that had previously been known in the country, it was pretty lush. From the end of the war in 1918, up until the stock market crash in 1929, there was a continuous upswing of production, interrupted only by a recession in 1921, which was overcome within a year. And, for the first time in this country, there was year after year of almost full employment, fairly good wages, lots of overtime, and all the rest. Some workers even began to own automobiles. That was a sign of what we called their "bourgeoisification." Everything is relative — and relative to the previous period, the automobiles of the twenties were a sign of workers' prosperity.

The big boom of the twenties was interpreted by all kinds of learned people as the final solution of the contradictions of capitalism. Then as now that was a common theme of the economists and intellectuals: Karl Marx was out of date. His theory of the cycle of boom-and-bust had been overcome by the genius of Amer-

ican capitalism. We were going to have ever-rising permanent prosperity from now on. A great many people, including workers, believed that, and radicalism lost its previous attraction.

The result was that by the end of the twenties the original movement had become dispersed. At least ninety percent of the people who had been active socialists and labor radicals in the two decades before had fallen aside. There was nothing left except a weak and rotting right-wing Socialist party and the Communist party, with a greatly reduced membership.

That was, you may say, the end of the Debsian movement. It had lasted twenty years. What remained after that was merely a hangover, a survival of remnants — never the dynamic center of radicalism as it had been before. But despite that eventual failure of the movement, I think the over-all judgment of the Debsian period must be favorable, because out of this movement came the cadres and some of the main ideas for the second big upsurge of American labor radicalism in the thirties.

There never could have been a Communist party in this country in the twenties if there had not been a socialist movement in the twenty preceding years. This first big experiment in socialist and labor radicalism failed in its ultimate mission. But it left behind — and this is what we should remember in our historical appraisal, because it is so pertinent for today — it left behind a residue, in the form of cadres, ideas and attitudes which continued and advanced the socialist tradition. What was left from that older movement eventually became the leaven in the movement of the thirties.

After the split of 1919, the new Communist party took over and rapidly displaced all other contenders for supremacy in the field of radicalism, as the Socialist party had done in the preceding two decades. What was the Communist party like in the twenties? I was there, and I remember, and in the light of later thought and study, I think I understand it and can report it truthfully.

The CP in its early years had certain basic characteristics. Its cadres, formed in the previous radical movement, consisted of younger comrades who were conditioned to irreconcilable struggle against capitalism. It was inspired by the Russian Revolution and was the carrier of its ideas as well as it understood them. Its message was revolutionary, not at all moderate, not in the least conciliatory, or liberalistic, or conciliationist. The idea of class collaboration was simply anathema. Its guiding doctrine was the *class struggle*.

One of the main slogans of the Communist party in that period was: "Organize the Unorganized!" That was a bold program that only revolutionists could take seriously. If you think it is tough in the steel union or any other union today, look back to those days. Steel, rubber, auto and every other big industry had no unions at all, or company unions, controlled by the companies and led by company stooges. The Communist party conducted a struggle against company unions for bona fide unions of the workers, under the slogan: Class Struggle *vs.* Class Collaboration! That was a revolutionary slogan for the time, and it did a lot to prepare the great upsurge of union organization in the next decade.

In the main the composition of the Communist party in the twenties was young. The age level of the Communist party today, or what's left of it or its peripheral circles doesn't resemble what the Communist party was in the twenties. That was a young movement, as dynamic revolutionary movements always are.

At its inception the "old men" of the party among the leaders were Ruthenberg, Bedacht, Wagenknecht, Katterfeld, later Foster — they were all turning forty years old. A second layer of leaders, represented by Earl Browder, Bill Dunne, Arne Swabeck, myself and others, were turning thirty. And a third layer of the top leaders, represented in the Central Committee and the Political Committee by Lovestone, Weinstone and Wolfe, were in their early twenties — fresh out of college.

That was the composition of the leadership. The ranks, I believe, were even younger. The old men of the Socialist party — of the period before the split — did not come with the Communist party. It took the youth to understand the war and the Russian Revolution and to make the new movement fit for new times.

Forgot More Than Words

What has happened to "the once boasted internationalism" of the socialists of the Second International "was graphically illustrated by an incident which took place while the delegates to the Hamburg meeting (this summer) were on a steamboat excursion. To honor their distinguished guests, the orchestra played the "Internationale." The delegates began to sing, but it became embarrassingly obvious after the first few bars that they had forgotten the words," writes David C. Williams in "The Progressive," November 1959.

Maintained Class-Struggle Policy

This Communist party held the line of class struggle and revolutionary doctrine in that long ten-year period of boom, prosperity and conservatism before the crash of 1929. It was in that period — fighting for revolutionary ideas against a conservative environment as we are trying to do today, refusing to compromise the principle of class independence — that the Communist party gathered and prepared its cadres for the great upsurge of the thirties.

Not more than ten percent was left from the old prewar movement. Although the Communist party itself continued to recruit individuals from day to day and month to month, it also continued to lose people and its over-all membership declined. The left wing leaders in the Socialist party had claimed, with some justification, that they had 60,000 votes supporting them in the Referendum of 1919 — shortly before the split. But then followed the Palmer Raids, the witch hunt, the deportations, the illegality of the party, and the long boom. It was tough going.

By the time of the stock market crash in 1929, which ended the myth of permanent capitalist prosperity, the Communist party had under 10,000 members. Ninety

percent of these were foreign born. But it was a young movement — and primarily proletarian.

That was what the CP had to start with at the end of the twenties. It was up against the fact that the trade union movement was even weaker than it had been at the beginning of the twenties. A peculiar phenomenon was recorded: for the first time in modern history a protracted period of prosperity with its increase of production and increase in the size of the proletariat didn't increase the size of the unions. On the contrary, it depleted and replaced them in many instances by company unions. The country was so conservative, the bosses were in such firm control, the union leadership was so weak, and its craft form of organization was so inadequate, that the trade unions embraced not more than three million at the time of the 1929 stock market crash. As far as CP influence in the unions was concerned, it was pretty well purged out, except in the garment trades and among the miners.

Although the CP wasn't in first-class shape in those earlier days, it was young, confident and revolutionary — even ultra-radical at times. The Socialist party and the IWW had withered on the vine. In the Communist party itself, the corruption of Stalinism had already started but as yet had not deeply affected the consciousness of the rank and file. Despite its reduced membership, the Communist party entered the thirties — the period of the great radical revival — as the dominating center of American radicalism. It had no serious contenders. It had to its left only the dissident group of the Trotskyists, who were numerically small and isolated. The right wing group of Lovestoneites was equally weak; the attenuated and decrepit Socialist party offered no real competition; and the IWW had fallen victim to its syndicalist dogmatism and become a sect. That was the shape of American radicalism when the thirties began.

Then the situation changed, almost overnight. The terrible financial and social crisis really shook up this country — and the workers. The radicalism produced by this shake-up was far stronger than the radicalism of the previous two decades. It had a much firmer social composition. This time the industrial workers in the main centers were the spearhead of the radicalism and gave the new movement a class composition of invincible power. It had the advantage of a more advanced ideology. The inspiration and ideas of the Russian Revolution permeated the Communist movement of that time and gave it a tremendous advantage over all other tendencies.

And then, in the changed situation in the thirties the impossible was accomplished. The impossible task of organizing the automobile industry, the rubber industry, the electrical manufacturing industry, the steel industry, the maritime industry — and actually bringing the monopolistic powers of American capitalism to the point where they had to recognize the unions — all that was accomplished in the great days of the CIO uprising in the thirties.

Along with that there was a growing sentiment for a Labor party which under proper leadership could have brought this whole movement of labor radicalism toward a glorious new epoch of independent class political action in this country. But that didn't happen. And the main reason it didn't happen was that the Communist party, which was the main leader of this new movement of labor radicalism, failed in its mission, even more shamefully, even more disgracefully than the Socialist party of the previous two decades. And more catastrophically, because it was not defeated in battle; it was corrupted from within. The Communist party has left less behind it from the great radical movement of the thirties than the Socialist party left in the beginning of the twenties.

You know the CP expanded its organization and influence in all directions in the thirties. Why did it collapse so miserably in the fifties? In fact, it had collapsed before then, but we have only seen in recent years how catastrophic it has been. Although many like John Gates, ex-editor of the *Daily Worker,* (I use him only as a symbol, because his name is legion) went through the experiences of the thirties, they didn't understand what happened and they can't make a true report about what they saw. They attribute the successes of the CP to the party's cleverness in putting on the mask of "progressivism," supporting Roosevelt and the New Deal in the late thirties and in the war period. And, conversely, they think the collapse of the CP has been caused by sectarianism, which is the way they describe the policy of class struggle and revolution.

The Big Appeal of the Communist Party

But that's a complete misunderstanding of what really happened. The main cadres of the Communist party, which played such a big role in the second big wave of American radicalism in this century were forged, as I said before, in the *twenties.* Then they were renewed and greatly expanded in the early *thirties* by the policy of the class struggle. (In fact, during the first half of the thirties the Communist party was devoted to what we called ultra-leftism, ultra-radicalism, not at all "progressivism." It did not maneuver with capitalist politics.)

In 1932, the Communist party nominated a Negro, James Ford, for Vice-President with Foster. And the slogan of their 1932 campaign was: "Class against Class." There was no mealy-mouthed "progressivism" about that. With this slogan and the spirit emanating from it, the main cadres of the young unemployed workers of that time, the student youth without prospects, and, for the first time in the history of American radicalism, significant numbers of Negroes — thousands of them — and displaced intellectuals in droves — were recruited to the party. In this early period of the depression they were not repelled by the party's radical and revolutionary aspect, but were attracted precisely because of it. Not in spite of its appearance as the representative of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union, but, in large measure, because of it.

That was the big appeal of the Communist party in the first years of the thirties. The discontented turned to the most radical and aggressive movement they could

find, and thought they had found it in the Communist party. In that, I think, is a lesson for the future. In times of social crisis, when the workers, the Negro people, the troubled students and the intellectuals of many kinds see no prospect in capitalism, they want to hear the word of a radical social transformation and a new beginning. That's what the Communist party represented in the eyes of these people; and that's why it grew.

In the early years of the thirties, the program and tradition of independent class politics completely dominated the Communist party and its tremendous periphery. So strong was this principle and this tradition that it couldn't be changed abruptly. The rank and file of the movement, educated in the principle of the class struggle — which has its highest and sharpest expression in independent socialist political action — had to be corrupted gradually, a step at a time. The snuggling up to Roosevelt and the Democratic party couldn't be presented directly to the Communist party membership and its supporters in the middle of the thirties. It had to be presented as a maneuver to fool the class enemy.

"The Mask Becomes the Face"

Of course, it was really a Stalinist maneuver to fool the communist workers; they were the real victims. This new turn was inspired and directed by the Stalinized bureaucracy of the Soviet Union, and designed to use the promising movement of American radicalism as a pawn in its diplomatic game. The leaders in Moscow were concerned with the short-term interests of their foreign policy, and not at all with the American workers and the American revolution. Roosevelt had recognized the Soviet Union, and the Stalinists, in turn, decided to recognize Roosevelt. They looked upon the great movement of American radicalism as something to be expended cheaply. They diverted it, through the leadership of the Communist party, into the Roosevelt camp. They steered it away from the movement for an independent Labor party, which was called for by the conditions of the time and the sentiments of hundreds of thousands of workers. The big switch in policy, from class struggle to class collaboration, was made in the shortsighted temporary interest of Stalinist diplomacy.

That's the great divide between the rise and the decline, and the eventual complete collapse of the radical movement of the thirties and of the Communist party that led it. The big turn-around began with disguise and double talk. Just think what was done and how it was done in 1936! There was a Presidential election. The Communist party leadership didn't yet dare to endorse the candidates of a capitalist party. They had a grand convention and nominated their own candidates, Browder and Ford, as independent candidates of the Communist party. This was a concession to the traditional purpose of a socialist or communist party. Then came the double talk. They said: We're nominating our own candidates, but — "Socialism is not the issue!"

This crooked formula was the great contribution of Browder, as the agent of Stalin, to the betrayal of American radicalism. "Socialism is not the issue?" Well, people might logically ask, if socialism is not the issue, what in the hell are you nominating a socialist candidate for? The Stalinist leaders didn't answer that question directly. They worked their way around it deviously.

They didn't call for people to vote for the Communist party candidates. And they didn't come right out for Roosevelt. They conducted the campaign on the slogan — what do you think? Well, by now you know it happens in every election — "Beat Landon at all costs!" That was the slogan of the Communist party in 1936, in the middle of the social crisis, when the possibility of a ringing campaign to further radicalize the workers was on the agenda. "Beat Landon at all costs!" meant of course, "elect Roosevelt at all costs!" That's what such a slogan always means in reverse.

It was supposed to be a very slick maneuver to fool everybody. "No, we're not voting for Roosevelt, we're putting up our own candidates." But all the trade unionists who were under the influence of the CP got the word: "Vote for Roosevelt." It was presented to the communist workers as a maneuver, to fool the class enemy. But those who started out that way, thinking to outwit the class enemy by supporting him, eventually became victims of their own deception. They began to play the capitalist party game in earnest.

The most incredible thing, for one who has been raised in the old socialist tradition, is to run into people by the score, and, if you look around for them, by the hundreds and thousands, who have been educated in the Communist party of recent years, who think they should play the Democratic party game for keeps. They believe in it. The mask has become the face. The dupers have become the duped.

Of course, the Stalinists didn't capture the Democratic party. I can tell you that, in case you have any doubts about it. But class collaborationist politics did capture the Communist party. The Stalinists went to work, running errands and ringing doorbells in order to beat some capitalist political faker at all costs in order to elect some other capitalist political shyster at all costs. Over a period of time the program of the class struggle and independent class politics was lost sight of altogether by the bulk of these people. The Communist party members and sympathizers forgot the ABC of socialism which Debs understood sixty years ago. They continued to support the Democratic party long after the Democrats had no further need of them and gave them the boot.

Of course, there were other causes for the catastrophic decline and disgraceful collapse of the Communist party and its peripheral movement. But that's the basic cause, because it goes right to the fundamental class issue of independent politics. That's the basic cause of the defeat, demoralization and dispersal of the great movement of labor radicalism generated by the crisis of the thirties.

In the thirties and since, the Communist party, as the leading center of the new radicalism, directly reversed the trend of their predecessors of the turn of the century. That unspeakable betrayal stands out strikingly as you see it in historical perspective. Debs and Way-

land, who had supported the Populist party and the Democratic party, turned around and led the movement forward from Populism and the Democratic party and all kinds of class collaborationist politics. The Stalinists reversed this whole trend and led communist and socialist workers back from independent class politics, back to class collaboration, back to support of capitalist politicians.

The leading forces of the Debsian period had the benefit of far less experience and far less study. Yet they did far better than their successors of the thirties. That's a striking historical fact that ought to induce younger people to study the history of the movement. In this study of history they will see how colossal has been the loss of the tremendous potentialities of the radical movement of the thirties under the Stalinist leadership.

The Lost Generation of Radicals

If we're going to make a new start and prepare for the next wave of radicalism in this country, there's only one way to begin. We have to return to fundamentals. At least, to the one big fundamental of class politics. If some people, who still call themselves socialists or communists, can't go directly to Marx and Lenin in one bound, they ought at least, for a start, to try to go back to Debs and the *Appeal to Reason* when they broke with the Democratic party in 1900.

The great movement of socialist and labor radicalism that was generated by the crisis of the thirties has completely spent itself. That's what we have to understand if we are going to get a realistic picture of the actual situation. Due to the combination of circumstances, the objective difficulties, plus the corruption of leadership, this movement is worn out. All that remains of it, outside the cadres of those who remain faithful to the fundamental ideas of socialism, is a big lost generation of radicals.

They're numerous in this country. But when I see these people, or hear about them which is more frequent, who have fallen out of the Communist party by the tens of thousands, who still want to consider themselves socialists and even communists, who want to gather every now and then to have a discussion — providing you don't bring up any fundamental questions or propose any action — they strike me as people suffering from political amnesia. They can't remember where they came from — from that revolutionary movement of the early thirties. They have a nostalgia for the big masses and big deals, but they've forgotten that that mass movement was produced by policies of the class struggle, not by class adaptation.

The radicalism generated by the social crisis in the thirties is not a total loss by any means. Like its predecessor of the Debsian time, the new movement of the thirties left something behind it to build on. First of all, and this is a tremendous thing, out of that great upheaval of the thirties came the CIO movement and the organization of the big industrial unions in the mass production industries. They have softened up, shackled by government controls and saddled with a conservative, capitalist-minded bureaucracy. But the unions as organizations have survived. We see them in action every once in a while, as in the present steel strike. And they remain a great potential power.

It needs just a little shift in the situation to bring it forth. We got a slight intimation of this a year ago when the bosses went a little bit too far and attempted to pass "right to work" laws. They could have passed them in the twenties without any strongly organized opposition. When they tried it in 1958, they were suddenly made aware of the fact that a seventeen million strong trade union movement, created by the upsurge of the thirties and inspired by radicals, didn't want to be broken up by "right to work" laws. That was a sort of political uprising, a portent of things to come, that upset all the calculations of the capitalist politicians.

Right now they're probing again, provoking the steel workers, and provoking the unions generally with the Landrum-Griffin anti-Labor law. Let them go a little bit too far, let a political aggressiveness of the capitalists coincide with some social disturbance and workers' discontent, and you'll see what a colossal power this seventeen million strong trade union movement really has. And what a hearing you'll get from workers then if you speak the true and honest word of class struggle against class collaboration! There's an immense reservoir for genuine radicalism in this great trade union movement. That's something left behind from the uprising of the thirties.

Something no less important, perhaps even more important in the long run, are the surviving cadres of class conscious revolutionists who preserve and represent the ideas, who are the continuators of the doctrine and the tradition of socialism. They are important because without the ideas, without the cadres, even though small, you can't hope to build a consistent revolutionary movement. And the conjunction of a cadre of class conscious revolutionists who have assimilated the experience of the past with a new upsurge of labor militancy, will release a great power.

It is another advantage of great import for the future, that this surviving nucleus of the continuators is organized and active, and is recruiting, even though slowly, but quite consistently and noticeably, a new cadre of young revolutionists. That is the touchstone. That is ground for confidence. The living movement always appeals to the young, and the mark of a living movement is its ability to attract the young. Wherever you see a party anywhere that has no young people, you can say for sure that its prospects are dim. The experienced troops of every army, even the best, always need renewal and replenishment.

"The Party of the Youth"

Here is the central point I have been building up to. The radical movement of the thirties, with all its grandeur, glory and power, has spent itself. Individuals and small groups of the old, fallen-away radicals may be reactivated under new conditions; but the main forces of the new movement of American socialist radicalism have to come from a new generation. There is

no room for doubt or misunderstanding on this score. The evidence of the recent years is conclusive. Our task is to hold the line and help the process along, provide some of the ideas, and make room for the new contingents of young militants.

That was Lenin's idea a long time ago. Only, he was more radical about it than we are today. The *New Republic* a few weeks ago carried a review of a history of the Russian Komsomol — the Russian Young Communist League. Here's a quotation from it:

"At the outset of a history of the Soviet Young Communist League or Komsomol, the author, Professor Fisher, cites a remark of Lenin's made long before the Revolution to someone who complained that the Russian Social Democrats were mostly mere youths. Lenin said. 'It's perfectly natural that youth should predominate in a revolutionary party, since this is the party of the future, and the future belongs to the young . . . We will always remain the party of the youth, of the most advanced class, i.e., the working class.' "

We have the same general idea and we take the attraction of the upcoming young rebels to our banner as a sign of things to come.

As Marxists, we count on the objective developments to prepare the ground for a great new movement. Trotsky, like all Marxists, based his revolutionary optimism on the contradictions of capitalism generating a revolutionary movement. So do we. In 1931, in the second year of the crisis, Trotsky wrote about America as follows:

"In the past, America has known more than one stormy outburst of revolutionary or semi-revolutionary mass movements. Every time they died out quickly. Because America every time entered a new period of economic upswing and also because the movements themselves were characterized by crass empiricism and theoretical helplessness. Those two conditions belong to the past. A new economic upswing, and one cannot consider it excluded in advance, will have to be based not on the internal equilibrium, but on the present chaos of world economy. American capitalism will enter an epoch of monstrous imperialism, of an uninterrupted growth of armaments, of intervention in the affairs of the entire world, of military conflicts and convulsions."

Remember, this was written in 1931 when the official policy of the United States was isolationism.

Then Trotsky continued: "On the other hand, in the form of communism, the American proletariat possesses, rather could possess, provided with a correct policy, no longer the old melange of empiricism, mysticism and quackery, but a scientifically grounded up-to-date doctrine. These radical changes permit us to predict with certainty that the inevitable and relatively rapid revolutionary transformation of the American proletariat will no more be the former easily extinguishable bonfire, but the beginning of a veritable revolutionary conflagration. In America, communism can face its great future with confidence."

The first part of Trotsky's prediction about the militaristic eruption of American capitalism has been confirmed to the letter. The second part was only partly carried out; the revolutionary prospects of the upsurge of the thirties were not realized. But even there, Trotsky had qualified his prediction. He said, the American workers could possess a scientific guide in the form of communism provided its representatives had "a correct policy." The American Communist party failed to provide that correct policy. Trotsky saw both the transformation of American capitalism into a world-embracing imperialist power on the one hand, and a revolutionary proletariat on the other, as a possible outcome of the thirties. And it really was possible. For the reasons we have cited, that possible outcome was lost the first time. We owe that failure, above all, to Stalinism.

But the prospect remains fully valid for the next upsurge. The movement of revolutionary socialism has a great future in this country. And if we face it with confidence, and put our trust in a new generation, the future will become the present all the sooner.

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John Brown's Raid On Harper's Ferry

by Arthur Jordan

THE centennial year of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry has passed little observed and less celebrated by most Americans (or their government, which once assisted in having Brown hanged). American Negroes, whose cause Brown made his own, have good reasons to remember. One hundred years after Brown and his small band struck their resounding blow for freedom, Negro children must run the gauntlet of rocks and jeers to go to school in the South. Integration proceeds at a snail's pace, while Southern "statesmen" vaunt their obstruction. The brutal lynchers of a Negro in Mississippi go scot-free. The chain-gang system of Florida threatens to seize a Negro from New York and return him to its purgatory. Bomb terror, cross-burning and shots from the dark are aimed at Negroes who dare to fight back.

Yet the principal organization of Negroes, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which at its founding in 1909 observed the fiftieth anniversary of John Brown's raid, refrained from mentioning this touchy subject at its 1959 convention. It saw fit, rather, to dishonor the occasion of the centennial by suspending one of its branch presidents for declaring that Negroes, in defending their lives and homes, should meet violence with violence.

Meanwhile the antiquarians are warmed by anticipation of countless centennial celebrations and commemorations of Civil War battles and deaths — glittering pageants, void of meaning. Civil War histories, biographies, novels roll from the presses in seemingly endless stream, not the lesser share of them devoted to the "heroes" of the Confederacy. Among these there is indeed an account of Brown and Harper's Ferry, another in a line which exonerates the institution he sought to kill, and sees in him and his supporters irresponsible fanatics.[1]

A four-day "observance" did take place in Harper's Ferry, part of it a sham skirmish (with costumed militia moving about like toy soldiers) presumably to celebrate Stonewall Jackson's seizure of the town in 1862. The owner of a local restaurant (for whites only) said of John Brown: "They hung him for treason in 1859 . . . I don't see why the hell we should honor him today."[2]

Why should we honor him?

* * *

ON OCTOBER 17, 1859 news was flashing over the telegraph wires that a force of armed insurrectionaries had seized the United States arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, and was holding the town, proclaiming universal emancipation of slaves, arming the Negroes of the district, and holding their masters as hostages. The leader was rumored to be John Brown, who some already knew as John Brown of Kansas.

The night before, the fifty-nine-year-old Brown and his men (there were twenty-one others, all young men — three of them Brown's sons, five Negroes) had moved quietly down from a Maryland farm where they had been hiding and secured the Potomac and Shenandoah bridges into the village . . . But soon Virginia militia came marching in from neighboring towns, the bridges were retaken, and Brown and his men penned up in the arsenal's fire-engine house. By evening a company of U. S. Marines arrived, under the command of Colonel Robert E. Lee; next morning they stormed the engine house and seized Brown with his surviving men (nine had been killed, while six escaped). The captured men were all tried in Virginia's courts for murder and treason, and then hanged. Brown himself was hanged at Charlestown on December 2, 1859 — the first American hanged for treason.[3]

The news of the raid and the ensuing trials and executions sent a shock through the consciousness of many Americans. The most prevalent, immediate reaction was that Old Brown was crazy. But many slaveholders were inclined to add: But also a dangerous criminal backed by a conspiratorial gang of equally dangerous, if more prominent and respectable, Yankees. In succeeding weeks and months numbers of supposedly "bad" Negroes were shot, while "suspicious-appearing" Northerners and even native white Southerners, were tarred, feathered, and ridden out of town in places as remote from Harper's Ferry as Kingstree, South Carolina, and Abbeville, Mississipi.

Many Northerners were quick to offer regrets. But, as Virginia proceeded to trials and executions, an increasing number expressed sympathy for Old Brown and identity with his ends if not his methods. Ralph Waldo Emerson, said that if Brown were hanged, he would make the gallows as glorious as the cross. While moderate anti-slavery politicians like Lincoln and Seward were careful to dissoci-

1. Furnas, J. C. **The Road to Harper's Ferry.** New York: William Sloane Associates, 1959. For an earlier unsympathetic view see the biography by the Southern poet and novelist, Robert Penn Warren (**John Brown: the Making of a Martyr.** New York: Payson & Clarke, Ltd., 1929); based in part on an earlier work by Hill P. Wilson (**John Brown: Soldier of Fortune.** Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918). An essay on Harper's Ferry by the historian, C. Vann Woodward ("John Brown's Private War," in **America in Crisis,** edited by Daniel Aaron. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952) is also unsympathetic in its conclusions. James C. Malin (**John Brown and the Legend of Fifty-six.** Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1942) seeks to deflate the "Brown myth," but contributes a mine of information on Brown in Kansas and on Brown bibliography. Oswald Garrison Villard's **John Brown** (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1910) remains the standard work, though the subject is seen in the image of the author, a late nineteenth century liberal. On the fiftieth anniversary of Harper's Ferry William E. B. DuBois paid a glowing and perceptive tribute to John Brown. (**John Brown.** Philadelphia: G. W. Jacobs & Company, 1909).

2. Quoted in **Newsweek,** Oct. 19, 1959.

3. Both Charlestown and Harper's Ferry are now in West Virginia.

ate themselves from such sentiments, slaveowners were not reassured.

On the record there is little doubt about the reaction of Negroes. Frederick Douglass recalled that "on the evening when the news came . . . I was speaking to a large audience in . . . South Philadelphia. The announcement came upon us with the startling force of an earthquake." Soon meetings were called, resolutions passed, and messages sent down to Brown's jail cell. The colored women of Brooklyn wrote:

"We truly appreciate your most noble and humane effort, and recognize in you a Savior commissioned to redeem us, the American people, from the great National Sin of Slavery; and though you have apparently failed in the object of your desires, yet the influence that we believe it will eventually exert, will accomplish all your attentions."

The Negroes of New Bedford, Massachusetts, resolved:

"That this meeting do fully endorse and heartily approve of the spirit manifested by Captain John Brown and his associates, but deeply regret that the plans so well laid did not succeed."

One may assume that the news was carried by plantation grapevine into the Deep South. We know that an unusually large number of Negroes were soon to be "sold South" from Harper's Ferry and its environs. And, in any case, Southern Negroes (then as now) usually knew what their white masters were discussing. In the fall of 1859 they were talking about Harper's Ferry.

Nor did the event go unobserved in foreign quarters. Karl Marx wrote to Frederick Engels in January, 1860: "In my opinion, the biggest things that are happening in the world today are on the one hand the movement of the slaves in America started by the death of John Brown, and on the other the movement of the serfs in Russia . . ."[4]

The man whose death was thus noted had himself a year earlier displayed an insight into the institutional nature of slavery which, though starkly simple, was more penetrating than many others made then and since. Slavery, he had said, was simply — war. "Slavery throughout its entire existence in the United States is none other than a most barbarous, unprovoked, and unjustifiable war of one portion of its citizens upon another portion — the only conditions of which are perpetual imprisonment and helpless servitude or absolute extermination."

One historian has observed that "this type of reasoning is identical with that of the revolutionaries who hold that the class struggle is in reality a class war."[5]

What manner of man came to such a view?

John Brown was born in 1800 in New Torrington, Connecticut; his ancestry traced back to the first Puritan settlers. When he was five, his father set out for northern Ohio, then a raw frontier. Brown was himself to be a chronic mover, living by turns in small Ohio towns, in Pennsylvania, in Massachusetts; and engaging in, by one estimate, some thirty business undertakings (almost invariably unsuccessful) in twenty-five years.

Yet, a purpose was emerging. When Brown moved in his forty-ninth year to a stony Adirondack farm at North Elba, New York, he was not following a will-o'-the-wisp dollar. The Abolitionist Gerrit Smith had deeded 100,000 acres of mountain lands to plant a community of free Negroes. Brown came at Smith's behest to help assure the colony's success. In his last decade John Brown defined the deeper lines of his existence.

In the summer of 1855 he followed his sons to the Kansas Territory, where an issue had been joined. While emigrant farmers broke the prairie sod, determined slaveowners from Missouri and the South at large sought, with the sanction of Washington, to nail down the law of slavery by "squatter sovereignty" and, where needed, by fraud and violence. On his way Brown stopped at an Abolition convention in Syracuse, N.Y., where he solicited funds to procure guns and ammunition "for Kansas purposes."

Brown's leadership role in the war for Kansas has often been disputed. It is nonetheless certain that to many thousand Abolitionists and Free Soilers across the Northern states he soon became the symbol of a violent resistance — of the will and strength to deal blow for blow, to make and keep Kansas free. But for Brown himself (as for us in retrospect) Kansas was only the opening skirmish of a larger war. Before he left the Territory the guerrilla captain led a foray into Missouri, forcibly releasing eleven slaves and escorting them to Canada. This was "carrying the war into Africa."

In Kansas John Brown said: "It is better that a whole generation of men, women, and children should be swept away than that the crime of slavery should exist one day longer." He left Kansas to spend the last years of life—still moving from place to place — recruiting men, raising money, perfecting plans. On Independence Day, 1859, he rented a farm on the Maryland side of the Potomac river. From there the road led straight across the bridge to Harper's Ferry arsenal — and up to the gallows at Charlestown.

The bare recital of events is marked by his transformation in late middle age from rootless seldom-do-well to consistent revolutionist. Yet we know that startling conversions do not occur in isolation. They register the long growth of an idea which finally bursts from its chrysalis into action.

His life, even from childhood, was throughout marked by a brooding preoccupation: God's terrible judgement on the injustices of his creatures. The brooding grew — and Brown came to know himself as the chosen instrument of judgement. This preoccupation, while such an extreme was relatively rare, was characteristic of the Calvinist sons of the Nineteenth Century.

Brown's father had expressed his resentment of slavery as early as the Revolutionary War and came to say to an old man: "Ever since, I've been an Abolitionist, and I'm so near the end of life, I think I shall die an Abolitionist." Brown himself recalled his early teens when in his father's absence he stayed with a "master [who] made a great pet of John, brought him to table with his company and called their attention to every little smart thing he said or did . . . while the Negro boy (who was fully if not more than his equal) was badly clothed, poorly fed, lodged in cold weather and beaten before his eyes with iron shovels or any other thing that came into hand." The father sheltered fugitive slaves; the son in his twenties began using his Pennsylvania house as a station on the Underground Railroad.

THERE is extant one document recording Brown's early thoughts on solutions to the "slavery question" — a letter he penned to his brother in his thirty-fourth year. He wrote:

"I have been trying to devise some means whereby I might do something in a practical way for my poor fellowmen who are in bondage, and having fully consulted the feelings of my wife and my three boys, we have agreed to get at least one Negro boy or youth and bring him up as we do our own . . . We think of three ways to obtain one: First, to try to get some Christian slaveholder to release one to us. Second, to get a free one if no one will let us have one that is a slave. Third, if that does not succeed, we have all agreed to submit to considerable privation in order to buy one . . . I have for years been trying to devise some way to get a school a-going here for blacks . . . I . . . think such advantages ought to be afforded the young blacks, whether they are all to be immediately set free or not. Perhaps we might, under God, in that way do more to-

4. Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick. **The Civil War in the United States**, edited by Richard Enmale. New York: International Publishers, 1937, p. 221.

5. Woodward, **loc. cit.**, p. 121.

6. Malin, **op. cit., passim.**

wards breaking their yoke effectually than in any other. If the young blacks of our country could once become enlightened, it would most assuredly operate on slavery like firing powder confined in rock, and all slaveholders know it well. Witness their heaven-daring laws against teaching blacks. If once the Christians in the free States would set to work in earnest in teaching the blacks, the people of the slaveholding States would find themselves constitutionally driven to set about the work of emancipation immediately." (The plans for a school never materialized.)

Thus far there was little to distinguish John Brown from many others — the same underlying indignation, the same groping for ingenious solutions. But even while Brown wrote his brother, William Lloyd Garrison was sounding the call for an immediate and unconditional emancipation. And Brown, the ameliorationist, eventually became Brown, the revolutionary activist.

Something must have been learned in the school of events: the anti-slavery men of the 1830's discovered that their petitions were ignored or intercepted in the mails, their meetings dispersed, their presses destroyed; sometimes they were set upon by angry mobs, tarred and feathered, and even murdered. The systematic power of an entrenched institution whose masters were determined never to let go was thus laid bare. There followed the violent theft from Mexico of the Southwest and California, the brazen resolution to fasten slavery on the whole national domain — even where it had previously been prohibited.

John Brown drew some conclusions. In 1847 he told Frederick Douglass that slaveholders "would never be induced to give up their slaves until they felt a big stick about their ears." The next year he wrote his first piece for a Negro newspaper. Speaking through "Sambo" (read a disillusioned "Uncle Tom") he said:

"Another trifling error of my life . . . is that I have always expected to secure the favour of the whites by tamely submitting to every species of indignity, contempt and wrong, instead of . . . resisting their brutal aggressions from principle and taking my place as a man and assuming the responsibilities of a man . . .; but I find that I get for all my submission about the same reward that the Southern Slaveocrats render the Doughfaced statesmen of the North for being bribed and browbeat, and fooled and cheated, as the Whigs and Democrats love to be, and think themselves highly honored if they may be allowed to lick up the spittle of a Southerner."

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 (part of a "great" national compromise) set Brown's teeth. Federal marshals and their deputies were empowered to stick their noses into every Northern hamlet and drag helpless Negroes off to "hearings," where in complete disregard of the victims' testimony they could be shipped south to slavery on the mere written affidavit of a slavemaster.

Brown's reply was an attempt to recruit the Negroes of Springfield, Massachusetts (where he was then living) into a United States League of Gileadites," organized on military lines to rescue fugitive slaves at gunpoint from anyone whomsoever, U.S. marshals included. By now he was studying the history of revolutions from Spartacus to 1848, and making notes on guerrilla warfare. Slavery was war, and the answer was — war on slavery!

The development of that conception reflected the march of events. It could be added that John Brown came in time to an appreciation, if a limited one, of the powers of organization. Brown was always a lonely individual. His own family, his sons, remained ever in the core of his vision. In his forties he began to meet some of the anti-slavery as well as Negro leaders. But his first real experience with a large organized body probably did not occur until he was leaving for Kansas. As noted, he spoke before a Syracuse anti-slavery convention, after which he wrote his wife: "This convention has been one of the most interesting meetings I ever attended in my life . . ." In the following years he was in constant touch with the leaders of the New England Emigrant Aid Society and the National Kansas Committee, and spoke repeatedly before anti-slavery mass meetings across the Northern states.

This is not to say that the organized anti-slavery movement was blessed with any single guiding line, or that all its formulations coincided with the direction of John Brown's thought. Like many radical movements, before and since, it was wracked by splits and controversies: a full, ultimate program *versus* a limited, immediate one; moral persuasion *versus* political action; the pros and cons of a new, third party; passive *versus* violent resistance. Some of its backers were shrewd industrialists who kept lines open to the enemy's camp. Others were bourgeois idealists — college-bred businessmen, ministers and intellectuals, of old respected American stock. The times and the nature of the opposing beast drove them to radical positions on the slavery issue, but social warfare was hardly in their scheme of things.

But John Brown was not of these. For all his early attempts at money-making, he remained a man who habitually worked with his hands: breaking soil, herding sheep, tanning hides. This may help explain the fact that, alone of the great Abolitionists, he planned to set in active motion the great mass of American Negroes, the plantation slaves. No other Abolitionist maintained such close contact with Negro leaders; Brown habitually consulted with Douglass and Loguen, McCune Smith and Henry Highland Garnet; and spent hours closeted with Harriet Tubman in discussion of the trails leading through mountain and swamp out of the plantation South. Before attempting his final stroke he called a Negro convention in Chatham, Ontario. For his plans the assent and active participation of the Negro people itself was essential.

Nevertheless, in Brown's plans for Harper's Ferry there was a large element of terrorism — the concept that a small determined group could, by its bold action, ignite the flames of mass movement. This is shown by the tiny band, some hardly more than boys, with which he finally struck. Brown as a terrorist is also revealed in that earlier night on the Marais de Cygnes in Kansas when he, his sons, and two others took five men (one of them a sixteen-year-old boy) from their beds and cut them down in cold blood. The deed was deliberate; the provocation obscure; and there has been much speculation as to motive. Yet one of Brown's severest critics concluded that this was not murder but political assassination.[7] The intention was to return violence for violence and arouse free-state Kansas to action.

John Brown was a revolutionary terrorist.[8] But the adjective must be emphasized, for it is clear that at Harper's Ferry he hoped to do more than strike fear into the slaveholders. Through the maze of his notes and correspondence one can perceive his grand design. After a company of Negroes and whites were recruited and drilled, funds obtained from a select group of wealthy sympathizers, guns and ammunition secured, the arsenal seized, the slaves of the district armed and liberated — then the insurgents would retreat into the mountains and descend the Appalachian spine, drawing up thousands of slaves, organizing the growing numbers in a chain of new bands, and finally establishing a new republic of black freemen, which would redeem the old from slavery. The conception, in its broadest outlines, is that of a revolutionary guerrilla warfare, waged then and since, and not always unsuccessfully.[9]

But Brown's plans were flawed in preparation and execution; and if the terrorist in him lacked the patience to mold a people through the experience of years of struggle, one can only marvel at the magnitude of his task. In any case, perhaps he did anticipate the possibility of a conspicuous failure, followed by arrest and trial. This would be indicated

7. **ibid.**, pp. 754-755.

8. See also the article by George Novack, "John Brown, A Revolutionary Terrorist." **The New International**, January, 1938.

9. Brown's plans are viewed in this light by Dr. DuBois, **op. cit.**, pp. 387-388, **passim.**

by his advice to the "Gileadites" of 1851: "The trial for life of one . . . bold and to some extent successful man for defending his rights in good earnest would arouse more sympathy than the accumulated wrongs and sufferings of more than three millions of [a] submissive colored population."

NEITHER he nor his fellow-prisoners would go on trial, but the Sovereign State of Virginia and all slavemasters. Theirs was the dilemma: either Old Brown was crazy and slaves happy (in which case why the bother?) or slavery was a terrible and shaky thing. He could put steel into Abolitionist souls, and carve an example forever into the brains of American Negroes. His purpose showed in every courtroom speech and every letter dispatched from his cell.

In his final speech to the court, he said:

"Had I interfered in the manner which I admit, . . . had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends, either father, mother, brother, sister, wife, or children, or any of that class, and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right. Every man in this Court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment . . . I say I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done, as I have always freely admitted I have done, in behalf of his despised poor, I did no wrong, but right. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I say, let it be done."

And, as he was marched to the gallows, he handed away a paper which contained a remarkable prophecy: "I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land, will never be purged away, but with Blood. I had as I now think: vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed; it might be done."

John Brown had pondered the history of Toussaint l'Ouverture in Haiti; and of Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner in the United States. If he overestimated the strength of the infant Negro organization of his day, he was only before his time. Only one volunteer came down to the Ferry from his Chatham convention. But soon others would be Union Army officers, and later yet, Congressmen in the Reconstruction.

Just over a year after they hanged Brown, the Boston Light Infantry marched through the streets — a quartet improvising to the plantation hymn, "Say, Brothers, Will You Meet Us?" the words of "John Brown's Body." Over three hundred thousand Negro soldiers would sing it in a war (the Secretary of War admitted they were indispensable to its victorious conclusion) which was the first step toward full liberation of their people.

Fifty years after Harper's Ferry, remembering John Brown, Dr. W. E. B. DuBois would ask:

"Have we come to see a day here in America when one citizen can deprive another of his vote at his discretion; restrict the education of his neighbors as he sees fit; with impunity load his neighbor with public insult on the king's highway; deprive him of his property without due process of law; deny him the right of a trial by his peers or any trial whatever if he can get a large enough group of men to join him; refuse to protect the integrity of the family; finally can not only close the door of opportunity in a fully competent neighbor's face but can actually count on the national and state governments to help and make effective this discrimination? — Such a state of affairs is dangerous. Within these barriers are men — human forces which no human hand can hold . . ."

Fifty years more: the questions and the conclusion stand.

John Brown had said, pointing his long finger at Governor Wise of Virginia and Colonel Robert E. Lee:

"I wish to say, furthermore, that you had better — all you people at the South — prepare yourselves for a settlement of that question that must come up for a settlement sooner than you are prepared for it. The sooner you are prepared, the better. You may dispose of me very easily; I am nearly disposed of now; but this question is still to be settled — this Negro question, I mean — the end of that is not yet."

But that end is surely coming. To that end, to the Negro people, to all who march with them, John Brown bequeathed a revolutionary's legacy.

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Democracy and Planned Economy in Yugoslavia

A Correspondence

Belgrade, Feb. 4, 1959

I LEFT off two weeks ago on a political note with which I would like to continue, that is, I'd like to try to formulate some of the ideas H. and I are currently considering . . . It seems that H. has made a lot of discoveries which have changed his mind quite a bit about Yugoslavia . . . And it appears that some of the accusations made by the Soviet bloc against the Tito regime are indeed well-founded.

The point is this: although everyone knew, including the Yugoslavs, that this system of Workers Councils would mean a definite slow-up in the industrialization process, it is much more; a terrific compromise in the class struggle in many more ways. For although the means of production have been "socialized," they are administered now by small groups of artisans and technicians, and the few industrial workers that are around in such a way that there is nothing "social" about the whole economic system.

The question of whether the Workers Councils are truly democratic; i.e., whether it isn't only the general directors who have the main say in the factory, is an open one; but whatever the case may be (and we are under the impression that some factories are very democratic while others are not at all) it still is a subsidiary question. The important thing to ask is: what are these administrative groups doing? And the answer is what H. wrote in his thesis, that they work entirely on the profit principle, and that the market is the most important determinant in the whole system.

At that time he thought this was good, as he probably told you: the important thing, he thought, was that the industries were owned by the State and that a growing industrial proletariat was being given the chance to learn industrial techniques by participating in administration. But as he has been finding out, partly from statistics and information which the Yugoslavs themselves are willing to give, and partly from our own experiences merely living here, not only does the system really hinder industrial development, but it is developing the very opposite ethos which the Communists perhaps were trying to nurture.

In the first place, there are countless examples of how irrational production here is: Yugoslavia imports eggs, coal, sugar, etc., all sorts of agricultural goods the demand for which the country could itself cover. The reason for this in all cases is that the particular enterprises concerned don't find it profitable to produce, store, or put on the market, as the case may be.

For instance: eggs (which were very expensive this year) have had to be imported because various storage and refrigeration plants found it unprofitable to store them over the summer. There has been a shortage of coal this winter; not because there wasn't any at home, on the contrary there are piles and piles of unsold coal in the main coal-producing sections of the country — but because the market price was for many months too low for the mine companies, so they held off, stopped digging (workers were put on "unpaid vacations" or half-time, or partially paid vacations) and along came the winter and now there isn't enough to go around without importing, with expensive currency from other countries.

THERE are an endless number of examples. This is the big problem they call "Factory and Commune Egoism": when companies hold out in some respect or other for the sake of making more money. In the city of Rijeka for example, there are a number of communes (one of the smaller political-administrational units) and they are constantly competing with each other. A commune with many important industries in it is of course richer than another, because the factories work closely in the investment policies with the communes. One Rijeka commune will not grant apartments to the personnel of a factory which is under the jurisdiction of another commune. And because each commune decides the rate of turnover tax for its section, the same car or truck can cost 80,000 dinars more in one than another.

Of course some of these examples which appear in the press quite frequently are criticized, and there are now strong tendencies to regulate some of this chaos on the commune level. But the essence of the whole matter is this: each company, each commune, is looking out for the highest profit, and the total result is production of expensive consumer goods, and some expensive light industry. The result is also that all the credits, without which Yugoslavia cannot live, are more or less going down a bottomless barrel . . .

And aside from the fact that they are not industrializing (relatively; one has to admit that they have done a lot, especially in Macedonia) and that they are building a petty-bourgeois morality by leaving these Councils so much to decide (for they inevitably decide how to advance the company and themselves above all else) it is also contributing all the more to the material differentiation among the population.

. . . The most glaring reality about Yugoslavia today is that these reforms which make up the "Titoist Experiment" have benefitted very few other than those who have been benefitted in all the years prior to World War II: the professional petty bourgeoisie from pre-war days who are today the technicians of the economy, a few skilled workers from before the war, the property owners, the artisans. These are the people who have the money (and of course they are very few) to buy all those consumer goods in the shop windows which the regime boasts about, including imported and domestic Hula-Hoops. These are the people who have the capital with which to make black-market arrangements with foreigners to whom they rent rooms at outrageous

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An extensive correspondence between "T," a young American living in Belgrade, and Shane Mage, one of the editors of *Young Socialist*, took place in the winter and spring of 1959 while the latter was visiting Morocco. Published here are excerpts from two of these letters dealing primarily with role of Workers Councils in the Yugoslav "system."

prices; these are the people who collect millions of dinars somehow every year, buy expensive foreign currencies with them, and then buy cars, radios, electric mixers, etc., in the other countries once they get the easily obtained passports.

And the rest of the people — the majority? They live pretty damn terribly. And Yugoslavia is the one Communist country today where you can speak of unemployment — the Councils don't want to share the spoils. The whole situation, as well as it being disgusting to see these characters run around with so much, is also very depressing — for this government is not winning any sympathy from the petty bourgeois to whom it has made so many concession-"reforms."

. . . I really don't want to knock what has been going on here too much, because it's not as if no progress has been made, and in general workers have a better life than they used to, there's a lot of building going on, etc., etc. And of course it's rather pleasant to know that intellectuals have more freedom here — although they don't do very much with it — than in the other Communist countries; one isn't watched and all that. But when we see our Albanians every morning and our landlady, and the Hula-Hoops we get pretty depressed. We are planning to take a few trips to Bulgaria and Rumania to do a little comparing before we write off the Yugoslavs completely . . ."T"

* * *

Casablanca, Feb. 17, 1959

. . . I found your description of Yugoslav reality extremely interesting. The favorable prejudice with which we tend to approach Yugoslavia is perfectly natural — because of the kind of attacks against Tito and his courage in standing up to Stalin, because of the importance of working class revolution in a country as backward and oppressed as prewar Yugoslavia, and because this revolution was made by the Yugoslavs themselves, not imposed from without.

I would even say that this pro-Yugoslav leaning is entirely justified by the role of ferment within the Stalinist world that Titoism plays by virtue of its existence; by the effect of the existence of Workers Councils on the workers of the other Soviet-bloc countries (like Poland and Hungary); by the fact that in their polemics with the Russian Stalinists the Titoists often try to base themselves theoretically on an authentically Communist approach (I remember a remarkable pamphlet by Kardelj on the causes and nature of the rise of Stalinism, and, at the time of the Hungarian revolution a speech also by Kardelj pointing out that the really socialist solution for Hungary would be based on the assumption of political power by the Hungarian workers' councils.)

OF COURSE for the Trotskyists this favorable leaning was always counter-balanced by certain theoretical and political criticisms of Titoism, but the problem has been that in the absence of an immediate contact with the internal life of Yugoslavia, both sympathies and criticisms have been too much of an abstract sort, so that for instance the Militant's attitude toward Yugoslavia seems to reverse itself completely depending on whether or not it agrees with the aspect of Titoist policy that it is discussing. Nevertheless I think our theoretical analysis of Titoism is basically correct, capable of giving an all-sided view, and is particularly in harmony with what you have observed and described in your letter.

Briefly, this theory considers the Communist party of Yugoslavia as a centrist party which broke effectively from Stalinism when it decided to take the leadership of a workers' revolution in the very midst of "the Great United Anti-Fascist Struggle," and which deepened this break in and after the 1948 split, but which, because it is dominated by an elite which holds unto itself the monopoly of political power and the privileges which flow therefrom, retains many essential aspects of Stalinist ideology.

The Tito regime, in order to retain power (and to the extent to which holding on to power is its sole *raison d'etre*) is condemned to maneuver between the Yugoslav workers who put it in power and are its basic supports, but who are evidently too small and weak a class to contend for power *against their own regime,* on the one side, and all those who would like to get rid of Tito, but only to their own profit: the Kremlin, U.S. imperialism, the peasants, your petty-bourgeois friends.

The essential is to interpret the Titoist statements and actions not as expressions of any variety of socialist philosophy, but as the expression of the need to retain the power of the bureaucratic elite created by a proletarian revolution in the most backward country of Europe (except Portugal and possibly Greece). A similar statement would have been true of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia in their 1920's and early 1930's. Nevertheless I absolutely refuse to go along with *Labor Action's* [defunct paper of Shachtman's now-dissolved group] phrases about Yugostalinists and the like. The essential difference is twofold: first of all the Russian Stalinists took power in a "political counter-revolution" in reaction against the October revolution, while the Yugoslav bureaucracy formed itself in the very course of the Yugoslav revolution which it mainly led; and secondly, ever since the mid nineteen thirties the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy has acted consistently and consciously as a counter-revolutionary force in world politics (and, as you know, was the real savior of European capitalism after the war) whereas the Yugoslavs, despite the reactionary effect of many of their international maneuvers (Balkan alliance, condemnation of North Korea and China in the Korean War) have also had a *left-wing* influence on members of the CP's of both Western and Eastern countries.

Well then, with this approach I was not surprised by the capitalist atmosphere you have found in Yugoslavia, even though it seems much worse than I would expect. Evidently, as you said, many of the Chinese and Russian criticisms are justified and this is very unfortunate because the actual goal of these criticisms is scarcely to help the Yugoslavs to a healthier socialism, but precisely to discredit what is *worthwhile* in the Yugoslav experiment, and most notably to show that Workers Councils can lead only to economic disorganization and tendencies toward the restoration of capitalism.

In *Labor Action* Hal Draper wrote quite a few articles trying to show that the Workers Councils were a huge bluff in the purest Stalinist tradition . . . In fact, the Yugoslav Workers Councils have a vast *contradictory* significance. For the workers, the very fact of their existence and attributions was a concession of greatest importance, a highly progressive act opening the door to workers' control of the entire economy, and eventually, political life.

From the point of view of capitalism, though, it was a concession of a very different sort — by disorganizing the centralized and planned economy, and fragmenting the working class among different and competing factories it opened the doors to capitalist restoration. (You may remember a section in *The Revolution Betrayed* where Trotsky describes a possible method of capitalist restoration almost identical with the Yugoslav system: that is to say, the effective abandonment of planning and the transformation of factories into "producers cooperatives of the capitalist type" with the workers of each plant sharing the profits and control.)

Obviously capitalism has not been restored in Yugoslavia for the industries remain the property of a workers state, and a sort of plan continues to exist. But what is the real nature of planning in Yugoslavia? And what effect does the plan have on economic development? Your letter suggests a picture of nearly complete anarchy, but is this really fair? A close study of this question would give you plenty of material for a really important article.

In any case the obvious question which poses itself is why did the Workers Council system result in a development toward capitalism? It is altogether too easy and superficial to simply blame the immaturity and weakness of the

Yugoslav working class for this. Immaturity could be overcome by an experience of over ten years, and for all its numerical weakness the Yugoslav workers were, socially, strong enough to lead a revolution and defend it against the Kremlin. The real cause, I think, lies in the *partial character of the council system* — the Workers Councils have been given real authority over the operations of the factories, *but only on the local level.* Not only are they rigorously shut off from political power, *but they are not allowed to centralize themselves into an effective organization directing the entire economy.* These, of course, are really two aspects of the same thing: without political power, real direction of the economy is unthinkable, and conversely any democratically elected body with real power over the economy would, by that very fact, be a contender for political power.

What is more, if the workers are to be represented on anything above the purely local level they must be able to choose their own representatives, which requires at least a real democratization of the Yugoslav Communist party — all things very menacing for the power of the present leadership.

Since the workers have no real chance to defend their interests *nationally,* they naturally seize the chance to do so *locally,* even at the expense of other factories or communes.

And, of course, the existence of *Workers Councils* on the local level is incompatible with a *bureaucratically* centralized economic direction. This (in addition to the fact that the Yugoslav bureaucracy is too weak socially and economically to afford the enormous "overhead" cost of Stalinist centralization) left Tito with no choice but decentralization; any other policy open to the bureaucracy would have been disastrous. The real alternatives would be between the present system and a *democratic* centralization that could get the people to accept real sacrifices in their own interest.

CONCRETELY, you might ask why a democratically centralized planning system would be better than the present setup for a country as poor as Yugoslavia. I don't pretend to know enough about Yugoslavia even to suggest the main lines of a plan — and the basic theoretical proposition is that the working class *as a whole,* if given the chance to inform itself, discuss and decide, knows much more the needs and possibilities of its economy than even the best "expert." But of this much I'm certain: things like the import of eggs because it was unprofitable to store them, or the shortage of coal when there was plenty of unsold coal, would not exist if there was a plan determined by the actual needs of the people.

In any case, I don't see how the weaknesses of Yugoslavia can lead to conclusions favorable to the Stalinist economic system as it exists in Russia and the other countries of Eastern Europe. Not only is it plain that in Yugoslavia itself a Stalinist policy could have been imposed only by Russian bayonets, but in general the Stalinist economy is even *less efficient* than the Yugoslav, with all its faults. For instance, what in Yugoslavia is remotely comparable to the waste represented by the millions of workers, farmers and intellectuals driven out of East Germany by the regime's stupidity and tyranny?

The things revealed in Poland in 1956 were practically unbelievably idiotic, like the cold storage plant built 200 miles from the fishing port so that the fish all spoiled before it could get there. The *entire* industrialization program of Hungary was a fantastic waste from any rational economic point of view, and led to a sharp decline in the standard of living, not to mention the economic effects of the explosion that followed. The history of Russia is studded with examples of enormous wastes, and not only in the disaster of Stalinist agricultural policies. No one can ignore the great accomplishments in the Soviet Union, but they are I would say *in spite* of Stalinism, not because of it.

After all, isn't the expansive power inherent in nationalized and planned economy sufficient to assure much more rapid and much better balanced progress than has been achieved?

Shane

Postscript:

New York, Nov. 19, 1959

The New York Times of Nov. 19 contained an article giving the latest claimed performance figures for the Yugoslav economy. According to this article a CP spokesman "reported that during the last three years the per capita gross national product, or output of goods and services, had increased an average of 11.9 per cent a year and personal consumption 10.1 per cent . . . In the last seven years, he said, national income more than doubled, industrial production rose almost two and a half times and farm output rose 51 per cent."

These figures indicate that Yugoslav industrial development, has been roughly comparable to the best performance in the Eastern bloc, and much better on the whole than in Poland, Rumania or Hungary.

Shane

. . . The "Thaw"

(Continued from page 4)

ican capitalists. It is quite likely, in our opinion, that this fear entered as a factor in their decision to relax cold-war tensions at this time. But we should also keep in mind that conditions have eased up somewhat for the capitalist class — at least temporarily. To offset defeats in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, the American, West European and Japanese economies have been booming during the last ten years (though the prosperity was marred by two recessions). Political conservatism has gained in Western Europe during the same time. These factors have allowed the capitalist policy makers to be more deliberate about their tactics and, without abandoning the arms buildup, to back away from suicidal solutions.

But these conditions cannot be expected to last indefinitely. The contradictions of the capitalist system lead toward another major economic collapse which will again bring the rule of the bourgeoisie in question throughout the world. Once more, imperialism will seek a way out through desperate solutions. No ruling class in history has ever surrendered power willingly, no matter how senseless its resistance or how outmoded the social system which it represents. The time always comes when, goaded to blind fury about the prospects of losing power, the ruling class does not shrink from self-destruction to prevent social change.

A timely political offensive by the working class in Western Europe and America can nevertheless so paralyze the will of the capitalist class as to render it powerless to precipitate a global war in defense of its system even in the midst of a deep economic and social crisis. If the working class goes all the way — that is, if it gains political power and reorganizes society on socialist lines — mankind will be forever freed of the haunting fear of war. But if the working class is derailed in its pursuit of political power by illusions that peace is possible under capitalism, or by any other illusion leading to a class-collaborationist course, the capitalist class will inevitably regain its self-confidence and will, at one point or another, unleash its vengeance. That is why the Stalinist recipe for "eliminating war" through a two-power deal holds such a grave threat for the cause of peace. It debilitates the workers' socialist consciousness and thereby prevents the working-class movement from struggling against war in the only realistic way — namely, by linking that struggle with the fight for socialism.

BOOKS

Deutscher's Life of Leon Trotsky

by Joseph Hansen

THE PROPHET UNARMED; Trotsky: 1921-1929, by Isaac Deutscher. Oxford University Press, New York. 1959. 490 pp. $9.50.

After completing the first volume of his biography of Leon Trotsky, *The Prophet Armed,* covering the period from 1879 to 1921, Deutscher indicated his intention to tell "the whole story of Trotsky's life and work from 1921 onwards in a single volume entitled *The Prophet Unarmed.*" A reviewer doubted that it could be done on the appropriate scale in one volume. "His doubt has proved justified," Deutscher says in his preface to this volume. He needed almost 500 pages to cover the eight-year period that ended with Trotsky's banishment from the Soviet Union. The author has projected a final volume, *The Prophet Outcast,* "to cover the stormy twelve years of Trotsky's last exile and to give the final assessment of his role."

Two reasons evidently influenced Deutscher in this fortunate decision. The eight-year period was the most fateful in the life of his subject; it involved "what was probably the fiercest and the most momentous political controversy of modern times." On the outcome of this controversy hinged the course of Soviet affairs for decades to come, and along with this the course of class struggles and revolutions throughout Europe, Asia, Latin America, even the United States. The seemingly obscure issues in dispute between Stalin and Trotsky ultimately involved, too, whether or not mankind had to undergo such catastrophes as the triumph of Nazism and a second world war.

Indeed, the controversy is still alive, for it posed or adumbrated all the current theories about the character of the Soviet Union, the nature and function of the bureaucracy, the meaning of Stalinism, the role of a vanguard party, what policies revolutionary socialists should follow in relation to the Soviet bloc countries and to their own domestic perspectives. Even Deutscher's own view that Stalin played a progressive role despite the horrors of his personal dictatorship finds its forerunner in the thinking of one of the big figures of the time, Preobrazhensky, who held that Soviet officialdom had no choice but to undertake the progressive task of "primitive socialist accumulation." Any socialist alive to the continuity of theory and its role in the politics of the working class will grasp the import which this great struggle of the twenties in the Soviet Union still holds for the future. With such considerations in mind, this volume reads like a short, even overly condensed, account.

To wish for a presentation in greater detail and of more commanding sweep is not to deny the power of this book or its usefulness. It is the first anywhere near adequate history of these decisive years in the political history of the Soviet Union. It is the first book-length study of the Left Opposition, its brilliant constellation of leaders, the disciples of Lenin, and their heroic struggle to maintain the tradition of Leninism against the counter-revolutionary reaction that propelled Stalin to power. The volume gives us a taste of the riches to be tapped in the Trotsky Archives at Harvard University, and of the wealth of as yet unpublished material produced by the Left Opposition. Deutscher's contribution should help shake those who have tended to dismiss Trotsky as now a "dead dog." Those who have scorned to read the writings of Lenin's comrade-in-arms because of Stalinist-inspired prejudices may find the book a bridge to a more objective attitude. Among the general reading public where Trotsky's works have begun to enjoy something of a revival in the past few years, the story told by Deutscher will undoubtedly inspire still further interest in the co-founder of the Soviet Union. In the socialist movement, *The Prophet Unarmed* will in all likelihood serve as a standard work for some time to come — perhaps until the ban on Trotsky's books and the study of his role and contributions is lifted in the Soviet Union itself and the government archives become available to scholarly research.

The book is not without shortcomings. These do not involve facts, however. Deutscher has presented his material with scrupulous concern for accuracy. It is doubtful that even Stalin's heirs will dare to challenge the book on these grounds. Yet they have a vested interest in presenting a totally different version of historic fact. They founded their careers in those decisive years by demonstrating their eagerness, energy and capacity at helping Stalin to bury Trotsky under a mountain of slander. Since new political currents have made it increasingly difficult in the Soviet Union to maintain the big lie, the propagandists of the Kremlin will probably try to say nothing about the book.

What is open to criticism, I think, are some of Deutscher's interpretations, beginning with his central concept of Trotsky. I am not referring to his admiration of Trotsky's genius, universality of interest or firmness of character, all of which have fascinated Deutscher as they must anyone who approaches this revolutionary titan objectively. What seems out of place is the element of caricature apparent in the portrait he draws.

Deutscher sees Trotsky as a "prophet" — first "armed," then "unarmed," and finally "outcast." Deutscher developed this from an observation by Machiavelli that "all armed prophets have conquered, and the unarmed ones have been destroyed." There is some truth to this, of course. It is of a kind with what Thucydides said, "The strong do what they can; the weak suffer what they must." The comment appears sage but it does not tell us much. What is meant by "strong" and "weak," by "armed," "unarmed" and "outcast"? From Trotsky's viewpoint it was Stalin who became unarmed and finally an outcast. History, it would seem, has already of-

fered considerable confirmation of Trotsky's viewpoint.

To begin with, it is incongruous to view Trotsky primarily as a "prophet." True, he made some startling forecasts and predictions. But he made these as a *scientist*. From Trotsky's own outlook, his point of reference in all he did, the success of these forecasts bore witness not so much to his intuition, which was powerful, as to the validity of the science that guided that intuition, dialectical materialism. Should we regard Marx, Engels and Lenin as "prophets" subject to the peculiar ups and downs of the occupation of prophecy? Machiavelli, the father of modern political science? Or, in not too remotely related fields, Galileo, Darwin and Pasteur? Then why Trotsky?

Perhaps the answer lies in a simplification that appears to guide Deutscher. A revolutionary of Trotsky's "prophetic" capacity displays an almost infallible political insight in periods of great mass upsurge, but when the masses withdraw from the arena, he becomes peculiarly fallible, almost blind, certainly helpless game for a cunning machine politician like Stalin. The extra credits that Deutscher grants Trotsky as a prophet, he balances up with discredits for his capacity as a politician. But this misses the the level of Trotsky's politics and the inadvisability, on this level, of competing with Stalin for leadership of the *reaction*.

Trotsky's plane as a politician covered the entire transition period of our society on a global scale from the death agony of capitalism to the construction of socialism. (Is it necessary to add, world-wide socialism, not "socialism in one country"?) Viewing his work from this height, which was Trotsky's height as it has been of every revolutionary socialist since Marx and Engels wrote the *Communist Manifesto*, it was of decisive importance to carry the October 1917 Revolution to victory. But it was equally decisive, perhaps historians will eventually say that it was even more decisive, in the ebb of that revolution to maintain the integrity of Marxist science; that is, the key principles already worked out plus what had been added in the colossal experiences since 1917. Trotsky was concerned about the prerequisites for the eventual world-wide success of socialism. As a revolutionary-socialist politician, Trotsky had no choice but to act as he did.

Granted that tactical errors may have been made in the struggle against the rise of Stalin, granting too, if you insist, that Stalin never made a tactical error. What does this prove, that Stalin had an infallible instinct as a "prophet" of degeneration? Was it a battle between good and evil prophets? The problem was to see the class forces in motion, not only the immediate ones, but the still more important ones to come later, and to orient oneself in the struggle in such way as to facilitate the eventual victory of socialism. Trotsky conducted his politics with that goal in sight; he fitted his means to that end; while Stalin confined himself to seeking personal power at the head of forces that eventually turned him into a gravedigger of socialist revolutions. We should add that Trotsky carried out his political responsibilities under unprecedented difficulties, not least of which was the little he had as theoretical guide in circumstances unencountered by the Marxist masters in whose tradition he stood. It is surprising that Deutscher does not see Trotsky's politics clearer in view of the excellent description he provides in his book of the class forces in motion at the time in the Soviet Union.

Deutscher's preoccupation with the "prophet" theme and his depreciation of the "prophet's" political capacities, leads him to failure to appreciate the growth of Trotsky as a politician. A main theme in this, as in the first, volume of the biography is taken from Trotsky's well-known polemic against Lenin in 1904 in which the 25-year-old revolutionary declared in the heat of factional struggle, "Lenin's methods lead to this: the party organization at first substitutes itself for the party as a whole; then the Central Committee substitutes itself for the organization; and finally a single 'dictator' substitutes himself for the Central Committee." Deutscher believes that such a tendency of "substitutism" was apparent among the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution and that it reached its culmination in Stalin's personal dictatorship. In brief, the seeds of Stalinism can be found in Bolshevism; and they consist of Lenin's democratic centralist method of organization. Trotsky therefore saw more clearly at the age of 25 than he did in later years. His acknowledgment of a mistaken view on Lenin's party-building methods was itself, so we must believe, a mistake. The youthful prophet was more clairvoyant than the mature politician.

But Trotsky's 1904 prediction turned out to be no more than what it was, an exaggerated statement in a factional dispute. To have made it meaningful Trotsky would have had to add the conditions under which it might come true — the degeneration of a proletarian revolution in a backward country surrounded by hostile capitalist powers, a degeneration that would so affect Lenin's party as to alter it qualitatively; in brief, a centralized party dragged down a national spiral can eventually become Stalinized. Trotsky did not and could not have foreseen this. That is not all. To have given full meaning to his prediction, he would have had to foresee and include an opposite possibility: Lenin's methods of party building would assure the means to win a proletarian victory in Russia; under conditions of the revolution thereupon spreading to other countries, Lenin's party would expand on an international spiral; moreover, as means of assuring fresh proletarian victories, Lenin's methods would eventually assure the flowering of proletarian democracy on a world-wide scale.

Trotsky did not see this in 1904. Like most leading socialists of his time, he did not see it until 1917. When empirical experience convinced him, he acknowledged his error. This was a decisive step in his development as a mature revolutionary-socialist politician. Having grasped the true meaning of Lenin's "arms" he never gave up this acquisition, this deeper insight into the politics of our epoch. It would have been better judgement on Deutscher's part, one thinks, to consider this as part of the source of Trotsky's incomparable leadership in the 1917 Revolution rather than to ascribe it all simply to his energy and intuition as a "prophet." The insight was even more important in the later struggle against Stalin. Where was the Left Opposition to get its "arms"? It is a pity that as a biographer of Trotsky, Deutscher should not have developed his own political insight on this subject beyond the abstractions Trotsky offered in a faction fight in 1904.

If it is an error of commission to have used the theme of "substitutism" in explaining the defeat of the Left Opposition and Stalin's successful usurpation of power, I would urge that it is a sin of omission not to have included Trotsky's final views on the Soviet Thermidor. Deutscher, it is true, conscientiously recounts the efforts of the Left Opposition to find a historical analogy in the degeneration of the French Revolution for what was occurring in the Soviet Union. He indicates that it was a matter of considerable pondering and dispute and that Trotsky returned repeatedly to the problem, modifying or altering his position on it. The reader is left with the impression that Trotsky never did reach a satisfactory position on the issue.

Now this may be Deutscher's view of Trotsky's final words on the subject, but Trotsky seems clearly enough to have had a different opinion. The question was not unimportant. For Trotsky's politics, in fact, it was in the final analysis decisive. The search for an analogy was part of the effort to achieve theoretical clarity on what the struggle in its fundamental aspects was about. It involved the character of the Soviet Union and therefore its defense and the nature of that defense, not to mention the ultimate socialist perspective. During the struggle itself, one grouping held that Thermidor, meaning by this the loss of proletarian power and the restoration of a bourgeois regime had already occurred. Trotsky agreed that the danger was great but that the facts showed such a restoration had not yet occurred. In 1935 he admitted a mistake in application of the historical analogy although not in the political positions taken at the time by the Left Opposition. The

correct analogy, he concluded, was that the proletariat had lost political power as in the French Thermidor, but again as in the French Thermidor no restoration of the old regime had occurred — the class that had won the revolution still ruled, although vicariously. One could therefore set the date of the Soviet Thermidor as about 1924, when the triumvirate of Kamenev, Zinoviev and Stalin defeated the 1923 Opposition and entrenched themselves in power.

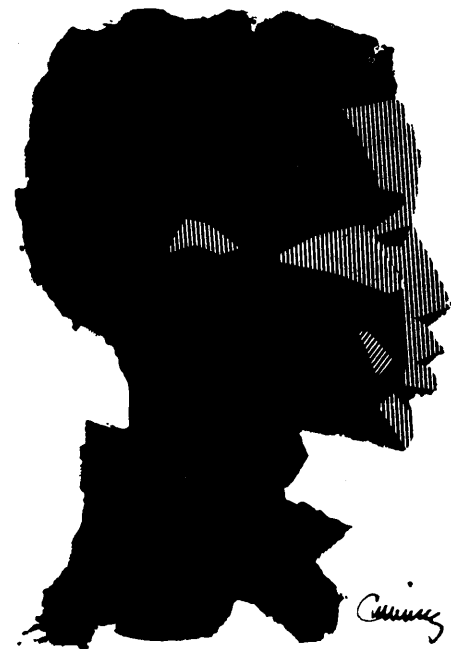
It appears to me that the analogy as Trotsky finally developed it could have proved useful in Deutscher's review of the events with which he deals in this volume. It would have been especially illuminating in showing what forces the Left Oppositionists were up against and why it was so difficult for them to find the "correct" (winning) tactic which Deutscher speculates about at each turn of events (as if a correct factional tactic could substitute for the masses!) It offers, too, a profound, materialist explanation of why the form of rule, as the degeneration set in, tended towards personal dictatorship. Standing at the opposite pole to Trotsky's 1904 "prediction," it is richly concrete, one of his most suggestive contributions to understanding the Soviet Union in its Stalinist phase.

Deutscher, of course, disagrees with Trotsky on the Thermidor analogy. It plays hob with all variants of the dogma that Stalinism is the logical outcome of Leninism. More immediately it conflicts with Deutscher's own theory that a period of "primitive socialist accumulation" was inevitable, no matter how it might reek with blood and dirt, and that Stalin with his barbaric ruthlessness was peculiarly fitted to play the progressive role of carrying it out. This is the theoretical source of Deutscher's tendency to overlook the parasitism of the bureaucratic caste and to find much good in Stalin's rule despite the horrors which he freely recognizes.

Trotsky, on the other hand, while agreeing that the Stalinist bureaucracy was forced to defend and even to develop much that was bequeathed by the Russian Revolution, including entire planks of the platform of the Left Opposition, held that the Stalinist regime, as the Thermidorean reaction, the political regime of the parasitic caste, was the worst domestic brake on progress, the greatest internal source of danger to the workers state, and an absolute obstacle to socialist revolutions outside the Soviet Union.

In the final analysis, the difference between the two views is one of methodology. Trotsky, the dialectician, had no difficulty in combining conceptually such warring concepts, while Deutscher does not seem able even to see such a combination. The progressive aspect to be found in one of the foulest abominations in history seems to gain ascendancy when he balances accounts, although he appears to have modified his position since Khrushchev's revelations at the Twentieth Congress.

But then our political and methodological norms are not Deutscher's. It is unrealistic to demand that he should be a revolutionary-socialist politician as well as a conscientious historian and writer capable of telling an enthralling story well. We are grateful for his book and do not hesitate to recommend it highly.



Race — Social or Biological?

by David Dreiser

CASTE, CLASS, & RACE, by Oliver Cromwell Cox. Monthly Review Press, New York. 1959. 600 pp. $7.50.

This penetrating and scholarly work originally appeared in 1948 and it is a well-deserved recognition of the author and a happy occasion for students of race relations that a new edition has appeared.

Dr. Cox has come to grips with the most basic and difficult aspects of the question of racial discrimination, that is, its fundamental nature and origin. He deals with the subject analytically, historically, all with substantial success.

It is evident that he found very early the necessity for proper differentiation of race from other social divisions such as class, caste, estate and nationality. Since identity of race and caste as social relations is the dominant view in academic circles, Dr. Cox has made an independent treatment of caste based on Hindu and other Indian sources. Oddly, the chief proponents of the caste theory of race relations in American sociology, including Gunnar Myrdal, have eschewed any serious study of Indian caste relations.

There is an intimate connection between the theory that caste originated in a supposed racial antipathy between Aryan invaders and Dravidians in ancient India. In exploding this myth, Cox has contributed greatly to the proper understanding of caste as a peculiar social phenomenon in India, and also further to establish that race relations are a conjunctural aspect of history peculiar to capitalism and did not exist in the ancient world anywhere.

Cox treats race strictly as a social relation and not from the viewpoint of physical anthropology. As he points out, the same man may be recognized as a Negro in one country and as a white person in another and enter into race relations in both situations. The assumed races need not be biologically defined. It is enough that they have imputed physical differences which make them distinguishable.

He thus views anthropology as involving another subject with "no necessary relationship with the problem of race relations as sociological phenomena. Race relations developed independently of tests and measurements." While true, it cannot be concluded so readily that anthropological tests and measurements developed independently of race relations. Cox might have done a great service to probe the extent to which "biological" classification has conformed with and depended on the world system of race relations.

Cox has traced the development of race relations from their origin in modern chattel slavery. This system was a commodity producing society that was an inevitable step in the birth and growth of industrial capitalism. Although reproducing the form of ancient slavery, it was by no means an anachronistic throwback. Slavery provided the accumulation of capital and raw materials necessary for the "industrial revolution."

That the slave was physically distinguishable from the master was an historical accident born of the long previously established distribution of people of varying skin color over the globe, and the sudden development of military supremacy by Europeans enabling them to enslave. Long after the initial enslavement came the association of skin color with the status of the slave.

Out of this came a relation in which the inferiority of the slave was transferred to the person of color and the

perpetuation of the relation after slavery no longer existed was based on skin color alone. Such constituted a race relation in the pure form. Thus a relation between people is racial if its conditions are determined primarily by recognized physical differences. The perpetuation of such a relation after the death of slavery became a vital element in the system of political control and economic exploitation by the American capitalist class.

Cox concludes that the primary need of race relations is subjugation for purposes of exploitation. The maintenance of the relation requires prohibition of intermarriage and other social intercourse. For this segregation is required and from a segregated and economically subject condition race prejudice flows. Prejudice is a by-product and by no means a cause of race relations. From this can be seen the fallacy of all theories of education against prejudice as an answer to the race problem. Cox has presented a valid theoretical basis for the conclusion in action of Negroes everywhere that it is segregation that must be fought first. Education of whites comes in the process or later.

Cox analyses other relations which involve intolerance, but in which the conditions differ. The primary demand that society makes of Jews is that they assimilate. Their religion and culture are designed to unite Jews in resisting assimilation. The Negro is in an opposite situation; he wants to assimilate, but is prevented from doing so although Negroes are among our oldest and most "Americanized" inhabitants.

Intermarriage between castes is generally proscribed as between races but with vital differences. Caste is an organized membership group and an individual may under special circumstances change caste. Offspring of an occasional intercaste marriage may enter the higher caste. No one can change his race and an offspring of a Negro-white marriage is always a Negro unless indistinguishability permits passing.

Without making a specific reference to the Communist party, Cox rejects their former idea of a "forty-ninth state" or any form of national separatism as an aim of American Negroes. "Its social drive is toward assimilation" which would not just modify the conditions of race relations, but would eliminate the relation altogether. He sees an intimate connection between the Negro movement and the struggle of the working class at large against capitalism.

In discussing capitalism Cox presents a theory of class in which "social class" is characterized by a ladder of status and prestige as distinguishable from "political classes" which are two opposed forces (bourgeoisie and proletariat) locked in mortal war for control of the productive forces and of society. He cites Rosa Luxemburg (an excellent authority) on the necessity for revolution and the falsity of reformism. He apparently misses entirely the utter contradiction between this view and his adulation of Roosevelt as a democratic reformer. This is the major defect in an otherwise superb work of historical materialist analysis and scholarship.

Century of Women's Struggle

by Frances James

CENTURY OF STRUGGLE, by Eleanor Flexner. Belknap Press, Harvard, Cambridge, Mass. 1959. 384 pp. $6.

In motivating her book Eleanor Flexner notes, "There is controversy at this time as to whether women have achieved loss, rather than gain, as to whether the 'girl in the gray flannel suit' has not brought in her wake fresh problems worse than the old ones . . . . The most objective historian must have a point of view. This book has been written in the belief that opportunity for complete human development could not, and should not, have been withheld from one-half of the nation because such opportunity inevitably brought with it new problems . . ."

In a bibliographical summary the author remarks, "Today's new literature [on the woman question in the U.S. — FJ] is largely psychological in nature." It is in opposition to this trend that she has prepared her concise yet broad, objective and well-documented historical survey of the women's rights movement in the United States.

The survey covers not only the suffrage movement — including its internal programmatic and organizational fights — but the general struggle of the female half of the population for full citizenship in a supposedly democratic society. The American woman has had to fight to own property, even for the right to her own hard-earned paycheck, which was, at one time in the U.S., legally the property of the husband! In the intellectual fields she had first to fight for the right to read and write and even to speak in public. Even today, "Whatever the cause — fact and myth or prejudice — men still comprise between ninety-five and ninety-seven per cent of our lawyers, architects, natural scientists, and engineers, and ninety-five per cent of the doctors in the United States."

Of special value is the author's relating of the women's rights movement to the role played by women in the economic and social life of the country in different periods. For example, Wyoming was the first state in which female suffrage was won and Miss Flexner accounts for this largely by the fact that women had equal property rights and played a social role comparable to men as settlers in the territory even before Wyoming was admitted to the union as a state.

Specific problems of women workers — job discrimination, wage differentials, exclusion from trade unions, etc., — are outlined in the following chapters: Beginnings of Organization Among Women; Women in the Trade Unions, 1860-75; Women in the Knights of Labor and the Early AFL; and, Into the Mainstream of Organized Labor. The hard-fought strikes of women textile, laundry, shoe and garment workers are described. There is basic information presented on women's increasingly important role in the economic life of the country: nearly one-third of the present labor force is female and approximately one-third of all American women are wage laborers.

The account given of the contributions of Negro women to the fight for female equality, both black and white, is an outstanding feature of the book.

The physical battles protecting life and property, for the right to educate Negro girls are among the most militant and heroic of our history. The powerful and inspiring contributions of Negro women anti-slavery leaders is exemplified in the account given of Sojourner Truth's role at the Akron, Ohio, Women's Rights Convention of 1851. Male hecklers threatened to disrupt the convention, ridiculing the weakness and helplessness of women. Sojourner Truth took the platform and saved the day with these words:

"The man over there says women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over puddles or gives me the best place — and ain't I a woman? . . . Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns and no man could head me — and ain't I a woman? . . . I have born thirteen children, and seen most of 'em sold into slavery and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me — and ain't I a woman?"

While the book is written in popular, readable style it is thoroughly documented (forty pages of bibliographical notes and references). Miss Flexner does not attempt to deal in any way with the basic cause of women's inferior position in private property societies nor does she propose any basic program other than continued work for reform. The book is, however, an authoritative American historical work and is of value to anyone interested in current civil liberties and minority rights movements.

The author says in conclusion, "It might help if we remembered more

often, not only the lonely vigils of Washington at Valley Forge and Lincoln in the White House, but the doubts and fears that racked an Angelina Grimke or the seemingly intrepid Elizabeth Cady Stanton when she stood up to make her first public speech in the tiny Wesleyan chapel at Seneca Falls [First Women's Rights Convention 1848 — FJ]. Perhaps in learning more of the long journey these and hundreds more, made into our present time, we can face our own future with more courage and wisdom, and greater hope."

Where Nationalization Went Wrong

by John Marshall

POWER AT THE TOP, by Clive Jenkins. MacGibbon & Kee, London. 1959. 292 pp. 21s net.

Why did the British Labor party lose the 1959 elections? Why was it unable to generate more enthusiasm for its achievements and more support for its program even among the working people?

Several clues to an answer are contained in this critical survey of the nationalized industries by one of the best-informed of the younger generation of union leaders in Great Britain.

When Labor took over the government in 1945, it instituted many long-overdue reforms which were welcomed by the workers. High hopes were aroused by the nationalizations of the railroads, airways and road transport, the coal mines, public utilities (gas and electricity) and the steel plants.

By 1959 there was widespread disappointment in the results of these nationalizations. What had gone wrong?

Labor took under public ownership less than twenty per cent of Britain's industry; the bulk stayed in capitalist hands. A pailful of planning could hardly be effective in a sea of capitalist competition and profiteering.

Ironically, partial nationalization brought considerable benefits to the capitalist class as a whole. "It rescued certain industries from bankruptcy, bailed some out, and put others on parole. By its over-generous compensation it saddled the new corporations with economic liabilities and agreed on a "bygones be bygones' policy with the financial interests which milked certain industries of large profits and neglected to maintain an adequate program of re-investment and research," Jenkins points out.

Moreover, it gave "a shot in the arm to an ailing capitalist economy by 'unlocking' capital to an extent undreamed of by the shareholders in the industries taken into public ownership. This capital has led to the flourishing existence of holding companies with large assets which have been investing in the 'growth' sectors of the economy and earning higher returns than they had done for many years in their former fields."

If the lush payments to the old proprietors converted their corporate liabilities into liquid assets, the most efficient operation of the newly nationalized industries and the cheap prices they charged for their goods and services have enabled the private sector to rake in extra profits.

The author is principally concerned to show that the top executives in charge of the nationalized industries are the same men who previously served private enterprise or who belong to the ruling class. He documents this in detail. While Labor was still in office, Prime Minister Attlee reported that, of the 131 names on central nationalized boards, sixty-one also held directorships in private companies, twenty-three were knights, nine were lords, and three were generals. Since 1951 this capture of control has been stepped up by the appointments of the Conservative government which, in addition to denationalizing steel, has sought to make the management of the nationalized industries into duplicates of the giant capitalist corporations.

Jenkins lists three positive gains the trade unionists received from the nationalizations. These are: greater security in employment; promotion and training at lower levels are now more regularized and easily available; and joint consultation is *some* check upon arbitrary acts of management.

"But," he concludes, "these gains fall far short of what was anticipated. The worker still loses stature when he enters the factory gates." There has been a "re-transfer of power to persons linked with the tiny but highly influential groups that in reality govern the country."

The *form* of ownership was changed but not its *control.* Consequently, "the two-three million people employed in nationalized industry, although now better informed about their individual enterprises, still lack that sense of participation in daily and long-run managerial conduct which is inseparable from a share in the power to *decide.*

Since Labor's electoral defeat prominent spokemen for right-wing opinion like Douglas Jay have called for the explicit renunciation of nationalization in the platform or aims of the party. Although the Gaitskell leadership fears to flout the traditions of the party and the sentiments of the ranks by open surrender to conservatism on this key question, it is uninclined to push for more public ownership.

Jenkin's criticisms of the deficiencies of the nationalized industries proceed from the opposite standpoint. He recognize that public ownership of the means of production is the core of any socialist program and that the "mixed economy," three-fourths private, one-fourth public, so admired by the welfare-staters, gives far more to the capitalists than to the workers.

Instead of sliding back to liberalism, Jenkins urges Labor to move ahead to a planned economy through more extensive nationalizations. Socialism means, he says, "a revolutionizing of the status of the industrial worker in a machine society." He projects a series of measures designed to give the organized workers a bigger say in the making and execution of policies and greater control over the operations of the nationally administered industries. These cannot be either democratized or effectively operated without abolishing the outworn owner-employe relationship perpetuated in the present setup.

"To Shake Up White America"

by Evelyn Sell

WHEN NEGROES MARCH, by Herbert Garfinkel. Free Press, Glencos, Illinois. 1959. 224 pp. $4.

Negro marches on Washington to demand civil rights and to protest discrimination are no longer unusual. But, when A. Philip Randolph first issued a call in January, 1941, for "10,000 black Americans" to march on the nation's capitol, the Chicago Defender editorialized, "To get ten thousand Negroes assembled in one spot, under one banner with justice, democracy and work as their slogan would be the miracle of the century." The description of the conditions which led to such a call by Randolph, the story of how the Negro masses and leaders responded and the events surrounding the March on Washington of the forties are vividly presented in Herbert Garfinkel's *When Negroes March.*

Mr. Garfinkel traces the March on Washington movement from the time

that the depression signs of "No Help Wanted" changed to the pre-World War II signs, "Help Wanted—White." Negro leaders appealed to President Roosevelt and met with government officials in behalf of the Negro community which was frozen out of the "benefits" of the war preparedness program. The ineffectiveness of such appeals and conferences and the marked contrast between the lot of the white worker and serviceman and the Negro prompted protest meetings and picketing throughout the country. It was at this point that Randolph issued the first call for "An 'all-out' thundering march on Washington . . ." in order to "shake up white America."

After a halting start the March on Washington idea began to seize the imaginations and stir the activities of the mass of Negroes. Local March committees were set up in eighteen cities, outdoor rallies were held, poster walks took place, funds solicited, MOW buttons were sold by the thousands. Counter-pressures and appeals for national unity on the part of the government only served to encourage the March supporters in their project. Originally asking 10,000 to march — the goal became 100,000 to gather at the Lincoln Memorial to demand equal job opportunities and an end to segregation in the armed forces.

Barely one week before the March was to take place, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 setting up a federal Fair Employment Practices Committee and Randolph called off the March.

Shortly after the first FEPC public hearings, Pearl Harbor was attacked and the shooting war began. However, the "Double V for Victory" campaign (victory against Jim Crow as well as against the Axis) continued throughout the war period. Mass meetings organized by the March on Washington Movement were held in Chicago, New York and St. Louis during the summer of 1942. They were all huge successes.

Mr. Garfinkel dates the decline of the March on Washington movement from the time of these rallies. Despite the formalization of the March on Washington as an organization at a conference held in September, 1942, the original objectives of the march movement were altered. Efforts now were to gain an effective FEPC and Randolph chose to pursue this goal with methods and organizations other than those associated with the MOW mass movement.

In his preface the author points out, "Behind the current agitation in the Negro community is a history of developing leadership and organization which requires intensive analysis if we are to understand the present. The defense period just prior to American entry into World War II is fundamental, because it was then that Negro political activity was forced into independent action."

By "independent action" Mr. Garfinkel means action independent of white liberals. True independent action — a break with capitalist aims and political parties — never occurs as an important factor to the author.

Unfortunately, the analysis of the "developing leadership and organization" which Mr. Garfinkel presents is the weakest section of his book. For example, "It is to the leadership of Dr. King and Mr. Wilkins that the future of Negro protest belongs, but it is from Mr. Randolph that a great deal of their tactical conception of the struggle has stemmed."

His attitude on this question is perhaps best expressed by the fact that he completely overlooks the new type of working class Negro leader typified by E. D. Nixon of Alabama and Robert Williams of North Carolina.

The Problem of Negro Leadership

by Jean Blake

W. E. B. DuBois: Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis, by Francis L. Broderick. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California. 1959. 259 pp. $5.

The life of DuBois — his ideas and activities — is a particularly rewarding choice of study for a number of reasons: He was a conscious leader, a professional leader and an especially articulate leader. In addition, his life covers a long period of time. DuBois was born in 1868 and is still active. This provides an unusual time span to develop and test ideas.

The author's approach to the writing of biography is clearly stated at the outset. He says:

"A study of the public career of a complex figure like William Edward Burghardt DuBois, who has put so much on record and who has been a controversial figure for over half a century, invites controversy at almost every chapter. It is not the job of the historian to avoid controversy. It is his job to reconstruct the past as accurately as his limitations permit, even when his judgments contradict existing judgments. This is what I have done. My intention has been neither to exalt nor to demean Dr. DuBois; it has been to understand him in the context of his time."

To the extent that Mr. Broderick did a job of research, analysis of his materials and reconstruction of the ideas and activities of DuBois, he helps give historical perspective to some of the major disputes over program in the Negro movement of the past fifty years — many of them still on the agenda as unfinished business.

For example, in view of the current debate over the advocacy of militant self-defense by Robert F. Williams for which he was suspended as president of the Monroe, N.C., branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the earlier experience of Dr. DuBois with the Association is quite significant.

Broderick cites editorials and articles by DuBois in 1911 and 1916 when he was editor of *Crisis,* in which he advocated militant self-defense despite the opposition of the NAACP leadership.

"When Negroes in Gainesville, Florida, failed to resist an attacking white mob in 1916," Broderick writes, "an editorial, 'Cowardice,' insisted that they should have fought in self-defense to the last ditch if they killed every white man in the country and were themselves killed in turn . . . lynching, he [DuBois] said, would stop in the South 'when the cowardly mob is faced by effective guns in the hands of people determined to sell their souls dearly.' Later the same year, in reply to a young woman who wanted more refinement and fewer overtones of violence in the *Crisis,* DuBois reminded her that no human group had 'ever' achieved its freedom 'without being compelled to murder' thousands of oppressors. Though he hoped this would not be true for American Negroes, 'it may be necessary.' "

"DuBois' threats of violence were only the most extreme manifestations of his divergences from his white associates," Broderick says. And he adds: "But though programs diverged and tempers wore thin, the entente with the Association held. The Association could ill afford to lose DuBois' superb editorial talents on a successful magazine."

But the controversy over advocacy of militant self-defense is only one example of the ideological struggles of DuBois that Broderick reconstructs. Some of the others were the relation of the Negro movement to the labor movement, to the consumers' co-operative movement, to the socialist movement, to the Russian Revolution, to the Communist party, to colonial struggles; the relation between forms of Negro organization and alliances, to the goals of reforms, equality and integration.

The biographer, who stated quite candidly at the beginning that "it is not the job of the historian to avoid controversy," turns DuBois' differences with his contemporaries into a three-way debate through his own implicit or explicit criticisms. (A four-way debate if the reader has some theories of his own.)

The student of the problems of program and leadership of the Negro struggle will find much interesting and useful material in this book.

Periodicals in Review

by Tim Wohlforth

END OF AMERICAN SOCIALIST

With its December issue, the *American Socialist* has called it quits after six years of publication. In doing so it has gone the way of such publications as *Labor Action*, *Challenge* and *New International* of the Social Democratic sphere. (Though it may be premature to report the death of *Anvil*, the student journal of the Shachtman group, we can report it as "missing in action," for it hasn't been published for a year now.)

The immediate causes of the demise of these publications are quite different. When looked at in a broader political perspective, however, a pattern emerges. The decision to abandon the *American Socialist* was not motivated by strictly financial pressures, its editors tell us. "We have been financially embarrassed several times before in our six-year career and have managed somehow or other to raise the necessary money," they state. It is rather that "it has been harder and harder to get the kind of support that a Left publication must have if it is to be a vital force."

The statement of the editors in the December issue gives the impression that they have given up because they feel that their efforts over the last six years have not produced the type of political movement they sought to create.

In a certain sense this is the very motivation that led to the downfall of *Labor Action* and the *New International* and, a little later on, YPSL *Challenge*. After seventeen years of work to build a political movement, Max Shachtman and his followers decided that it was no longer worth the effort and there was no longer any justification for maintaining an independent press and organization. They therefore entered the Socialist party-Social Democratic Federation.

The momentary result of their entry was a spurt of activity in the SP-SDF's youth organization, the Young People's Socialist League, which produced *Challenge*. As this activity subsided, the YPSL was unable to continue its publication. The membership did not feel concerned enough about its continuation to make the financial sacrifices necessary to sustain it.

The *American Socialist* was published by a group led by Bert Cochran and Harry Braverman which split from the Socialist Workers party (just as the Shachtman group had done earlier) and attempted to create some sort of alternative movement to a revolutionary socialist party. Cochran and Braverman apparently thought they could do this by completely ignoring basic programmatic questions; they turned their backs on any serious attempt to analyze world developments and come to definit political conclusions.

They strove, with considerable success, to publish a magazine without revealing any definite political line. The ultimate effect of this was failure to attract people who were searching for a political program and the demoralization of their original supporters who were in a revolutionary socialist movement to start with, were led into a break with it and then found themselves dangling in mid air. Under these conditions the failure of the magazine venture became inevitable.

It is difficult enough to sustain a magazine without a clearly defined political outlook, but it is downright impossible to build a socialist movement without one. This is one of the main lessons of the experience of *American Socialist*. Shachtman's experiment was but another variant. Rather than attempt to build a movement without a program as Cochran did, Shachtman conceived of the scheme of building a movement with someone else's program — that of the State Department socialists. As always happens in such cases, the device becomes the reality; the program that is being cleverly utilized turns out to be utilizing the manipulator: confusion and demoralization ensues.

There is one positive achievement of the six-year history of the *American Socialist* which is important despite the failure of the publication. It initiated and maintained a high technical standard of radical journalism which surpassed any of its contemporaries. It was always well edited, its illustrations among the best to be found in any publication and its general appearance quite attractive. We can do well to learn from this positive feature of Cochran and Braverman's magazine venture as well as from their political mistakes.

THE NEW LEFT IN ENGLAND

The turmoil following the Khrushchev revelations and the Hungarian Revolution produced in England several new publications and political organizations. Among the most stimulating were the *New Reasoner*, published by E. P. Thompson, and *Universities and Left Review*, published by students, some formerly with the Communist party and some from the left wing of the Labor party.

These two publications have recently merged to form the *New Left Review*. Among the supporters of this new publication can be found many young intellectuals new to politics who are repelled by the opportunism of the official Labor party leadership and the blind apologetics for the Kremlin of the British Communist party. These young people have formed various loosely related Left Clubs and Left coffee houses in the university areas engaging in discussions and — in the case of anti-nuclear tests campaign — some action.

The ideology of at least one section of the intellectual leadership of the group (it seems to be the predominant section) is clearly expressed by E. P. Thompson in his article, "The New Left," in the last issue of the *New Reasoner* (Summer 1959). Thompson characterizes modern Britain in an impressionistic but at the same time occasionally perceptive way. Using terminology reminiscent of our C. Wright Mills, he speaks of the Great Apathy perpetrated by the "Establishment" (which he compares to the American Power Elite and the Soviet bureaucracy). The Establishment is divided into three parts: the Establishment of Power; the Establishment of Orthodoxy; and the Establishment of Institutions.

A large part of Thompson's article is devoted, not to a critique of modern capitalism, but rather to a critique of the "Old Left." He considers the British Trotskyists, organized in the Socialist Educational League and conducting a vigorous left-wing struggle within the unions and the Labor party, to be the latest example of the Old Left.

Thompson is searching for an ideological home somewhere between revolutionary socialism and Stalinism and Social Democracy. Apparently he wants this new ideological home to allow him to dissent from right-wing socialism and thus express his alienation from the Establishment, including the established trade union and Labor party bureaucracy. At the same time, however, this new ideology must not compel him to conduct any real struggle against this Establishment or exert efforts to build an organization for the conduct of such a struggle. This leads him to a sort of academic revolutionism which rejects the actual struggle now transpiring as "fervent parasitic factionalism"; a Marxist critique of the capitalist system and the analysis of the ebbs and flows of the class struggle he regards as "economism"; and, finally, the building of a revolutionary party he dismisses as "vanguardism."

What Thompson omits is as indicative of his views as what he says. He writes a lengthy article on the perspective for the Left with almost no mention of the working class. He does not relate the development of the conscious socialist movement to the struggles of the working class in England.

Intellectuals can play a very important role in helping to bring socialist consciousness to the working class.

Lenin and all the Marxist leaders have helped us understand this. However, the intellectual isolated from the working class and incapable of submitting to the discipline of the working class movement, is powerless. It is the task of the socialist movement to forge the link between the intellectual and the advanced elements in the working class. Thompson, it appears, has turned his back on this task.

This kind of radicalism has considerable appeal to that stratum of intellectuals in England as well as the United States who wish to be radical but who at the same time do not want this radicalism to be carried to the point that it interferes or disrupts their "peaceful coexistence" with the rest of the middle class (especially the academic section thereof). Similar views to Thompson's are expressed in this country in such otherwise politically divergent publications as *Dissent* (for right-wing armchair socialists); *American Socialist* (for ex-Trotskyist armchair socialists); and *Monthly Review* (for friends of the Soviet Union armchair socialists).

It is doubtful whether such an ideology of sterility and inaction can have any lasting attraction for its younger supporters.

Another British publication, *Labor Review,* carries in its November, 1959 issue a fine article by Gerry Healy, secretary of the Socialist Labor League, which goes into the question of the New Left more deeply than we can here.

NATIONAL GUARDIAN DISARMED

The banner headline in the Oct. 12, 1959 issue of the *National Guardian* queries: "Can We Disarm and Convert to Peace Without a Crash?" In this and a number of subsequent issues the *Guardian* seems to be conducting a veritable campaign aimed at convincing the capitalists that they can disarm without endangering their system.

The capitalists do not seem too ready to accept this view and continue in practice — no matter how much they state the opposite in their propaganda — to act on the belief that they cannot afford to disarm. On this particular question we cannot help feeling that the capitalists understand their system better than some of their "progressive" critics.

Total disarmament of the U.S. would not only rock an economy which was able to pull out of depression only on the basis of World War II and the cold war which followed, but would also make it impossible for the capitalists to police the world to preserve and extend their markets and raw materials sources.

We socialists, rather than attempting to convince the capitalists to act contrary to their nature, have another and more practical solution: let's get rid of capitalism! It is too bad that the *Guardian* editorial staff, who are as devoted to socialism as we are, have allowed their vain striving for permanent peace between capitalism and the non capitalist bloc to lead them into such a blind alley. The net effect of their campaign is not to disarm the capitalists but rather to disarm themselves.

RANDOM NOTES

Recent issues of the *Monthly Review* have contained some interesting discussion on the nature of Marxism first initiated by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy in the October and November issues. Joseph Starobin's comments show that today he is as enthusiastically joining in the "Great American Celebration" as he earlier eulogized the "infallible leader," Stalin. Comments of Stanley Moore and Maurice Dobb are more in line with the subject, Marxism . . . Considerable controversy has surrounded the *Nation's* special issue, "The Shame of New York" and the strange episode following its publication in which the two authors, a reporter-writer team of Fred Cook and Gene Gleason, were fired from their jobs on the *World Telegram* for publicly charging New York city officials with attempting to silence them with bribery. Gleason "confessed," after being grilled for a whole day in the District Attorney's office, that his charge was false. The *Militant,* in a Dec. 14 editorial, associated itself with the *National Guardian* in the view "that Fred Cook and the *Nation* are the victims of a dirty move to discredit their indictment of New York rackets, politics and big business." "The indictment becomes all the more pertinent," the *Militant* says, and calls on its readers to obtain the special issue of the *Nation* (333 Sixth Ave., New York 14. Ten copies are $4 and 50 copies are $7.50; a single copy is fifty cents). The *Nation* has become one liberal voice that performs the basic duty of exposing the ugly sores of capitalist society. This is in the best "muckraking" tradition of American liberalism and for our part we prefer it to the liberalism of the *realpolitikers* that infest the Democratic party . . . A lot of good material on the labor movement can be found in *Dissent's* Fall 1959 issue . . . The September and October issues of *Liberation* carry several articles discussing the question, "Should Negroes React to Violence?" in defending themselves . . . *Science and Society,* which over the years adhered rather closely to the official Communist party line, and which seemed untouched by the regroupment crisis, has shown signs of a wee bit of life. The Spring 1959 issue contained an article by Hans Freistadt which suggests in passing that greater freedom of thought for Soviet scientists would help them in their pursuits. It has also printed articles by Paul Mattick and Albert Blumberg, the former certainly not in the CP orbit and the latter formerly associated with John Gates who has left the CP . . . The *Atlantic Monthly* has devoted its December issue to articles on China, another sign of the deep curiosity Americans have about developments in that country. A revolution cannot be hidden from the world — not even by a mountain of slander. The monumental scope of the slander itself testifies to the significance of the event.

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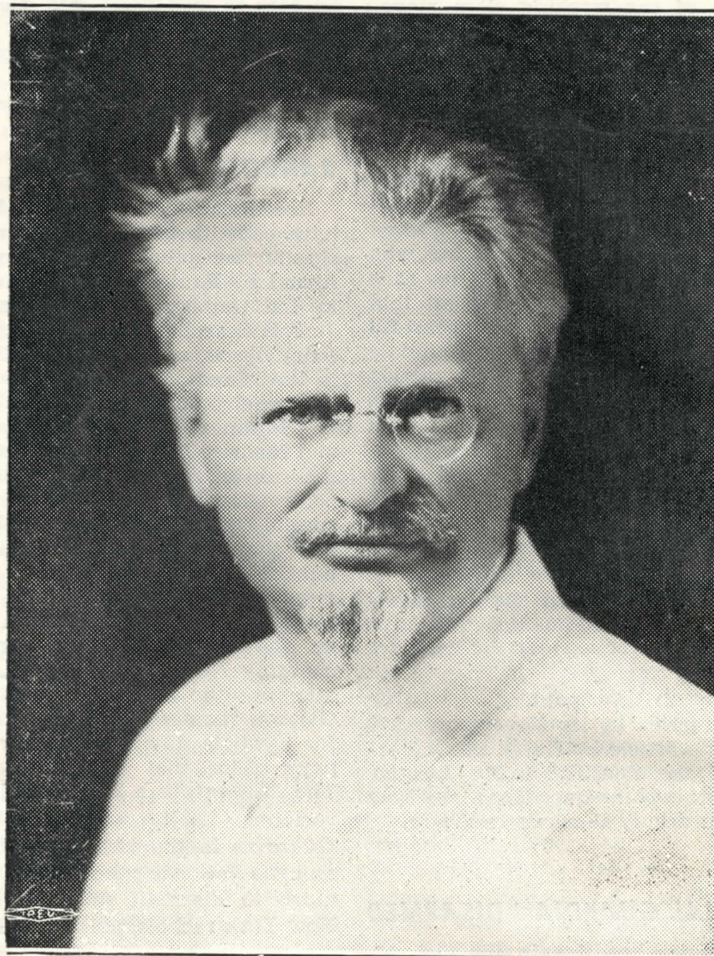
Trotsky's Diary in Exile 1935



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