

LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Weekly

The Strange Case Against Beria

... page 3

Pacifism vs. Marxism: A Discussion

... page 6

Russian Exploitation in E. Germany

... page 5

NLRB and the Longshore Vote

... page 2

JANUARY 4, 1954

FIVE CENTS

Looking Back on 1953's Headlines

By GORDON HASKELL

Major political developments are not regulated by the solar calendar. In looking back over any particular year, what tends to impress one is the continuity of political trends rather than the sharp breaks in them. Yet 1953 has been a year in which, despite the continuity, sharp changes have occurred which remind us that the saying "the more things change, the more they remain the same," is nothing but a conservative falsehood.

The year 1953 began with the return to power of the Republican Party after twenty years in opposition. The basic character of the administration was quickly revealed with the appointment of the millionaire cabinet by President Eisenhower. LABOR ACTION's headline for February 2 read:

It's the Curse of Midas, Mr. Wilson, That's What It Is

That was when Wilson started out by refusing to sell his stocks in General Motors, proclaiming that "what's good for General Motors is good for the country." That was just the beginning.

The "Eisenhower crusade" staffed the government departments with men who opposed the social measures of the New Deal. Although it is true that one cannot turn back the clock of history, the Republicans made a valorous try at it. Public housing was scuttled, and most of the social measures of the New and Fair Deals were squeezed and chipped away at. Budget-cutting, hard money, the giving away of government-owned resources and plant—all the pet schemes of the American businessman received priority.

New U. S. Military Policy on Formosa Increases Danger of World War III (Feb. 9)

The Eisenhower administration had come to power with vague promises of a more "vigorous" foreign policy. In an attempt to show some action on this promise, the president announced that this country would no longer "restrain" Chiang Kai-shek from attacking China. This seemed to indicate a turn to the "Asia First" policies of the China Lobby, and toward a more belligerent militarist line. But the political realities asserted themselves, including the danger of the complete isolation of America from her allies unless a cautious policy in Asia were continued.

Russia Without Stalin—What's Ahead As New Despots Unite Against "Panic"? (March 16)

Stalin's death on March 5 was the second major event which marked a break in 1953 in the long-term trends. The Stalinist ruling class was confronted with a major problem in establishing the succession, a problem which is of first-rate importance in a totalitarian society. As far as the rest of the world was concerned, the effect was a marked slackening in the pressure of the Russian ruling class in foreign affairs—in fact, a "peace" offensive designed to increase the frictions among the capitalist powers while leaving the Stalinist rulers a maximum of elbow-room for the settlement of their own problems.

Washington Powerless to Seize Initiative as Kremlin Presses On with Peace Drive (April 6)

The Kremlin's policy worked like a charm. In Europe and Asia "neutralist" moods were encouraged. Winston Churchill began to press for a quick conference with Malenkov for the settlement of the cold war in a face-to-face session of the Big Three, in the same way that the problems of World War II were "settled" at Yalta and Teheran.

But Washington was neither willing to "settle" with the Russian rulers (that is, to make a deal to accept and legalize the Russian seizures after the war), nor was it able to seize the opportunity given it by Stalin's death to take the initiative in pressing Stalinism to the wall. The fact became clearer than ever that Washington has no political program with which to rally the peoples of the world against Stalinist totalitarianism, and its military program is feared as much by its allies as by the Kremlin.

The First Mass Workers' Revolts in Satellites Shake the Russian Power (June 22)

The Russian rulers had made a major miscalculation. The third major event of the year was the workers' revolt in East Berlin which spread to the whole of Eastern Germany, and which was accompanied in the same month by mass stirrings in Czechoslovakia and Poland. The struggle for power within the Kremlin, the uncertainty about who was master in the house, weakened and demoralized the Stalinist rulers and party chiefs everywhere. The rapid shifts in policies which signaled this uncertainty heartened the workers in the satellites to rise up and demonstrate against their masters.

The Stalinist monolith showed deep fissures. Its inner weakness was laid bare. In these circumstances, instead of pressing forward with their "peace" offensive, the Kremlin rulers were forced to adopt a policy of evading any major conferences while they sought to bring their house back into some semblance of order. On July 10 Beria was purged as an "enemy of the state" as part of the struggle to re-establish one-man rule.

(Turn to last page)

Withdrawal of 2 U. S. Divisions Highlights the Powder-Keg in Korea—

Rhee Pledges War, While U.S. Prepares to Unleash A-Bombs on China in Case...

By PHILIP COBEN

The announcement that the U. S. is withdrawing two divisions from Korea may sound, at first blush, like a "peace" move; but in the context of Washington's new military perspective, and in the light of the present impasse in Korean negotiations, it takes on rather a threatening cast.

It has to be understood, first of all, that this move has nothing to do with any orientation toward withdrawing American forces from Korea, nor with any step in that direction. The U. S. leaves in Korea more than five of its own divisions, plus 18 South Korean divisions, plus three or four divisions from other UN nations, plus nearly four divisions which are held in Japan.

The withdrawal of the two divisions may have been rendered desirable by economy motives at home, but it ties in closely with the military plans of the administration in case of renewed warfare. These plans have been widely given out as: (1) making the war on atomic war, utilizing America's new and dread weapons of devastation; (2) extending the war at least to the China mainland.

In this military strategy, which involves great political decisions, the subordinate economy motive, insofar as it is a factor, can operate since the brass figures that less manpower would be needed in Korea for the new-look A-bomb war.

The N. Y. Times military writer, Han-

son Baldwin, confirms this view in his own analysis. The withdrawal, he says, "is a logical part of the developing politico-military policy of the Eisenhower administration." This policy includes "greater dependence upon air power and sea power and atomic and other new arms."

'RETALIATION' ON RUSSIA?

Furthermore, "an enemy attack in Korea would be met by an active mobile defense not limited to Korea; . . . our retaliation would be carried to China itself—and perhaps to the Soviet Union; . . . no holds would be barred . . . atomic weapons might (but would not necessarily) be used." (Our emphasis.)

This is a startling statement by a responsible authority close to the Pentagon that the leaders of the U. S. are playing with the idea of starting the Third World War with Russia in case of resumed warfare in Korea.

But Baldwin also writes that Washington is convinced that the Stalinists in Korea will not take the initiative to reopen the war "in the foreseeable future." Their military preparations in North Korea, he says, "indicate a defensive pattern."

Yet the same day's news carried the information that the resumption of warfare in Korea, with all its planned consequences, was being openly threatened,

(Turn to last page)

SPOTLIGHT

A Boost for American Democracy

The coming Pan-American Conference in Caracas, Venezuela, will be held under auspices guaranteed to preserve its effectiveness as a bulwark of democracy in the world. The guarantee is personally given by the head of the Venezuelan secret police, who vows that "you can bet anything you want there would not be a repetition of the bloody street fighting and rioting that occurred in Bogota, Colombia, during the ninth conference in April 1948."

The defense of democracy in the Western Hemisphere, is going to be implemented by this petroleum colony of America's oil companies, you bet. "Wait and see," says Señor Estrada, the aforesaid police chief. "There will be no trouble even if we have to round up every suspicious character in the country and jail them all throughout the conference."

The democratic speeches of the inter-American statesmen will not be disturbed. The N. Y. Times correspondent, Sydney Gruson, who gives us the glad tidings, adds: "When Señor Estrada says something like this, the people who know him believe it. As head of the se-

cret police he is the man mainly responsible for having destroyed the underground organization of Acción Democrática, whose democratically elected president, Romulo Gallegos, lasted only ten months in 1948 before the Venezuelan army imposed the present military dictatorship. . . . The question of what sort of methods Señor Estrada's policemen use against the political opposition usually draws this answer: 'Oh, the usual secret-police methods.'"

While, therefore, the deliberations of the Conference on how to guard the hemisphere against dictatorship will be tranquil, Washington has not been unperturbed. Señor Estrada's government also imposes press censorship—oh, nothing serious, just enough "to protect against any abuse of freedom of the press" by misguided oppositions who have not yet been jailed—and American newspapermen covering the conference in March will not be used to such excellent and efficient defense of democracy. So—

"If, as expected, the government eases press censorship for the inter-American conference, it will be because Señor Estrada feels the internal situation can

(Continued on page 4)

The Longshore Vote: NLRB Decisions Aided ILA but AFL Came Through Strong

By BEN HALL

Bus after bus, chartered by the old International Longshoremen's Association, carted blaring brass bands and thousands of dock workers to the NLRB's Port of New York collective-bargaining elections on December 22-23. There weren't any AFL buses.

"Most observers" detected a strong tide running against the AFL and predicted a certain, shattering defeat for it, by at least three to one. When the ballots were counted they were in for surprise. 9,060 were cast for the ILA; 7,568 went to the AFL. But 4,397 additional votes were challenged; and pending their disposition, the NLRB was compelled to delay a final decision.

Although it ran ahead, the ILA has been struck a heavy blow, perhaps a mortal one. When the AFL polled 45.5 per cent of the counted ballots, it had achieved a spectacular moral victory, a portent of its ultimate and probably not far-off triumph.

The erroneous expectations of an overwhelming ILA victory appeared to be based on all the facts but one. All the events immediately preceding the vote seemed deliberately contrived to assure success for the racket-dominated union. But thousands of dock workers were determined, despite all momentary difficulties, to get rid of the gangs and build a genuine union.

Only two months after it had been chartered on September 22, as a union existing only on paper and on hopes, the new AFL union was forced into an election, long before it had a chance to put its case before the majority of workers. The ILA, on the other hand, could count on a closely knit inner machine of racketeers and thugs together with their tools and union front men.

ILA TERROR

It was a machine based on favoritism, graft and extortion, and policed by terror. Hundreds of men were obligated to it for their jobs or petty privileges. Thousands of others, dominated by the mood of favoritism, imagined that their jobs and security depended on the continued strength of the machine. In the very nature of the racket setup, built up over decades, the ILA could begin the election campaign with a solid core of thousands of workers and officials, convinced that their personal fate was linked to that of the racketeers, for good or ill.

With this as a base, the ILA counted on intimidation to do the rest. ILA gangsters are known to use murder as a normal routine. One of the earliest AFL supporters disappeared mysteriously and was found drowned days later. Known thugs circulated around the polling booths; there were stabbings and beatings.

William Bradley, ILA president, announced ominously during the voting that he had discovered that there were 10,000 longshoremen too many in the port and that AFL supporters had better beware. They could expect, he hinted, to look for new trades if the ILA won, as everyone thought it would.

So oppressive became the atmosphere that the AFL was compelled to abandon plans to drive workers to the voting stations in buses; longshoremen feared to become publicly associated with the new union in any way. Thousands who voted AFL came down in ILA buses.

The AFL now demands that the election, conducted in such an atmosphere, be voided by the NLRB and a new one ordered. Everything now hinges on the NLRB action on its demands; for the 7,500 men who voted AFL have already broken the stranglehold of fear, and in a new vote thousands of others will probably go along with them.

NLRB'S RECORD

While the NLRB ponders what to do, its record in the longshore case deserves a close scrutiny.

For reasons which no one has explained it favored the old ILA in virtually all its decisions. In fact, the participation of this government board bore every resemblance to outright collaboration with the thug-run union.

The AFL needed time, time to educate and influence longshoremen. The Shipping Association, in collusion with the ILA thugs for many years, demanded a quick election, and of course so did the ILA. The NLRB agreed with the ILA-employer demand.

Another crucial dispute arose over the definition of the collective bargaining

unit. The AFL, with greatest support among the longshoremen proper, insisted upon a vote only among them, to the exclusion of more casual and secondary trades. But the ILA, which had predominant strength among such units, called for the inclusion of as many as possible. The NLRB again backed up the ILA.

The AFL filed unfair labor-practice charges against the companies and the ILA, charging intimidation of its members and pointing to the obvious collusion of bosses and ILA officials. But the NLRB forced through the election before deciding upon the AFL charges, which are still pending.

DEWEY INTERVENES

Thus the elections took place when sentiment had just begun to switch to the AFL but before the switch could be completed. The results of the elections became obsolete the very hour of their publication. No doubt, thousands of longshoremen voted for the ILA out of fear and uncertainty; now that they have seen 7,500 of their fellow workers decide for the AFL their own fears and uncertainties begin to vanish, but they have no way to express themselves unless a new election is ordered.

As this is written, the NLRB must decide what to do about the challenged ballots and how to act on the AFL demand for a new election. If the record of the board is a guide to its future actions, it

LONDON LETTER

Review of British Politics for the Year

By DAVID ALEXANDER

LONDON, Dec. 21—It is no pleasure, in reviewing last year's events in Britain, to have to write that it has been a year of unparalleled reaction.

Not only in home policy but equally in foreign and colonial policy, the Conservative forces have placed their imprint clearly on the plan of history. What, however, is even less palatable is that on all major colonial issues the Labor and Tory parties have been substantially united. Disagreements over such issues have been over tactics rather than principles, and even these have been used merely as party devices.

At home, on the other hand, the Labor Party has been battling valiantly against denationalization of road transport and steel. It has used every possible measure to oppose it, short of industrial action. Likewise, its opposition to commercial television has been stated in no uncertain terms.

Even these issues, however, the right wing of the party has put to its own account. Instead of reacting to the Tories' attempts to denationalize these industries by increased determination for further public ownership, it has made the renationalization of these industries the main progressive legislation in the party program; it has thus, in its own opinion, relieved itself of the responsibility for further progressive measures.

SETBACKS

Whatever may be written to the contrary, progressive forces suffered severe setbacks at both Trade Union Congress and Labor Party annual conferences. Though the left-wing forces had good opportunities for ventilating their views, and the political wing of the Labor movement undoubtedly showed very healthy left-wing sentiments, the progressive forces in that movement did not do well. The apparent deal made between the Bevanites and the right-wing meant political "peace" in the party at the cost of abandonment of left-wing aspirations.

Thus, however progressive the senti-

ment will undoubtedly repeat its old performance: final endorsement of the ILA. But it is compelled to pause.

The NLRB is now under the control of the Republican administration and we can only speculate on what sordid intrigues—political and, shall we say, economic, linking shipping companies, politicians and racketeers—dominated its decisions. We get a hint from what has become public.

Thomas E. Dewey, Republican governor, has the special task of cleaning up the record of his administration and that of his party—a record already tarnished by the New York race-track revelations. He has been studiously maneuvering for credit for cleaning up the New York waterfront and is furious at the NLRB (controlled by his own party) whose actions threaten to undermine his own objectives and turn control back to the gangsters.

He has ordered a state investigation of the conditions under which this national labor election has taken place, and he demands that the NLRB hold up certification of the ILA until he completes his inquiries. Republican Senator Ives threatens to demand a congressional investigation of the NLRB if it rushes through endorsement of the ILA.

It is not only a startling conflict between state and federal agencies; it is an open conflict over policy between sections of the Republican Party. The mysterious roots of this conflict are yet to be laid bare.

NLRB, gangsters, employers — all would have been futile for the ILA, which was doomed. Only one thing could have saved it. It needed desperately some cover of labor-union respectability, some device to hide its gangster control and parade as a first-class union. It succeeded. But only with the help of John L. Lewis, who was probably the only single man who could have saved the

racketeers from imminent defeat.

Weeks before, a fantastic rumor had been put into circulation, suggesting that the ILA had been offered a berth in District 50 of the United Mine Workers. This fantastic rumor, virtually unbelievable, turned out to be true!

JOHN L. THROWS STONES

The day before the election, Lewis announced his support of the discredited ILA and reported that he had already loaned it \$50,000, with more forthcoming. As the NLRB was setting up the polling booths, Lewis posed with ILA President Bradley for photographers in Washington, D. C.

In the negotiations between the AFL and CIO for unity and cooperation, Lewis had been frozen out. This was his revenge. The racketeers gain momentary shelter. Lewis, with cynical irresponsibility, reminds the rest of the labor officialdom that he can and will throw stones.

On the side of the new longshore union were the prestige and power of the AFL as a genuine labor organization and the fighting traditions of the old ILA rank-and-file opposition, which had carried on irrepressible unauthorized strikes against the old leadership and fought racketeering. Many ILA oppositionists had faced death; some had been murdered. This combination will yet conquer.

If the AFL has not yet completely overcome the old ILA, it is because many longshoremen are not convinced of its sincerity in the struggle.

In an election appeal, George Meany called upon longshoremen to vote for democracy, for rank-and-file control, and for a fighting union. But longshoremen know that racketeering and bureaucracy exist in the very AFL which appeals for their support.

Investigations of union insurance
(Turn to last page)

ment of large sections of Labor, they are no nearer affecting the policy of the party than hitherto. The aim of a political party is to change the policy of a country. Some sections of the left wing seem to mistake marked increase in the volume of words about such policy for a greater ability to change it. This may predispose to further change, but it may also be just a safety valve to prevent it from occurring.

On Conservative foreign policy, there were but two gleams of light through the black clouds of reaction. Churchill's government, calculating that elections in the Sudan would favor Britain, made an agreement on this subject with General Naguib; but the Sudan election resulted in a victory for the pro-Egyptian forces. It is clear that the Sudan is on its way to political independence.

Based on what will probably turn out to be a miscalculation, the colonial secretary agreed to self-rule by the Nigerians by 1956, if they want it. The miscalculation in this case was that political differences between the three parts of this territory will prevent a united call for self-government when the time comes. The Labor Party supported the Tories on both these important issues.

GUIANA ISSUE

Perhaps the most important political question which united the Tories and Labor was Guiana. We have previously written about the serious view that left-wing thinkers take of the Labor attitude, and have hailed the Labor Party over the coals for forbidding its branches to listen to Jagan and Burnham, the Guianese PPP representatives who came to Britain. It is truly fantastic to think of the Labor Party agreeing to the landing of troops but disagreeing with the suspension of the constitution—a pretty point.

We have to say, however, in all fairness that the party leadership was fundamentally sincere in the stand it took, in the sense that, with its present policy, had it then been in power, it would have done substantially the same as the Tories.

Parliamentary opposition on this issue comes from the sincere left wing—Fenner Brockway, Leslie Hale and others,

and a few people who for merely bureaucratic reasons want to embarrass the Tories just because Labor is in opposition, but who would have done little different if in power themselves.

The deposition of the kabaka of Buganda was a question on which Labor crossed swords with the Tories.

Labor today is "sober"—having been in office. It is always ready to wait for a reactionary justification of an action before judging it. It has forgotten that if imperialists want to suppress a national movement, they do it first and then extract the "evidence" upon which to base their action.

Labor is still embarrassed by its responsibility for other babies of its own conception. The intransigence of British policy over the Suez Canal Zone, the proposed Central African Federation, "terrorism" in Kenya, "Communists" in Malaya—the responsibility for these situations cannot be refused by Labor.

ON THE HOME FRONT

Yet, in opposition, it is kicking. It has protested about colonial imperialists' responsibilities for "excesses"; yet it does not realize that these are an inevitable result of the national struggle and the attempt to repress it. You cannot bear a baby and then be annoyed that it cries.

On the home front, prices of most basic food items have gone up since the Tories' accession to office. Nevertheless, tea, eggs, sugar and sweets have been rationed. This leaves meat, butter and margarine as the remaining items rationed by a card; one is allowed 25 cents of meat, 4 ounces of butter and 4 ounces of margarine per week. Food is, however, plentiful now, and rationing occurs more by the purse than by the ration card.

Items of interest which we did not mention during the year were the rejection of a bill to allow theaters and amusements to be open on Sunday; the act fixing the statutory period of conscription for the next 10 years; the meeting of the Commonwealth premiers in June; the removal of the control on trading in non-ferrous metals; and some others.

THE STRANGE CASE AGAINST BERIA

Kremlin Wants to Wash Off the Stalin Taint—with Stalin's Methods

By A. S. ABRAMOVICH

The mystery surrounding Lavrentia Beria's fate since the day he fell from power on June 26, 1953 was dissipated on December 16 by Radio Moscow's announcement that the former head of the Russian secret police and six of his closest aides had been indicted for treason and would stand trial in the near future.

Speculation immediately began on another Moscow trial in the making, fashioned after the 1936-38 trials, with Beria confessing to one impossible crime after another while the state prosecutor engaged in an orgy of vilification in the style of Andrey Vishinsky.

Just eight days after the indictment had been broadcast, all such speculation was cut short by the announcement in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* of December 24 that Beria and his six collaborators had already been tried in secret session by the Russian Supreme Court—with Marshal Konev presiding as chairman—condemned, and immediately executed along with the other defendants. Like his two GPU predecessors, Yagoda and Yezhov, whom Stalin had also hand-picked to head the secret police, Beria died in front of a firing squad. And like them, he died accused, not of his real crimes against the Russian people, but the victim of a typical Stalinist frame-up.

Liberal Reformer?

Before proceeding to an interpretation of the events surrounding Beria's liquidation, we would like to call the attention of our readers to one outstanding fact. Each and everyone of Beria's co-defendants was a former secret-police official.

Whether Beria actually attempted to seize power or, as is more likely, whether he was preparing for this by installing his trusted lieutenants in key positions of power, his entire plan was based on the use of the terror machine, the secret police.

This fact alone should once and for all dispose of those theorists like the Russian Menshevik leader R. Abramovich who persist in seeing Beria a defeated proponent of a "liberal reform program." Whatever demagogic moves or statements Beria may have inspired in preparing to overthrow and crush his opponents, one does not prepare for a more democratic political order by seizing power with the aid of the most vicious and unrestrained terror machine that history has ever known.

If Beria was no "liberal," does this mean that his victorious opponents in the struggle for power, the nine remaining members of the clique that rules Russia today, represent the true reformers? It is worth while pausing a moment to enumerate the various economic and social changes taking place in the Russian empire since Beria fell from power.

The Same Coin

In the satellite countries, with the exception of East Germany, a great turn toward a relaxation of the terror and forced industrialization has been in process, with concessions being made to the peasantry, the harried middle-classes teetering dangerously on the edge of total extinction, and the workers. Within Russia itself, important concessions have been made to the peasantry and the urban consumer. The peasant has been assured of his right to cultivate his private plot and given the guarantee of a higher income from his work on the collective farm. The consumer, or more plainly, the worker, has been promised and has begun to receive more and better consumption goods.

Even in the sphere of the arts the oppressive hand of the censor—that is, the secret police—has been lifted. In the last month, Ilya Ehrenburg, that spineless chameleon journalist, who reflects perfectly the current ideology of the Kremlin (it was he who cried "Death to every German" during the Second World War) has issued an inspired call for greater creative freedom for the writer. And what Ehrenburg has proclaimed for the writer, Aram Khatchaturian has proclaimed for the musician.

There exists a certain school of writers on Russia who see in Malenkov the chief agent of "liberalization." And such people will point to the facts we have just adduced as proof of this democratizing process from above. But life is a little more complex than such people conceive it to be. The Malenkov-Khrushchev-Kaganovich regime is granting considerable concessions and relaxing the police terror—but at the same time it prepared a typical Stalinist frame-up against Beria and his cohorts. Beria's arrest, indictment and execution are the other side of the same coin.

Standard Falsification

Moscow's indictment of Beria boils down to the charge that from the very start of his career in 1918 he served as an agent of foreign imperialism; further, that in the service of a foreign imperialist power whose identity is not disclosed (this fact indicates Moscow's attitude toward negotiations with the United States) he attempted to overthrow the existing regime after Stalin's death and to restore capitalism.

To give some substance to these stale inventions, the Kremlin regime concocted the following story: In 1919 Beria acted as a secret agent in Baku for British imperialism, working through the anti-Bolshevik Azeri nationalist Mussavet Party. In 1924 Beria shifted

ed his sphere of operations to the secret police apparatus of the Georgian Mensheviks (who then held governmental power), described in the indictment as another branch of British intelligence.

The second half of the indictment passes almost silently over the three decades intervening between 1920 and 1953, and brings Beria's alleged "crimes" up to date. He is charged with: (a) having caused the now officially admitted crisis in agriculture as a means of destroying the collective farm system; (b) fostering bourgeois nationalism by inflaming other nationalities against the Great Russians; and (c) of filling the police apparatus with his own supporters in preparation for defying the party, overthrowing the regime and destroying the existing social system.

In the entire indictment Beria's real crime is touched on only in oblique fashion—he failed in the struggle for power and paid the penalty for his failure. As for the other charges, it would be as absurd to consider them seriously as it would be to take for good coin the reports of "spontaneous" mass meetings throughout Russia of indignant citizens "demanding" the "swift execution of this traitor to the motherland."

True to the tradition of Stalin, the present collective leadership also prepared this unique extra-legal feature of a totalitarian frame-up. It is an authentic reproduction of the nightmare atmosphere Stalin created as a background for the liquidation of his victims in the 1936-38 series of show trials.

On December 17, just one day after the indictment had been broadcast, the workers in Beria's native Georgia were vehemently demanding the death penalty for the "traitors." On December 21, for the third consecutive day according to the Russian News Agency, Tass, Soviet citizens were "demanding the death of Lavrentia Beria and his six accused fellow plotters." Sailors at sea, miners in Siberia and writers in Moscow, Tass reported, all joined together and in unanimous voice called for Beria's execution as a traitor.

Clearly, Stalin's heirs have inherited not only his power but his "Asiatic methods" as well.

For those who know how to read the cryptic prose of official Stalinist documents, especially indictments, the Beria indictment has its own story to tell. In the list of crimes attributed to Beria, there is a studied silence concerning his activity first as head of the secret police and later as secretary of the party in the Transcaucasian region (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) during the late twenties and the thirties.

In the House of the Hanged . . .

It was in this period that Beria attracted Stalin's attention. In the first place, he carried out the ruthless liquidation of the Old Bolsheviks, other "independent" elements in the party and state apparatus and even loyal Stalinists who refused to accept Stalin as a demigod. In the second place, Beria revealed a rare talent as a falsifier of history, recasting events in order that Stalin might emerge as the founder and leader of the workers' movements in Transcaucasia.

The deathly silence of the indictment is inevitable. To have touched this period in Beria's life would have also exposed the complicity of Malenkov, Khrushchev, Kaganovich, Mikoyan and the others in the same crimes. They too did Stalin's bidding.

For example, while Beria was liquidating the party and government leadership of the Transcaucasians in wholesale fashion, Malenkov was working under Yezhov, later head of the secret police, in the Kremlin in the personnel department of the party secretariat where the lists of victims for the purge trials were being drawn up under Stalin's direct supervision. Kaganovich and Khrushchev carried out the terrible purges in the Ukraine that swept away one set of leaders after another.

"In the house of the hanged one does not speak of the rope," and that is the reason why there is no direct

mention of any victims of the 1936-38 purges. One may also hazard the opinion this is also the reason why no show trial was held. What if Beria or one of his co-defendants had challenged his accusers and denounced their complicity in the trials and executions that convulsed the entire country?

Enter Ordjonikidze

Just one name out of this period of delirium—the period that marked Stalin's consolidation of power and his ascent to the status of absolute dictator—is mentioned, that of Sergo Ordjonikidze. Beria is accused of the "crime" of having aroused the former's political distrust and suspicion, and in addition, of persecuting Ordjonikidze's family after he died. Just what does it mean?

Like Beria, Ordjonikidze was a Georgian who accompanied Stalin on the road to power. Openly brutal to the point where Lenin demanded his expulsion from the Bolshevik party for his harsh treatment of his Georgian countrymen, Ordjonikidze helped Stalin crush all the opposition groups that blocked the bureaucracy's road to power. But even Ordjonikidze, Stalinist though he was, could not stomach Stalin's destructive and murderous lust for absolute power.

He protested and tried to prevent the ruthless liquidation of the Old Bolsheviks who had recanted, as well as of loyal members of the Stalinist clique who had incurred the dictator's displeasure. Some were his personal friends, like Abel Yenukidze, a fellow Georgian, who had introduced Stalin to Marxism, and was secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet; others represented precious technically trained intellectual capital of the country, like Pyatakov, who had renounced his opposition to the regime and become deputy to Ordjonikidze in the Commissariat of Heavy Industry.

For resisting Stalin's will Ordjonikidze was poisoned and died suddenly in his Kremlin apartment on February 18, 1937, a little less than a month after the trial of the 17—one of whom was Pyatakov. Yenukidze was executed in December of that same year.

Beria and Ordjonikidze

To understand what the indictment does not say, but implies, in mentioning Ordjonikidze, we should remember that Beria came to Moscow to become head of the secret police in 1938—after Ordjonikidze died. And in fact, Beria was called to Moscow to replace Yezhov and call a halt to the insane bloodletting. There was therefore no direct struggle between Ordjonikidze and Beria; there was a bitter conflict, however, between Ordjonikidze and Stalin, in which the former tried to prevent Stalin from becoming absolute dictator by slaughtering not only his avowed political enemies but his old friends as well.

If Beria excited Ordjonikidze's political suspicions, this simply means that Ordjonikidze suspected that Beria was like Stalin, harbored the same ambitions to become absolute dictator as far back as the mid-thirties, and was prepared to use Stalin's murderous methods to achieve his aims.

This interpretation is confirmed by the seemingly petty accusation made against Beria. Amidst all his foul crimes, the fact that he persecuted Ordjonikidze's family after the latter died is singled out! But it so happens that these two conjoined traits were the distinctive features of Stalin's personality—he had an inordinate lust for power and he excelled in vindictive punishment of those who crossed his path, including their families in his revenge.

By evoking the fiction of a non-existent conflict between Ordjonikidze and Beria, the regime is indirectly and cautiously denouncing Stalin's personal dictatorship and his murderous methods which rested on the unrestrained use of the secret police. It is an attempt to assure to the bureaucracy, which knows the true history of Ordjonikidze's fatal conflict with Stalin, that the existing regime intends to maintain a collective leadership. Further, by presenting Beria as Stalin's chief agent and his true inheritor, Malenkov, Khrushchev and Company are attempting to exculpate their own guilt and responsibility for the purges of the mid-thirties.

Case of M. S. Kedrov

We call attention to another rather curious detail in the indictment. Beria is accused specifically of one very serious crime in the entire indictment. He is charged with having murdered M. S. Kedrov.

Now out of the tens of thousands of people whom Beria had assassinated directly or indirectly, why should this particular crime be recalled? The answer is given in the description of Kedrov's background.

He is described as an Old Bolshevik who joined the party in 1902, and a former member of the Presidium of the Cheka under Dzerzhinsky in the pre-Stalin era. The Chekist Kedrov-Dzherzhinsky is contrasted to Beria, Stalin's GPU chief. Under Lenin and Trotsky, the Cheka was the "sword of the revolution," always subordinate to the will of the party and directed against the class enemy who took up arms against the young workers' republic. Under Stalin, the secret police was responsible only to him and raged in uncontrolled fashion not only against the Old Bolshevik guard, but against the elite and rank and file of the Stalinist bureaucracy as well. Again as in the mention of Ordjonikidze, we have a cautious attempt on the part of the regime to dissociate itself from Stalin.

Labor Action FORUM
New York

RUTH REYNOLDS

who is under indictment by the U. S. government for aiding the fight for Puerto Rican independence will speak on

The Struggle for Independence in Puerto Rico

THURSDAY EVENING—JAN. 7

LABOR ACTION HALL
114 West 14 Street, New York City

Longshore—

(Continued from page 2)

funds reveals corrupt officials in various AFL unions dipping into the till. Only three days after the longshore vote had been completed, the International Union of Operating Engineers (AFL), Local 137 in New York State, invited a convicted racketeer to resume his post as business agent. The local "voted" in a fashion that is traditional in the ILA: no secret ballot, a standing vote.

On the board of trustees of the new AFL union sits Dave Beck, president of the Teamsters Union, reported to be honest and bureaucratic. While the AFL appeals for the reconstruction of a fine new longshore union, Beck sets up a new Teamster local to take over public-loading work handled by the longshore union from the beginning. Beck threatened to strike in order to carve out this new jurisdiction, making clear that his claims were staked against whatever union won the election, ILA or AFL.

SUSPICION OF AFL

Longshoremen who think of the AFL as a single solid federation with a uniform outlook are puzzled. Perhaps the whole fight on the waterfront is nothing but a squabble between two rival groups of crooks, they speculate cynically. In which case they are impressed with the profound argument of the ILA officials: "You know what you got; you don't know what you might get." They remain unaware that the fight against racketeering union leaders on the waterfront is part of a campaign against racketeers inside the AFL and against their protectors.

For a long time, sections of the AFL have demanded that the federation root out gangsters where they have taken hold. But the majority wanted no interference in the life of affiliates, however backward or reactionary. The International Ladies Garment Workers Union succeeded finally in pushing through a resolution against racketeering at an AFL convention which set up a special committee to combat it. But until the longshore fight, this resolution remained a dead letter.

All elements in the AFL watch the longshore fight closely. If the racketeers had crushed the AFL, then the most conservative sections of the federation would have put on a big push against any repetition of the fight against the ILA. But it did not happen.

Despite the employers, despite the NLRB, despite the racketeers, and despite Lewis, the AFL has already won a great moral victory in the fight against racketeers. Militant longshoremen are in the forefront of a campaign to cleanse the labor movement.

SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 1

stand it. At the moment it looks as if only messages going abroad will be freed from scrutiny."

Thus, while Venezuelan democracy is far from perfect, even its high level will be raised temporarily in order not to blemish the tone of the Caracas conference. After all, "Venezuelan leaders who, like Señor Estrada, know something of the world outside, realize that much of the prestige expected to accrue from the conference will be tarnished if censorship is in effect."

The American press, which became justifiably indignant at repression of press freedom in Peron's Argentina (in proportion to Peron's demagogic anti-Americanism), have not been notable for protests against the idea of holding the Pan-American Conference in this police state, with "the prestige which is expected to accrue" to the dictatorship and all. Even the appearance of this revealing dispatch in the Times would seem mainly to be pressure on Venezuela to ease its censorship for the benefit of the U. S. press.

Señor Estrada, by the way, is no merely benighted Latin American. He went to school in the United States, served three years in his country's Washington embassy, and his main ambition (he tells American reporters) is to settle down in the U. S. whenever Venezuela's destiny makes it possible for him to be released from his present burdens. He is no stranger to the American Way of Life.

Read the
NEW INTERNATIONAL
America's leading Marxist review

Youth and Student Corner

SP Steals a Moment from Its Mass Work to Report on YPSL

By BOGDAN DENITCH

It is with some hesitation that we take up more space to deal with the Socialist Party and its shadow youth movement, but we plead new provocation.

We have on hand, dated December 21 (a sort of Christmas present to the membership), a communication to the members of the YPSL issued by the SP's "Interim Supervisory Committee." It is entitled "A Report to the Membership" and is the first—absolutely the first—real comment on the split that has come out of the SP, directed to the youth which the Party hopes to keep. Let one think that the long document took four months to prepare, let us say immediately that the entire document, a masterpiece of brevity, is less than two mimeographed pages long.

The document on hand is interesting as an example of the SP's internal democracy and the way it abides by the principle of not distorting the facts. It is in the inimitable style of the SP's pro-consul to the youth, Steve Siteman (see last week's LA).

To begin with, the SP's document claims that it has lost "no more than 15 members." This is interesting since the document itself has been put out by the party and written by the party. Thus apparently there were not enough YPSL members left even to provide a skeleton National Office for the SP youth; not even one nationally known member remained around, just to sign the document. As for the claim that "no more than 15 members" were lost—the New York district of the YPSL alone had considerably more members than that.

It goes on to say that the SP had to face a YPSL opposition which controlled the National Convention (which had more than 15 delegates) and won a clear majority on the National Executive Committee. This group, persisting in its opposition to the SP and cooperating with the SYL, finally so tried the patience of the SP (which had in the meantime merely suspended the New York organization of the youth) that the SP national committee had to step in.

Then, the SP document went on to say, the "undemocratic" YPSL NEC went on to try and hold a national referendum of the membership to determine whether or not to stay in the SP.

"The party's committee, in the face of this fait accompli, had no choice but to suspend all national officers of the YPSL and assume direction of the organization." (This, note, for just trying to hold a referendum.) "Local New York of the SP, after giving all individuals concerned an opportunity to be heard, expelled those members of the YPSL who were also members of the party and had participated in the separatist movement."

THEIR MORALS . . .

Now two things stand out here: no members of the YPSL ever had a trial, received charges, or received notification that they had been "given a hearing and expelled." The closest the American branch of the world democratic socialist movement came to this procedure was to hear and receive resignations from two members of the New York District YPSL, after which it apparently dropped all others without the bourgeois formality of a hearing.

Undaunted by the events and sure of its adhesion to democracy, the SP goes on to say: "This is where the matters stand. The party [our emphasis], struggling with its own difficulties, including the changeover in format of the Call, had little time to give to reconstructing the YPSL."

Indeed! the "changeover in the format of the Call" (a job for a couple of editors) put such a strain on the resources of the entire machinery of the party, involving the sustained activity for four months of the SP rank and file as well as of the youth who stayed with the SP, that not even a 2-page report on the loss of the youth organization could be given till now. Besides, it is hard to see how the YPSL could have needed "reconstructing" if "no more than 15 members" (and mostly from one locality at that) were lost.

In fact, it is hard to see, if the SP re-

The Left Wing in the Youth International

Since the 1946 Congress of the International Union of Socialist Youth the strength of the organized left wing within the IUSY has been declining almost steadily. On the other hand the left wings within the IUSY sections, particularly within the mass youth movements of central Europe, have been growing, both in clarity of view and numerical strength.

The reason for the erratic politics of the Youth International is not difficult to find; although the IUSY has no organizational connections with the Socialist International, its member sections are in most, but not all cases, the youth sections of social-democratic parties. The politics of those parties have had a direct effect on the politics of the Youth International particularly since most of the European socialist youth organizations are subject to extremely bureaucratic control by their adult sections.

As an example of the type of control the youth is subject to, let us examine the British Labor Party's Labor League of Youth, easily the most conservative of the sections of the international (where it is represented by appointed spokesmen). The LLOY may not even discuss the political line of the BLP; it may not pass political resolutions differing from the BLP even for internal consumption; it could not until recently have a national executive body; it may not have any internal discussion organ.

CONTINENTAL PICTURE

All observers from England note that the LLOY is left-wing, with the more conservative wing being Bevanite while the Trotskyists, the Stalinists and the ILP all have strong influence among the rank and file. Nevertheless, through its official spokesmen the LLOY presents the politics of right-wing social-democracy.

The Continental sections present a more complex picture. Many of the youth sections maintained their contact and organization through the Resistance and were closely affected by the currents in the European underground resistance movement. The war also weakened the organization of the adult SPs, making much interference from the adult parties out of the question in the early post-war years. Thus the Belgians, the French, the Greeks, the Austrians and the Italians (with some support from the Germans) formed a solid left wing of militants who had but recently been engaged in armed struggle.

The growth of the social-democratic parties and the consolidation of the political scene made a decline of the socialist youth inevitable. The militants of the youth entered into the parties; their replacements in the youth had no training and no long internationalist tradition. As the German youth grew, for example, its politics became more and more innocuous.

YOU'RE INVITED

to speak your mind in the letter column of Labor Action. Our policy is to publish letters of general political interest, regardless of views. Keep them to 500 words.

port's story is not an invention, why the party has to send out a communication (postpaid envelope enclosed) asking whoever is still in the youth to please let the party know of their existence.

The episode is a worthy commentary on the "Bolshevik morality" of the SP bureaucrats—for, as everyone in the SP knows, "Bolshevik morality" is defined as the practice of deception, lies and unprincipled distortions of fact.

We again assure the California SP youth of our fullest sympathy. The SP will not only ignore the political program of what youth it has left but will fail even to provide an organizational basis for the latter's existence. We therefore suggest that without fail they elect as many delegates as they are entitled to for the Socialist Youth Unity Convention that is slated for February, when the two Third Camp socialist youth groups will unite.

There are of course exceptions: the Austrian youth represents all that is healthiest in the Austrian social-democracy; the Dutch youth—unaffiliated with any party since the Dutch Social-Democratic Party dissolved after the war to form a broad "Labor" Party—is still internationalist and Marxist.

The IUSY, however, as a body, is pro-Western and suffers, in its political documents, from all the weaknesses of the post-war European social-democracy. Lack of social-dynamism, lack of militancy, and attempts to orient away from the class organizations have had their effect in weakening the Youth International.

Footnote

LABOR ACTION is in receipt of a letter from Victor Howard, of the Libertarian Socialist Committee (Chicago), which may be of some interest. The LSC of Chicago was one of the groups participating in the recent Third Camp conference.


Comrade Howard's communication encloses a letter he wrote to the IWW's *Industrial Worker*, defending the Third Camp Conference against another letter which had appeared in that paper's columns. But the *Industrial Worker* refused to print Howard's letter, on the ground that it was too "personal" (that is, it discussed the political views of the letter writer who had attacked the conference). To complicate matters: the present editor of the *Industrial Worker* is himself also a member of Comrade Howard's group, the LSC.

This LSC is a loose unideological grouping of pacifists, anarchists, socialists, anarcho-pacifists, etc. Previous to the conference, it had proposed the novel idea of holding the gathering in Des Moines, Iowa—presumably to free it from the dead hand of New York "bureaucrats." Now some LSC elements seem displeased with the conference because it did not launch big "mass activities."

The *Industrial Worker*, under the editorship of its present editor, lent its columns to unfriendly reports on the conference. In its Dec. 18 issue, it printed a letter signed only by a card number, the holder of which, however, happens to be one of the leaders of the LSC group. It is this that Comrade Howard replied to—in vain, since he couldn't crash the *Industrial Worker's* columns. (Outside of this, both the paper and its LSC editor believe in democratic discussion.)

Howard's reply excellently disposed of the silly charges against the conference, among other things. He also had a sensible word to say about the "wild" perspective of the LSC critic, who had met the point about "objective conditions" with the statement, "If necessary, we shall make the objective conditions right"! In addition Howard incidentally pointed out that this same critic, who belongs to both the IWW and the ESC, also "believes in the progressive 'foundation' of the Soviet Union and is an admirer of the Cannonite Socialist Workers Party!"

However, the IWW's paper saw fit to print the views of this peculiar political mélange, but to exclude Howard's sane reply.



LABOR ACTION

January 4, 1954 Vol. 18, No. 1

Published weekly by Labor Action Publishing Company, 114 West 14 Street, New York 11, N. Y.—Telephone: WAtkins 4-4222—Re-entered as second-class matter May 24, 1940, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1874.—Subscriptions: \$2 a year; \$1 for 6 months (\$2.25 and \$1.15 for Canadian and Foreign).—Opinions and policies expressed in signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the views of Labor Action, which are given in editorial statements.

Editor: HAL DRAPER
Asst. Editors: **GORDON HASKELL,**
BEN HALL, MARY BELL
Business Mgr.: **L. G. SMITH**

Russian Exploitation of E. German Satellite Will Continue in Spite of New Agreement

By A. STEIN

On January 1, 1954, hymns of praise will burst forth from the servile East German press in thanks for Moscow's boundless generosity and benevolence. On that date Moscow officially ceases exacting any further reparations from its German satellite in accordance with the economic agreement signed in Moscow on August 22, 1953.

The only payments the East German regime is henceforth obligated to pay will be five per cent of its yearly state budget to cover occupation costs. The Russians have estimated that in 1954 this will come to slightly more than a billion and a half East German Marks. (It is characteristic of the Russians that only now do they admit that the East Germans have been paying occupation costs to the tune of about two billion East German Marks a year, a fact which they denied till the present time.)

In addition, the August 22 agreement provides for the return to East German control of the last 33 of 200 large industrial enterprises which the Russians seized in 1945 and converted into Russian property, working exclusively for the benefit of the Russian economy. It also relieves the East Germans of paying the last installment on 66 Russian-held properties which were returned to them in 1952.

MOSCOW'S MOTIVES

This official renunciation by the Russians of the right to further reparations comes at the end of more than eight years of their merciless, predatory exploitation of the East German economy. According to a documented study made by the German Social-Democratic Party, the Russians have extracted more than \$28 billion worth of industrial plant goods from current output and services, since 1945, from their puppet satellite. This is almost three times the \$10 billion worth of reparations the Russians demanded at Yalta in 1945.

This Russian pillaging for the past eight years is the direct and immediate cause of the irremediable crisis in East Germany. To meet the insatiable demands of the Russians for economic booty, their German puppets were compelled to raise the exploitation of the workers to an unbearable pitch without any recompense in the way of improved living standards. Indeed, living standards in Eastern Germany deteriorated during 1952 and 1953 to the starvation levels of the immediate post-war period of 1945-46. The June 17 events were the workers' answer to this regime of colonial exploitation.

The Russians are now moderating their levies on the German economy only because it can no longer yield reparations at the previous rate without bringing about the complete ruin of the economy and of the Ulbricht-Grotewohl regime. Besides the official renunciation of reparations and the transfer of the Russian-controlled industries are acts intended to demonstrate Moscow's political support and confidence in the discredited puppet regime. Officially, the Ulbricht-Grotewohl regime now has complete con-

trol over the entire economy and therefore appears as "independent" as the West German Adenauer regime.

The Russian claim that reparations will end on January 1, 1954, and that on that same date they will no longer control any part of the East German economy, is a shabby fraud. The truth is that the Russians will continue to drain goods out of East Germany for nothing; they will continue to own and operate some of the properties they seized back in 1945; and they will continue to control decisive sectors of East German industry through the banks they operate.

For example, the Russians have not said a word about the Wismuth-AG corporation which controls the uranium mines along the German-Czech border and which employs about 200,000 forced-laborers and slave workers in the mines and its auxiliary enterprises. The Wismuth-AG embraces between 65 and 70 mines as well as repair shops, warehouses, laboratories, plants fabricating mine equipment and ore-refining mills. This vast industrial complex devoted to the manufacture of materials needed in the production of atom bombs will remain in Russian hands so long as they stay on East German soil.

CONCEALING THE TAKE

Furthermore, although the Russians are officially returning the last 33 huge industrial plants they operated directly through their so-called SAG (*Soviet Aktion Gesellschaften*) corporations, they will in real fact continue to dispose of whatever part of the output of these plants they want. The working capital of these enterprises is owned and controlled by the largest and wealthiest bank in East Germany, the Russian Garantie and Kredit bank. By virtue of the money this Russian bank has pumped into these enterprises (at four and a half per cent interest), it has a legal claim to the output of these factories.

In addition to this financial lever, the Russians have ordered the East German regime to set up a special administrative department to run these factories, and the Russians are choosing the German directors who will replace the Russian administrators.

The Russians have worked out ingenious methods of concealing their exploitation of East Germany. Instead of taking reparations they will now take a larger volume of exports.

This is just what began to happen in 1948 when the Russians made their first propaganda declaration of a cut in reparations, according to a former Russian foreign-trade official who worked in Eastern Germany at that time. In an essay which he contributed to a book en-

titled *Soviet Economic Policy in Postwar Germany*, this former Russian official (named Vlas Leskov) states that when reparations were scaled down in 1948, the Russian share in East German "exports" rose from 350 million marks to 440 million marks annually.

In 1950, the Russians announced a further reduction in reparations and claimed they would be taking only 7 per cent of Eastern Germany's current output. However, a Social-Democratic study asserts that in 1951 and 1952 the Russians had extracted reparation goods to the sum of over nine billion East German Marks. In the same two years, the value of East Germany's industrial output came to about 24 billion marks.

The Russians disguised part of the reparations by designating them as "exports." For in the same period, between 1950 and 1953, exports from Eastern Germany to Russia doubled. In 1950 Russia took 21 per cent of East Germany's exports, in 1953 42 per cent. For this reason we can confidently expect that "exports" from East Germany to Russia will show a jump in the coming period.

Whether buying goods out of reparation funds supplied by the puppet regime or paying for them out of their own funds, as a genuine purchase, the Russians have the ingenious habit of establishing prices at 1938 German levels. This means in practice that the Russians pay only 50 to 60 per cent of actual production costs.

In the past the East German government not only had to transfer reparation funds to the Russians with which to pay for reparation goods, it also had to subsidize the nationalized industries which produced for the Russians. According to official figures in the year of 1948, for example, the nationalized undertakings working on reparation orders were regularly showing a deficit that ranged from 25 to 40 per cent. The persistent inability of East Germany's nationalized industries to show an over-all profit is due to the fact that the profits of the nationalized industries not working for the Russians had to cover the losses of factories producing reparations and exports for Moscow.

APPETITE GROWS

Not only will East Germany continue to sell a considerable share of its industrial output at a loss to Russia, it will continue to bear the entire cost of these "exports." The Russians dispose of vast financial resources and are in a position to renew these resources. As a result of eight years of continuous reparation payments, the Russians have in their possession billions of East German Marks as a reserve on which they can draw to pay for what they purchase in East Germany.

Moreover, the Russians will continue to draw a profit from the Garantie and Kredit Bank, and from the vast network of trading and transport companies which they own and operate at a profit. The Russian Transport Company "Derutra" handles exports going to Russia, controls the North Sea facilities of Wismar, Rostock and Stralsund, and in addition, dominates the transport business between East and West Europe since it controls the necessary rail and road facilities.

Another trading company owned by the Russians is "Derunaph", which deals in gasoline import and distribution. It owns storage space and facilities, controls the distribution of gasoline in Eastern Germany, and owns the entire network of gasoline and oil retail pumps and service stations.

The original plant, stocks and facilities of both companies mentioned above,

as well as of the many other trading and transportation firms operated by the Russians, were confiscated from the Germans. But in announcing the return of the SAG industrial enterprises, they have not said a word about returning these lucrative sources of income.

In a word, appetite grows with eating, and the Russians have not for a moment abandoned their stranglehold on the East German economy. They intend to go right on exacting as much tribute as it is politically expedient and economically feasible to extort from the plundered, exhausted economy.

British Trotskyist Group in Split Too

First report has reached us of the extension to Britain of the widening split in the Fourth International ("orthodox-Trotskyist") groups.

In that country, since the dissolution of the Trotskyist "Revolutionary Communist Party" in 1949 to enter the ranks of the Labor Party, the "orthodox-Trotskyists" centered their activity around the organ *Socialist Outlook*. The political leader of this group has been Healy.

With the recent split in the American Socialist Workers Party and in the Ceylon Trotskyist party, the Fourth International groups have been ripped apart between the tendency represented by the international secretary, Pablo, representing the more Stalinoid wing of the movement, and the politics represented by Cannon of the SWP, which hangs back from the extreme pro-Stalinist position elaborated by the "Pabloites." The split in the British group follows similar lines of division.

A letter which we have received from a friend in England gives the following details:

"The split has already taken place here. Healy has lined up with Cannon against Pablo. Lawrence, editor of the *Socialist Outlook*, is lined up with Pablo. The size of each group is approximately equal at the moment.

"The Pabloites are in control of the *Socialist Outlook*—though the Cannon-Healyites still have some say in its running by virtue of holding a substantial bloc of shares in the Labour Publishing Company which runs the *Socialist Outlook*. There is still a state of fluidity despite the existence of two separate national organizations.

"There is a section of both organizations which is waiting to see (1) who will eventually get absolute control of the *Socialist Outlook*, and (2) how the Cannon-Pablo conflict will affect the two important F. I. national sections, the Ceylonese and the Bolivian. [these are the only two groups which have any mass influence in their respective countries—Ed.]

"I doubt very much if either Healy or Lawrence have more than 40 people. In fact, this is probably a very inflated number. However, the influence of the *Socialist Outlook* is considerable. . . . And yet, peculiarly enough—or not so peculiarly—the organization even before the split was losing members. . . . The new split will have a crippling effect on them, on both factions, certainly for the next few months. The fact is that though the Stalinoid line attracted quite a periphery of genuine, if confused, left-wingers, the organization, with its sectarianism, dogmatism, rigidity and general brutality, repelled these very same elements. . . ."

Plan Tresca Memorial Meeting Jan. 9

Old friends of Carlo Tresca, murdered Italian labor editor, will recall memories of his courage and his uncompromising opposition to both Stalinists and Fascists, on Saturday, January 9, two days before the actual anniversary of his death in 1943. They will meet in the Rand School, 7 East 15 Street, at 2 p.m., under auspices of the Tresca Memorial Committee, of which Norman Thomas is chairman.

After that meeting, flowers will again be laid at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 15 Street, where Tresca was shot down as he left the office of his fortnightly journal, *Il Martello* (The Hammer).

Speakers at the memorial will include James T. Farrell, the novelist; Fort Velona, a vital defense witness in the Athos Terzani-Khaki Shirts murder frame-up case in 1933, in which Tresca played so important a part; Sidney Hertzberg, writer and editor; Morris Milgram, builder of homes for workers in Philadelphia; and Samuel H. Friedman, member of the Socialist Party's national executive committee.

When Tresca was killed, the gunman got away in an automobile, which was found abandoned a few blocks away several hours later. No one was ever prose-

cuted for that crime, despite the fact that one of two suspects was identified by a parole agent as having entered the escape-car (recognized by its number) an hour and a half before the murder.

One of Tresca's outstanding effective actions in the class struggle was his organizing of a committee which defended and won exoneration for Athos Terzani, young anti-fascist who was falsely charged with the fatal shooting of a comrade, Antonio Fierro, in a free-for-all battle at a meeting of the fascist Khaki Shirts in Astoria.

When Terzani was arrested for that slaying (though he had pointed out the real killer to the police and showed them where he hid the murder gun), Carlo Tresca immediately organized a defense committee, of which Norman Thomas was chairman.

Intensively gathering evidence in both Astoria and Philadelphia, where the Khaki Shirts had headquarters, that committee not only achieved Terzani's acquittal at the end of a four-day trial, but brought about the prosecution and conviction of the actual slayer, Frank Moddiafore, and his accessory, Art Smith, Khaki Shirts commander. Both were sent to prison.

Resolution on ISL Case Presented to AVC

A resolution to "endorse the recent action of the Workers Defense League in making a test case of the attorney general's Subversive List," in the case of the ISL, was presented to the recent national convention of the American Veterans Committee, which met in Atlantic City on December 4-6.

The resolution, put forward by the Delaware County, Penna., chapter of the AVC, was favorably reported out of the National Affairs Committee but defeated on the floor. The bulletin of the chapter which sponsored the resolution (the *Delco Citizen*), which reports the above

information, does not add any details about what discussion took place on the floor.

The resolution quoted the statement of Rowland Watts, WDL national secretary, on the ISL case, and said: "We pledge our moral support to the WDL in this challenge of the validity of the subversive list, procedurally and politically. We do not believe that radicalism or opposition to the capitalist system is in itself a subversive activity. Unlike the Communist Party, the Independent Socialist League is both anti-fascist and anti-Stalinist, and does not have any connection with any foreign government."

'Violence' & Democracy: Discussion

A Pacifist Argues That the 'Essential Nature' Of Violence Itself Is 'Undemocratic'

By DAVID McREYNOLDS

Violence is clearly one of the central issues of our time. All of us agree; General MacArthur, Georgi Malenkov and Max Shachtman would find common ground on this; if they would agree on nothing else.

Today only a psychotic would knowingly work to bring about a major war. Rational men often pursue policies which will lead to war, but that is quite different from conceiving of war as a positive good. And while many still feel violence is an essential instrument of revolution; practically no one *wants* violence. In modern times, the fascists alone, of major political movements, thought of violence as a desirable thing—a means to be preferred above others—making of it a kind of mystique.

However, the Independent Socialist League, in common with the Republicans, Democrats, Stalinists, and, I regret to say, a majority of my own Socialist Party, feels that as a *last resort* violence may be necessary, however undesirable. This is where the pacifists disagree. The editors of LABOR ACTION would not hit anyone, I'm sure. But pacifists, God willing, would not hit anyone *back*.

Most pacifists would define violence as a method of solving problems in which physical force is used with the intent of harming or killing others. We certainly don't consider demonstrations, picket lines, general strikes, etc., as being violent. (Violence may accompany these actions, but the actions are not of themselves violent.)

VIOLENCE AN INEFFECTIVE TOOL

The pacifist has several objections to violence. The first two are not, perhaps, directly related to the nature of violence itself, but to the nature of the times. In the same way that fire may be useful in general but bad if used in a room filled with gasoline fumes, violence—whatever its previous value—is an ineffective tool for revolutionaries to use today because of the nature of the modern state.

It should be clear by now that the weapons in the hands of the modern state make war an impossible method for achieving or defending democracy. It would not matter who waged the war—capitalists, Stalinists or socialists—the chaos resulting from modern war would be so complete that no democratic society could emerge from the ruins. It would not matter who started the war or who was to blame, we would all be just as dead. A bee may be completely justified in stinging the person who sits on it, but the bee dies just as quickly whether it stung in self-defense or in malice. *War is not a last resort for democracy. It is freedom's tomb.*

Not only must we be very clear about our rejection of war regardless of the "justification," we should be just as clear in rejecting violence as a method for achieving a democratic revolution. For, with the rise of the modern centralized state, we have seen the state gain a *virtual monopoly* over weapons of violence. It is no longer the muskets of the King's troops against the muskets of the people. It is the modern state armed with aircraft, tanks, poison gas and machineguns, and aided by modern propaganda, control of communications and transportation, and a vast secret-police system, all arrayed against a populace still armed only with muskets.

The radical who thinks he is going to overthrow this or any other government with shotguns and "Molotov cocktails" is to be commended for a remarkable and romantic imagination. What violent revolution has been successful since 1900 in any centralized, industrialized state?

VIOLENCE IS UNDEMOCRATIC

The pacifist does not base his argument against violence only on the relation between violence and the nature of the times. He is convinced that the essential nature of violence itself is undemocratic.

We do not believe it is a coincidence that the major violent revolutions since 1900 (occurring, incidentally, in such backward areas as Russia, China, etc.) have resulted in oppressive dictatorships. It is no accident that states which have placed great emphasis on militarism have not remained democratic.

We do not for a moment deny that many courageous men and women have taken up arms in defense of freedom. Our disagreement with their *method* in no sense implies a doubt about their *intentions*. When we say that it is undemocratic to use violence we realize that in a narrow sense it is "democratic" for a majority of the people to take any action they want. But this does not mean that an action "democratically" undertaken will prove to be democratic. Even if an overwhelming majority of the people voted for a dictatorship it would still be an undemocratic action.

If a majority agree to use violence it is simply wrong in large numbers. We can, with the best intentions, vote to wage war or take part in a revolution on behalf of freedom. But regardless of our democratic intentions, the results will be undemocratic in the same way that if we mistakenly swallow poison in place of medicine our intentions will not save us.

Pacifists believe that the means we use shape our ends. There is nothing remarkable or religious about this view. After all, LABOR ACTION has often pointed out that democracy cannot be achieved by any except democratic means. The pacifists believe that we cannot achieve democracy except by democratic, non-violent means.

DEMOCRACY A WAY OF LIFE

Democracy, to most pacifists, is not some particular kind of parliamentary system but a way of life. It is a society where men live cooperatively with a minimum of coercion, where each individual is free to develop in socially constructive ways, and where each person feels a voluntary but very real and abiding sense of community with those around him. I think that LABOR ACTION might well agree with this. At least I hope this is not "some special pacifist definition."

Democracy is fundamentally based on mutual respect among men. It is possible only where a sense of community is present. It cannot tolerate class or race lines. It cannot flourish if the people are fearful and riven by hatred. It is stifled if the state has been so centralized that the individual no longer counts, if men no longer feel a need to participate in the job of governing themselves.

Some might say this is all fine, but that before we can have such a society we must struggle to overcome such things as racism, capitalism, etc., which stand in its way, and that this struggle may require violence. The pacifist agrees that tremendous obstacles stand in the way of a truly democratic society. He would (or should!) agree that revolutionary social changes, as well as individual changes, are necessary. But he would argue that to use violence as a means is to obliterate all hope of achieving democracy as an end.

Violence as a social method assumes that there are groups of men who are "beyond the pale," who are not worthy of our respect. However closely it unites the group using it, it divides them from the group against which it is used and leaves scars which never heal. Violence denies that each man has an individual worth—only those who belong to "our" group, or the "right" race, or the "proper" class, are worthy of respect.

VIOLENCE SPREADS FEAR

Centralism and secrecy are necessary to be "effectively violent." What army could win a war without a tightly unified command? What revolution could succeed if it began at a dozen different times and lacked coordination? How can either war or violent revolution be carried on unless the battle plans are secret? Lenin understood the nature of violence well enough: observe his outline for a revolutionary "conspiracy" in *What Is to Be Done*. And yet, this very centralism and secrecy militates against democracy.

Violence creates a special group who wield the weapons of violence and thus have undue power in dictating policy. The threat of violence spreads fear through the land, churning anxiety into hysteria. One has only to observe the growing repression of civil liberties in the U. S. as we oppose Russia's violence with a violence of our own; to see how we have become fearful and conformist, rather than affirming our freedom in action.

Through creating hatred and fear, building centralism, encouraging secrecy and bringing into existence authoritarian elites who hold a monopoly on violence—in all these ways this method undermines that sense of community among men which is vital to democracy as a way of life. Violence is a tragic denial of the brotherhood of man: it is an infinitely greater tragedy to find men and women who would preach justice and build democracy

NOTE

LABOR ACTION is glad to present the exchange of views on pacifism which occupies these two facing pages. As our readers know, Independent Socialists recently (at the Third Camp Conference in November) engaged in a fruitful exploration of the possibilities of joint collaboration in the struggle against war between Marxist socialists and pacifists. The conference itself was devoted very largely to the positive aspects of united action, but it was also stressed that "We wish to conduct some exploration of our respective political philosophies and programs."

The initiative for the present discussion was taken, however, apart from the conference, by Comrade David McReynolds, of the Socialist Party's youth group on the West Coast and an active pacifist, in his initial letters to LABOR ACTION; and we willingly invited him to present his views on "why it is undemocratic for an overwhelming majority to defend its rights by force against (say) a fascist putsch that seeks to enslave the people by force." The question began, therefore, with the specific question of the relationship between pacifism (and violence) and democracy, but inevitably it has become a bit broader than that.

We are also in receipt of a discussion letter from another pacifist comrade, Michael Harrington of the YPSL, in which he raises a number of questions for our discussion dealing with what may be called the "practical" arguments for pacifism. This discussion is at present scheduled for next week's issue.—Ed.

take into their hands the weapons of reaction which must ultimately destroy their very cause.

Let no one misconstrue the pacifist rejection of violence as a submission to social injustice. Quite the contrary. We believe that in order to effectively fight injustice our method of defense, of resistance, and a times, of revolution, must be non-violent.

Non-violence is expressed in many ways; through negotiation, through strikes, non-cooperation with the government in regard to conscription and taxation, public demonstrations, etc. It is also expressed through constructive projects, reconstruction, work in unions, co-ops, churches, etc. But underlying all non-violent actions is the willingness of the non-violent person to suffer even prison and death without turning to violence.

There is the constant attempt to maintain an attitude of creative goodwill; of compassion, even toward the most brutal opponent. And always the man of non-violence tries to remember that he opposes the injustice, men do—not the men themselves. To win the wrong doer is as important as to help those who suffer from wrongdoing; all are equally our brothers. His ultimate goal is not to embarrass, hurt or humiliate his opponent, but to find a lasting reconciliation based on justice not on compromise.

STRENGTH OF NON-VIOLENCE

The Power of Non-Violence by Richard Gregg, and various writings by M. K. Gandhi deal at greater length with this problem. The pacifist wants to find a near which will not corrupt his ends. Non-violence is his answer.

The power of non-violence is not an academic question nor a theological abstraction suited only to puppets. The force Gandhi exerted against the British in India, the Resistance Campaign in South Africa, the June 17 workers' revolt in Berlin, and the work of groups such as the Committee on Racial Equality (CORE) here in America, all give proof to the strength which groups and individuals committed to absolute non-violence can have in working for a decent society. To quote from Jayaprakash Narayan of the Praj (Indian) Socialist Party:

"The second aspect of Gandhism that must attract every socialist is its undying contribution to revolutionary technology . . . the conventional attitude of the 'scientific socialist' is to brush Gandhi aside as crankish old man who was so much out of date in the atomic age, who was medieval, reactionary and even an indirect apologist of the vested interests. The more sophisticated among them go forward and poke fun . . . and sum him up as a class-collaborationist. The trouble is that the so-called scientific socialist is seldom scientific. More often than not he is just a bigoted phrasemonger."

If readers of LABOR ACTION explore non-violence as honestly as I hope all pacifists are exploring socialism, both our positions may change enough that we will be able to join forces more completely in the common struggle for human freedom.

Would you stoolpigeon to the FBI?

That's the theme of "The Emperor's Clothes"—except that, as a matter of fact, the setting is laid in an East European police-state.

The Emperor's Clothes

This unusual play has been revived, off Broadway, by the theater group of the Greenwich Mews Playhouse. It deals in memorable fashion with the dilemma of a man in a police-state under the pressure of conformism and state terror. Should he squeal or stand up to his inquisitors? Should he be a rat or a "hero"? Should he sell himself and his child to the police for the job he wants?

N. Y. ISL Theater Party for "The Emperor's Clothes"

Tuesday eve., January 26

Write for tickets to:
New York ISL, 114 West 14 Street
New York 11, N. Y.
Contribution: \$1.50

On the Pacifist vs. Marxist View

A Reply: The Abstract Character of the Pacifist Approach to Social Reality

By HAL DRAPER

This discussion was supposed to be not so much on the general propositions of pacifism as on the specific and more delimited claim that any and every use of violence is, in and of itself, *undemocratic*. These are two different questions.

The absolute pacifism we are discussing is principled opposition to the use of violence under any circumstances, at any time, for whatever reason. Its proponents commonly claim that it is the only effective method of struggle, or the only moral one, or the only one that can achieve results consonant with our joint aims. But if they also add the claim that it is the only *democratic* method of struggle, they are taking on more territory.

It is this latter claim that led to this exchange, and the present article will be concerned with it primarily. Other sections of Comrade McReynolds' argument will be discussed in connection with a second exchange on the question of pacifism (with another pacifist comrade) which is scheduled for next week's issue.

McReynolds asserts that "the essential nature of violence is itself undemocratic" (his emphasis). He adds:

"When we say that it is undemocratic to use violence we realize that in a narrow sense it is 'democratic' for a majority of the people to take any action they want. But this does not mean that an action 'democratically' undertaken will prove to be democratic. Even if an overwhelming majority of the people voted for a dictatorship it would still be an undemocratic action." (My emphasis.)

Isn't he saying here that, "in a narrow sense," it would be "democratic" to abolish all democratic rights for the people as long as the original decision to do this is taken by majority vote? This strikes me as playing with words at the best. Even as far as formal definitions go, I've never heard of anyone who defined democracy simply as majority rule—and in a single vote at that. The most elementary conception of democracy involves continuing rights on the part of minorities and dissenters; otherwise it is not democracy even "in a narrow sense" but the very opposite of democracy.

"OBJECTIVE CONSEQUENCES"

But, getting away from this trick formulation, I think it is more important to point out the dangers of identifying the democratic-or-undemocratic character of an action or method with what its consequences may "prove to be." Everyone knows that the two are inextricably linked, as ends and means are linked, but they are not the same thing.

Thus I might argue that pacifism, since it cannot effectively lead to a more democratic society but can have only the result of disarming and weakening an effective struggle, does not have democratic consequences but the reverse. According to McReynolds' approach, I would then have to denounce pacifists as being *undemocratic* because I think they're wrong.

But I do not like this mode of thought, or this way of using language, and for good reason. It is the Stalinists who have made famous the identification of the "objective consequences" of an ideology with the ideology itself: if for example, Trotsky's policy weakens the state before fascism, it is therefore "objectively" pro-fascist, and Trotsky is therefore "objectively" a fascist. . . . Or if Bukharin's economic policy (it is argued, let's say with justice) strengthens capitalist elements, Bukharin is therefore "objectively" pro-capitalist, therefore he IS pro-capitalist. . . .

So McReynolds seems to be arguing in part that the use of violence must, at least in the end, "prove to be" undemocratic in its results. Therefore "the essential nature of violence is undemocratic." It is at this point, indeed, that he uses the analogy: "if we mistakenly swallow poison in place of medicine our intentions will not save us." Now, to be sure, swallowing poison in place of medicine is a very disconcerting sort of blunder to make, and its consequences surely speak against it as a general practice; but . . . its "essential nature" is not suicide.

McReynolds, as I understood it, was trying to argue for the proposition that "the essential nature of violence itself is undemocratic." This proposition is not helped by an attempt to demonstrate that the inevitable consequences of the use of violence must be undemocratic.

At least, it is not helped except by the Stalinist method of identifying the nature of an ideology by the nature of its "objective consequences." (Of course, I do not impute this Stalinist method to McReynolds, but only to his mistake. So to speak, it is the "objective consequence" of his false argument, and, true to principle, I do not identify McReynolds' ideology with the "objective consequences" of his mistake.)

TWO VIEWS ON DEMOCRACY

Now it is not the good "intentions" of Marxists (or pacifists) which determine whether their methods are democratic or not. We can get away from formal "definitions" of democracy—including McReynolds' implied definition of democracy ("in a narrow sense") as rule by majority vote.

Those methods are democratic in their tendency which lead to the ever-greater participation from below by the masses of people in the continuing determination of their own social, political and economic destinies; in the continuing broadening of their ability to intelligently determine their will, change it and carry it out into action;

which most thoroughly makes the decisions of the community, which affect all, reflect the changing will of a mass of people who are themselves participating in the process—as subjects and not merely as objects of decisions, actors on the stage themselves and not merely spectators or claquees.

Thus, the nature of democracy is bound up not merely with certain formal institutions of representative government, etc. (which are necessary but not enough), but with social movement and class relations at a given time and place.

I would contrast this view with McReynolds' timeless and unhistorical *utopian* characterization of democracy: it is "a way of life. It is a society where men live cooperatively with a minimum of coercion, where each individual is free to develop in socially constructive ways, and where each person feels a voluntary but very real and abiding sense of community with those around him."

McReynolds is here describing a very desirable society, to be sure; he has mentioned some important aspects of the kind of society which is the ultimate goal of our struggle; but he is not discussing *democracy*. The kind of society he describes fits in best, as a matter of fact, not with the existence of a *democratic* state but with the abolition of any state, that is, with anarchism. A "minimum of coercion" is the great goal for society, but the problem of democracy in this world is that of building a democratic movement of *coercion*. Pacifists are for non-violent *coercion*—very well; they wish to compel obedience to the interests and wishes of the people by non-violent methods such as non-violent strikes; but every strike, violent or not, is a very effective method of *coercion*.

DEMOCRACY AND COERCION

Is a strike (non-violent type) consistent with "mutual respect among men"? Why, of course it is, I would say, even though it is aimed at depriving certain men (known vulgarly as scabs) of their livelihood, forcing them to quit work against their will by compulsive (non-violent) methods such as the pressure of public scorn, closing down the factory so that they are out of jobs, etc.

A boycott, which is usually very non-violent, seeks to attain a "socially constructive" end by doing harm to other men—not bodily harm but other very painful hurts like stopping their source of income, wherefrom they eat and feed their innocent children.

I could go on with many other non-violent forms of coercion, which not only hurt certain people dreadfully but are indeed designed to do so. What does the excellent principle of "mutual respect among men" tell us about this? Do not these forms of coercion often unavoidably divide group against group and "leave scars which never heal"? Does not the scab also have his "individual worth" which has to be respected? Is there any way in which your "sense of community" with a scab differs from your "sense of community" with a striker?

The pacifist's fixation on one form of coercion, the doing of *bodily* harm, seems to blind him to the fact that most of the lofty and laudable moral terms he uses are not limited in their applicability to this one form of compulsion. The holding of fine moral principles is a great thing, but the danger is that of substituting fine moral abstractions for the realities of social struggle.

"Violence as a social method," writes McReynolds, "assumes that there are groups of men who are 'beyond the pale,' who are not worthy of our respect." This ~~preachment would have greater force, no doubt, if McReynolds made clear what he was talking about. Beyond what pale? In every struggle, including non-violent ones, there are lines drawn, not arbitrarily by "us" but by the sides that people take.~~

I shall not here dispute a pacifist's wish to "love the enemy"—provided that at the same time he fights him, across the line (or "pale") that has been drawn in the struggle. I do not wish him to give up his "respect" for his enemy as a human being—in fact, we Marxists are very capable of "respecting" enemies—as long as he can act on the difference between a human being who is fighting for tyranny and social injustice on one side of the "pale" and a human being who is fighting for progress on his own side of the "pale."

Least of all does a good socialist give up a man on the other side of the pale as hopeless; surely McReynolds is aware that, in violent revolutions for example, the revolutionary forces have fought less with weapons in hand than with their *political* weapons to win over the minds of men on the other side. . . .

REDUCTION TO ABSTRACTIONS

In this connection consider McReynolds' assertion that "Violence denies that each man has an individual worth" and the rest of that sentence. My undeniable feeling, which I cannot conceal in the interests of truthfulness, is that these vague phrases are a substitute for thinking through a social conflict. If a fascist gang wishes to break up our meeting by force and violence, and we defend ourselves as efficiently as we know how or are prepared to do, just exactly how are we "denying" that each individual fascist hoodlum has an "individual worth"—and in fact what on earth would it mean if we "denied" it?

If strikers shut down a factory and thereby throw a bunch of scabs out of work and out of their "right" to a day's labor to feed their starving children, exactly what

has happened to the scabs' "individual worth"? If the Spanish workers take up arms against Franco's fascist assault in defense of their own "individual worth" and other interests, how is this an affront to the "individual worth" of either Franco, his fascist generals or his misled myrmidons?

Again in the interests of truth I must confess that, at a certain point in the accumulation of these moral abstractions, divorced from the realities of social struggle, I feel that the argument gets lost in a fog.

"Violence," claims McReynolds, "creates a special group who wield the weapons of violence and thus have undue power in dictating policy." (Hence fear, anxiety, hysteria, repression of civil liberties, etc.) McReynolds has now succeeded in reducing even violence to a mere abstraction.

"Violence creates" no special group. Special groups of armed men, divorced as such from the people as a whole, have indeed been created by capitalist militarism and the militarism of other class-exploiting societies. In fact it is a characteristic of ruling-class states that they seek to divorce their special bodies of armed men from the populace and raise them ABOVE the peoples as a coercive force directed against the latter.

But it is Marxist socialism which looks to the development of the *armed people*, as the best defenders of democratic institutions, not to special groups of armed men. There is a long discussion possible on this point alone, which we cannot go into here.

THE UNHISTORICAL APPROACH

Secondly, it is not historically true that "undue power in dictating policy" has usually arisen from the special situation of groups bearing arms. We happen to live in a society where there long has been "a special group who wield the weapons of violence," namely the armed forces, but the "undue power in dictating policy" belongs not primarily to them or to the generals but to the *ruling class* in society, most of whom do not carry even pearl-handled revolvers. This is most particularly true of modern capitalist states (as distinct from Latin American dictatorships by colonels).

The pacifist argument is essentially *unhistorical*: that is, it does not base itself on the lessons of history and the play of social and political forces, but tends to deduce abstractions from immutable moral principles. The American Revolution was quite a bloody affair, and it set up "a special group" of weapon-wielders, the Revolutionary army. This bloody revolution by force and violence established a state which, for over a century, was distinguished from most of the European states by its LACK of a militarist tradition—so much so that as late as the Second World War it was possible for C. O.'s, pacifists and socialists to appeal to this tradition in combating conscription. If this non-militarist tradition has been torn to shreds lately in this country, that is not due to George Washington or even Ulysses S. Grant, but to the developments in American capitalism associated with its new imperialist role and drives. Militarism does not stem from "violence": it stems from the drives of a class-exploitive society.

Thirdly, to be consistent McReynolds must not only be suspicious of "violence" but—perhaps even more—of that simple thing, government and other forms of organization. The anarchists could tell him why, and they would be right, as against him: Organization, *any* organization, especially state organization, sets up a "special group" (its bureaucracy) who wield special powers over others, have the power to punish and coerce others, and have "undue power" over the organization not shared by a simple citizen or rank-and-filer. The anarchist will explain to McReynolds that bureaucratism is inherent in any government or organization as such, and that it can be averted only by a principled opposition to organization as such, particularly state organization.

The anarchist has a point, of course, for it is true that bureaucratism is a *danger* inherent in all government and organization, just as there are inherent dangers in all violence, all strikes, all forms of coercion, and—when you get right down to it—all forms of living.

The pacifist's vision is exclusively fixed on the special dangers of violence, abstracted from the living world, just as the anarchist's is fixed on the dangers of the existence of government—and, not unexpectedly, the two fixations are combined in the anarcho-pacifist, who has some reason to claim to be the most consistent abstractionist of them all.

NO AUTOMATIC ANSWERS

McReynolds makes an abstraction also out of "centralism," "secrecy" and "conspiracy." These are necessarily connected with violence only in his own argumentation. A non-violent resistance movement in a totalitarian state will have to face the problem of its own forms of organization as a fighting movement. Will it have a "centralized" leadership? Will it form plans and tell them to the totalitarian secret police or will it practice a smidgin of "conspiracy" about them? Will it try to conceal the identity or whereabouts of its organizers and leaders and militants, or will it practice some "secrecy" on such matters?

The point is not what McReynolds' answer to these difficult questions are, even if he tries to convince himself that a non-violent resistance to totalitarianism can function as openly and publicly as if it were dealing only with Eisenhower or with an American prison warden. The point is that neither pacifism nor non-pacifism gives an automatic answer on these questions of tactics and strategy.

But pacifism tends to depend on the existence of *automatic* answers, that is, answers which need not be figured out from an analysis of given social and political factors, but which can be deduced from abstract

(Turn to last page)

Pacifism —

(Continued from page 7)

principles, preferably moral ones.

The Marxist has a wider choice of methods. The choice is not between "violent methods" and non-violent methods of resistance. This is a false dichotomy which makes it very easy for the pacifist to choose, by deceiving himself as to the alternatives.

I have heard pacifist after pacifist talk as if the discovery of non-violent methods of struggle was a special contribution of pacifism. This happens to be untrue. We have indeed discussed the use of violence in special situations—as, for example, under totalitarianism—but the fact is that for over a hundred years of the Marxist movement, 99 per cent of its energies and thought has been devoted to the working out and practice of its political and social (non-violent) weapons.

Every single example of non-violent methods mentioned by McReynolds has been developed by the socialist and labor movement, not by the pacifists. The IWW in its palmy days, as "violent" a movement as any country has seen, specialized in thinking up effective non-violent methods of struggle, like filling the jails in a free-speech fight.

Marxists do not really have to be urged to "explore non-violence" and its methods. The sole and single difference is that we do not make a principled fetish out of non-violence—that is absolutely all.

LEARNING TOGETHER

None of the above, however, has any bearing on an entirely different point: in spite of the vast experience of the working-class movement with non-violent methods, it would be absurd and empty bragging to give the impression that we think that the movement has exhausted the exploration of non-violent methods or that the pacifist movement cannot teach us and others anything. That would be completely untrue. Marxists have learned a great deal about unionism from pure-and-simple "business" trade-unionists, without thereby becoming the least bit convinced that "business unionism" is a superior ideology. We can and intend to learn their specialties from pacifists too.

Above all, nothing in the present discussion has any bearing on the possibility of collaboration between pacifists and Marxists. We are discussing ideological differences which separate us; and precisely because they separate us, at the recent Third Camp Conference we devoted ourselves very fruitfully to discussing the possibility of united action on which we can combine our efforts. Such collaboration does not demand that either tendency give up its views; on the contrary it ought to insure a discussion even of basic differences in the best possible spirit.

Rhee & U.S. —

(Continued from page 1)

not by the Stalinists but by America's ally, the Rhee government of South Korea.

In a provocative message to the North, Rhee pledged that South Korea would "come to your rescue just as soon as we possibly can."

'DESPERATE'

He called on the UN allies to halt "futile discussions with the Communists" and join him in Armageddon (which he called "the last great battle to annihilate the Red forces that seek destruction of the free world"). He reminded Koreans he had agreed to a temporary halt in his announced aim to unify Korea under his own regime by force of arms, but, he said, the breakdown of the Panmunjom negotiations "can be regarded as final." He said "the current international situation does not permit us to take the action we so desperately want to take" (i.e., invade North Korea) but "Better that we all die together than that we leave part of our people in slavery" (i.e., slavery to a tyrant other than Syngman Rhee).

As 1954 opens, then, the dictatorial Rhee regime—which offers the Korean people scarcely a semblance of a "lesser evil" as compared with the Stalinist totalitarianism in the North—is the main visible and immediate threat that can unlock the forces of destruction that are being prepared by the new U. S. military policy. In this setting, the withdrawal of two divisions from Korea symbolizes the steps that are being taken to bring the prospect of A-bomb war closer than ever before.

Looking Back on 1953 —

(Continued from page 1)

Washington Has No Peace Plan For the Korean Peace Conference

(Aug. 24)

A truce ended the Korean war on July 27. It was quite evident, that the Stalinists were anxious for an end to the hostilities, as they were willing even to overlook the "liberation" of 27,000 anti-Stalinist prisoners of war by Syngman Rhee.

But here, again, the American government showed its inability to give a political answer to the problem of Korea. The truce only initiated an endless series of wrangles over procedural questions, mainly around the composition of the political conferences which was to negotiate the final end of the war. The United States won a smashing "victory" . . . over India . . . on the issue of her participation as a neutral in the conference, thus further alienating public opinion all over the world, and specially in Asia.

At year's end, even the negotiations over the calling of the political conference had been broken off by the American representatives on the charge that they had been "insulted" by the Stalinists.

Adenauer Gains On The Neo-Nazi Vote

(Sept. 14)

Another great "victory" for American policy was the big Adenauer gains in the West German elections. With open American support, the German chancellor's party made deep inroads into the strength of the right-wing groups—by openly identifying itself with most of their program. An economic boom, coupled with a timid policy on the part of the Social-Democrats, placed the West German industrialists squarely in the saddle.

This was in contrast to the relative defeat in Italy which had toppled the government of Alcide De Gasperi from power on July 28. But the resurgence of the men who had helped Hitler to power and backed his regime till it was obvious that the war was lost, was far from being an unmixed blessing for the American government. It tended to strengthen French fears of German military resurgence, and thus to strengthen their opposition to German rearmament, either inside or outside a European Defense Community.

What is the Secret Treaty That The U. S. Has Signed with Fascist Franco?

(Oct. 5)

The Eisenhower administration finally signed the treaty with Franco which had been prepared by the Truman government. In exchange for a number of military bases, the U. S. undertook to re-equip Franco's army, and give him a large loan. This aroused widespread opposition in the labor movement of all countries, including the most advanced sections of the unions in America. Here again the basic character of U. S. foreign policy was spotlighted: stabilize every regime, however reactionary, which promises military support against Stalinism.

The Police-State Atmosphere Thickens; FBI Head's Intervention in White Case as McCarthyite Hatchetman Breaks a Myth

(Nov. 30)

This headline is one of dozens throughout the year which described the extension of the witchhunt. The most dramatic single event was the involvement of ex-President Harry Truman by the charge that he had "knowingly" promoted a Russian spy to high office. The charge was made by Attorney General Herbert Brownell in a desperate Republican attempt to turn the country's attention away from a series of Democratic victories at the polls in local and national by-elections.

All year long McCarthy, Jenner and Velde worked away with their Congressional committees to smear, intimidate, and blackmail one sector after another of American public life into rigid conformity.

Stalinists, alleged Stalinists and ex-Stalinists bore the brunt of the attack. But it became clearer as the year wore on that wide sections of the Republican leadership were convinced that here they had found a sure formula by which to keep themselves in office. Thus the extension of the attack from authors who had written books which were being used by the State Department's Information Service abroad, to schools and colleges, to the clergy, and finally, to the Democratic Party itself, was a logical, and almost inevitable process.

But as the witchhunt atmosphere thickened, the opposition to it, or at least to certain aspects of it, also increased. While far too many leaders in the labor movement and among liberals in general weakened before the onslaught, or even began to swim with the tide, others were driven into opposition by the feeling that if it were permitted to continue no one would be safe in the long run.

Is Socialism "Subversive"?

(Sept. 28)

The Independent Socialist League sought to strike a powerful blow against the witchhunt by initiating action against its inclusion in the attorney general's "list of subversive organizations" and thereby against the list itself. It was given vigorous backing in this action by the Workers Defense League, and by year's end had received support from the Socialist Party press and the Fellowship of Reconciliation and a growing number of individuals active in the fight for civil liberties. Despite the stalling tactics of the Department of Justice, the ISL-SYL and their supporters in this action hoped to bring the issue to a head within the coming year.

In the Midst of War Boom, Unemployed Workers Are Thrown on the Scrap Heap

(Dec. 7)

In the last quarter of 1953 the American economy showed definite signs that the boom was over. Despite a continuation of military spending at unprecedented "peacetime" levels, most economic indices showed a downturn, and several industries were in real trouble. The economy had expanded to a point at which even military spending at the level of \$30 billions per year could no longer guarantee full employment as a constant state of affairs. Although the Republican administration engaged in a good deal of talk about taking some kind of action to bolster the economy, it was clear that their orientation toward capital, businessmen and their profits was such that not too much was to be expected in the way of action from this source. The unions in the hardest-hit industry were beginning to worry openly, and the United Automobile Workers (CIO) held a conference in Washington on the unemployment problem.

The Atomic Stalemate in the Cold War

(Dec. 28)

As the year came to a close, the picture in the United States and the world was strikingly different than it had been at the beginning. Economics and politics everywhere, to be sure, were still dominated by the cold war, and the end to this struggle seemed no closer than it had in the past.

But much had changed. Russia no longer seemed invincible. The blow struck by the workers in the satellites was a telling one, and its repercussions in the attitude of workers toward Stalinism all over the world were immense. In France the long, paralyzing political stalemate had been broken momentarily by the electrifying August strikes.

In the United States itself the change seemed chiefly for the worse, with the police-state atmosphere thicker than ever. But here too a change was perceptible, though its depth and weight cannot yet be judged. The unquestioning attitude of the workers toward the government's policies and the economic system itself was a product of the economic boom. Even if a major depression fails to develop now, the economic squeeze is being felt far more strongly than in recent years. At the same time the labor movement and the Democratic Party are coming into the direct line of fire of the McCarthys. The reaction to this promises to make 1954 a far more lively year politically than was 1953.

Over-all, the cold-war stalemate continues. In 1953 the workers in the satellites showed the road to breaking it open in a progressive fashion. The best we can hope for in 1954 is that workers all over the world will follow their example.

The ISL Program in Brief

The Independent Socialist League stands for socialist democracy and against the two systems of exploitation which now divide the world: capitalism and Stalinism.

Capitalism cannot be reformed or liberalized, by any Fair Deal or other deal, so as to give the people freedom, abundance, security or peace. It must be abolished and replaced by a new social system, in which the people own and control the basic sectors of the economy, democratically controlling their own economic and political destinies.

Stalinism, in Russia and wherever it holds power, is a brutal totalitarianism—a new form of exploitation. Its agents in every country, the Communist Parties, are unrelenting enemies of socialism and have nothing in common with socialism—which cannot exist without effective democratic control by the people.

These two camps of capitalism and Stalinism are today at each other's throats in a worldwide imperialist rivalry for domination. This struggle can only lead to the most frightful war in history so long as the people leave the capitalist and Stalinist rulers in power. Independent Socialism stands for building and strengthening the Third Camp of the people against both war blocs.

The ISL, as a Marxist movement, looks to the working class and its ever-present struggle as the basic progressive force in society. The ISL is organized to spread the ideas of socialism in the labor movement and among all other sections of the people.

At the same time, Independent Socialists participate actively in every struggle to better the people's lot now—such as the fight for higher living standards, against Jim Crow and anti-Semitism, in defense of civil liberties and the trade-union movement. We seek to join together with all other militants in the labor movement as a left force working for the formation of an independent labor party and other progressive policies.

The fight for democracy and the fight for socialism are inseparable. There can be no lasting and genuine democracy without socialism, and there can be no socialism without democracy. To enroll under this banner, join the Independent Socialist League!

Get Acquainted!

Independent Socialist League
114 West 14 Street
New York 11, N. Y.

- I want more information about the ideas of Independent Socialism and the ISL.
- I want to join the ISL.

NAME (please print)

ADDRESS

CITY

ZONE STATE

The Handy Way to Subscribe!

LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Weekly

114 West 14 Street
New York 11, New York

- Please enter my subscription:
- 1 year at \$2. New
 - 6 months at \$1. Renewal
 - Payment enclosed. Bill me.

NAME (please print)

ADDRESS

CITY

ZONE STATE