

# LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Weekly

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## ISL Begins Its Case Against the 'List' System at the Washington Hearing

# SOCIALISM vs. the 'SUBVERSIVE LIST'

By ALBERT GATES

Washington, June 8

This week saw the organizations put on their case before Edward M. Morrissey, hearing examiner appointed by Attorney General Herbert Brownell, to hear the first formal contest of the "subversive list" since it was established in 1948. Witnesses on behalf of the Independent Socialist League, and its predecessors, the Workers Party and Socialist Youth League, included Norman Thomas, Dwight Macdonald, staff writer for the *New Yorker* and former member of the Workers Party, Harry Fleischman, former national secretary of the Socialist Party, and B. J. Widick, co-author of the book *The UAW and Walter Reuther*. Max Shachtman, national chairman of the ISL, began his direct testimony during the previous week, and continued to testify in the periods between the testimony of the other witnesses.

As reported last week, Shachtman

began with testimony on the formation of the American Trotskyist movement and the split in the Socialist Workers Party in 1940. On Wednesday, June 6, B. J. Widick testified on matters pertaining to the labor movement. He was followed by Shachtman who continued his testimony during that day and Thursday on the formation of the Workers Party and the development of its theoretical and political views as well as its activities.

This testimony covered the widest range of subjects in order to establish what the real views of the organization were in those days and how they developed further when the Independent Socialist League became successor to the Workers Party.

### ON FORCE AND VIOLENCE

The government's contention is that there is only one interpretation of Lenin's views as presented by their "expert" witness, Professor Jeroid Tanquaray Robinson. Cross-examination of Professor Robinson disqualified this testimony, as has already been reported. Under direct examination by Isaac M. Groner, co-counsel for the organizations, Shachtman showed why the professor's testimony was not well grounded. On the specific question of "force and violence," Shachtman said:

"No, we don't understand Lenin to have taken that position as absolutely applicable to all conditions and circumstances regardless of time and place. It can be demonstrated without any difficulty that Lenin said the contrary."

MR. GRONER: "Do you have any examples where Lenin said the contrary?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"Would you indicate what they are?"

A.—"Here is Lenin writing, not about some far-off country, but about Russia, not Russia in general, but about Russia in the very midst of its most revolutionary turmoil in 1917. He is writing an article called 'The Tasks of the Revolution,' which appeared in the Bolshevik paper *Rabotchi Put*, September 27, 1917—"

Q.—"Do you believe . . . that Leninism is force and violence?"

A.—"No. I don't consider that the essential point of view of Lenin, if he said that at all. I point out to you that Lenin very carefully set down what he considered the essence of his position in *The Teachings of Karl Marx*. It is a widely disseminated pamphlet. . . . I doubt very much that you will find one word in that pamphlet about the violent

## EXCLUSIVE REPORT ON A VITAL CASE

The hearing of the Independent Socialist League in Washington reported here is the first of its kind in the country. It is the first time that an organization which was arbitrarily "listed" by the attorney general as "subversive" has managed to get the Department of Justice to grant the hearing provided for in the regulations.

After seven years of effort, such a department hearing was finally granted the ISL as a by-product of our court victory in the Shachtman passport case. (The hearing also includes the listing of the ISL's predecessors, the Workers Party and the Socialist Youth League, all three being referred to in the reported proceedings as "the organizations.")

We have already reported the first part of the present hearing during which the Justice Department attorneys presented their case before the hearing examiner—an examiner appointed by the department itself. The hearing is a necessary step before the fight against the subversive list system can be taken to the courts.

This past week the ISL started the presentation of its own side of the case. We are devoting a great deal of our space to reporting these proceedings because of the interest and importance attached to the underlying issues: the relationship of socialism to democracy, on the one hand, and to Stalinism, on the other.

overthrow of government by minorities, by anti-democratic or non-democratic means."

Q.—"Coming to the conception of these organizations, the Leninism of the Workers Party and the Independent Socialist League, that Leninism—is there a belief that the transition to socialism could not be effected by peaceful and democratic means?"

A.—"That it is impossible?"

Q.—"Yes"

A.—"Not at all. It is entirely possible but not guaranteed in all countries and under all circumstances, but entirely possible."

### OPPORTUNITY IN 1917

At this point Shachtman read the quotation by Lenin from *Rabotchi Put*, as follows:

"The democracy of Russia, the Soviets and the Socialist-revolutionary and Menshevik parties now have the opportunity—very seldom to be met with in the history of revolutions—of ensuring the convocation of the Constituent Assembly at the appointed date without fresh delays, of saving the country from military and economic catastrophe, and of assuring a peaceful development of the revolution.

"If the Soviets were now to take the full and exclusive power of the state into their own hands with the purpose of

carrying out the program set forth above, they could not only be sure of support of nine-tenths of the population of Russia—the working class and the vast majority of the peasantry—but could also be sure of the greatest revolutionary enthusiasm on the part of the army and the majority of the people, without which victory over famine and war is impossible.

"There could now be no question of resistance being offered to the Soviets if they themselves did not vacillate. No class would dare to raise a rebellion against the Soviets, and the landlords and capitalists, chastened by the experience of the Kornilov affair, would peacefully surrender power upon the ultimatum of the Soviets. To overcome the resistance of the capitalists to the program of the Soviets, it would be sufficient to establish supervision by the workers and peasants over the exploiters and to punish refractory persons by such measures as the confiscation of their entire property coupled with a short term of imprisonment.

"By seizing power now—and this is probably their last chance—the Soviets could still ensure the peaceful development of the revolution, the peaceful election of deputies by the people, the peaceful struggle of parties within the Soviet

(Continued on page 6)

## A Senator Wants to Prosecute Jefferson

Sen. Watkins of the Judiciary Committee would like to prosecute Thomas Jefferson for advocating revolution, he says. The only thing that stops him is that the old revolutionist isn't around any longer.

The subject came up at a committee hearing on a bill which would give the states power to cook up their own witchhunt laws, now that the Supreme Court has decided that federal law had pre-empted the field.

The name of Jefferson was introduced by Joseph L. Rauh, president of the ADA. Rauh had told the committee that Congress had passed laws which "infringe on political freedoms," and said he thought Thomas Jefferson himself had made a remark about revolution being a "healthy" thing.

According to the Associated Press, Sen. Watkins "exclaimed" that he didn't believe it. Then he went on to show how horror-stricken he was:

"If Mr. Jefferson were here and advocated such a thing, I would move that he be prosecuted."

However, it was Jefferson—none other—who once wrote that "a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing," and it was the same subversive gentleman who said the piece about watering the "tree of liberty with the blood of tyrants," etc.

As a matter of fact, come to think of it, he and his friends had not just advocated revolution—they had recently made a revolution.

The question: Will Sen. Watkins now trace down Jefferson's descendants, if any, and deprive them, their heirs and assignees of social-security benefits, in accordance with current capitalist customs?

FRIDAY, JUNE 22—in NEW YORK

## Hear Max Shachtman & Albert Gates

In a firsthand report from the first hearing in Washington of its kind . . .

## ISL versus the 'Subversive List'

ADELPHI HALL, 74 Fifth Avenue (near 14 St.), at 8:15 p.m.

## The Bottom Isn't Dropping Out, But It's More Than Just a Shake-Out . . .

# A RECESSION HAS BEGUN

By SAM TAYLOR

Unemployment—one of the joys of a "free economy"—is about to be spread about more liberally during the latter part of this year. The signs of a creeping recession are becoming clearer and more apparent.

Daily new highs are being reported for 1956—higher unemployment, rising inventories, rising business failures, increasing cutbacks in production, and a steady upturn in pessimism.

**The bulls of the '55-'56 boom have had their day and the bears are now taking over, as the third recession in the past eight years begins. The economy has pushed to the brink of the \$400 billion Gross National Product and is now sagging out just short of the mark.**

Flurries of calm appraisals reassuring reappraisals, and perceptive prognoses will soon darken the pages of newspapers and magazines. We will be assured that it is merely a rolling readjustment, a breathing spell, a pause on the road to the "new era," a wrinkle on the road to the billion-dollar economy and a slight shake-out.

There is no question but that the bloom is off the boom as in one industry after another the recession signals are going up—auto, steel, appliances, residential housing, rubber, textiles and farm equipment. Prices of industrial raw materials are weakening and beginning to slide downward and inventories are climbing.

### DOWNTREND

Total production, as measured by the Federal Reserve Board Index of Industrial Production has fallen by about 2 per cent since the high of December.

Although it is certainly no signal to head for the storm cellars, the downturn is fairly well established.

Total industrial production has been more or less on a plateau since last September, but in face of the recent production cuts announced in the newspapers, which always precede the published government figures, it will be several weeks before the present situation is officially verified.

Consumer durable-goods production—autos, appliances, TV, and furniture—always more volatile and sensitive to changes in business conditions—has taken a serious slump. Since last September, it has declined by 14 per cent and this decline is by no means merely confined to autos. The spurt of consumer durable-goods production which highlighted the past boom has clearly overshoot the ability of consumers to purchase the outpouring of autos and TV sets.

The most spectacular and most publicized setbacks have occurred in the auto industry. Since the start of the year when it was noticeable that auto sales were sagging, it was only a question of time before the effects would percolate through the entire economy. While no one expected auto sales to come anywhere near the record 7.4 million car sales or 8 million car production of 1955, there weren't very many who were ready to risk the statement in print that they would fall the way they have.

### FURTHER DECLINE DUE

Originally Harlowe Curtice of General Motors predicted an auto output of about 6.5 million cars for this year. Already he has revised that figure downward. His latest estimate as of the middle of May is 5.8 million, and it has been seconded by Henry Ford II.

This means that the second half of the year will see a further decline in auto production. In May production was 35 per cent under a year ago, while to date 25 per cent fewer cars have been produced than in 1955. The present auto industry's estimates—and they certainly have no reason to exude pessimism—mean that production for the rest of the year will remain at the estimated

June output—about 450,000 cars a month.

But at this level, according to the latest Department of Labor figures, there are 185,000 unemployed. It is likely that within several weeks 200,000 workers will be laid off without a time set for a return to work. In the beginning of May when there were 148,000 laid off, the Labor Department said that there were another 150,000 temporarily out of work (that is, laid off with a definite return time set). Therefore during the summer, somewhere between 350,000 and 400,000 auto workers will be affected by the auto cutbacks.

However, the perplexing question remains the disposal of the mountainous inventories of new cars on the dealer's lots. At the end of April, these were estimated at some 900,000 as the expected spring pick-up failed to materialize. If sales remain at the present levels during the summer months, then these new-car inventories will be a drag on the production of the 1957 models which are scheduled to come out in September.

The phenomenal pace set in 1955 seems out of the question for 1957. It will be remembered that the 1955 model change-over coincided with the upturn in the economy at the end of 1954. This time it will coincide with a downturn. Therefore many may start to wonder whether Harlowe Curtice's 5.8 million car estimate is too high.

### SHADOW OVER STEEL

Another sector which is preparing for the shock of a second-half decline is the steel industry. While the furnaces and mills turned out record tonnage in the

first half of the year, steel men at the May meeting of the American Iron and Steel Institute generally agreed that second-half production will fall by about 15 per cent.

The reason for the high level of steel operations has been the widespread policy of building large inventories. These well-watered inventories were not being built against actual production needs but rather in anticipation of the expected rise in steel prices this summer and/or a steel strike.

Even without a general downturn at this time, steel would be in for the reported 15 per cent decline as the inventories are worked off. Now the signs point to an even greater decline as cancellation of steel orders spread wider than auto and appliances.

The *Wall Street Journal* reports on June 4 that "steel buying for third-quarter delivery is continuing to disappoint producers, foreshadowing a deeper slump than had been expected a few weeks ago."

With the second-half prospects in focus, the steel industry is already talking about the second-best year. While reports of second- or third-best years look pretty good on newspaper headlines, they don't look so good from the point of view of those laid off.

### TRICKY HEADLINES

It is now pretty generally acknowledged in order to maintain full employment it is necessary to have a constantly expanding economy due to the ever increasing size of the labor force and the steady push to rising productivity now that automation is a reality in many factories. For the economy to stand still means that unemployment will rise.

Nor will tricky headlines really conceal what is happening in the economy. For example the *New York Times* on May 9 reports "National Product of U. S. Up Sharply," and the story states that "the annual rate for the first three months of the year . . . was the highest in the nation's history."

### LONDON LETTER

## 1st Automation Strike in Britain

By OWEN ROBERTS

Until about twelve months ago interest in automation in Britain was confined mainly to a relative handful of trade-unionists, politicians, industrialists and sociological students. This phase ended in the early months of last year when the "popular" press realized that automation was good copy and began featuring articles that were obviously influenced by the science-fiction pulp magazines. Now, however, the flirtation has ended and Britain is face to face with real problems due to the introduction of automatic processes on an ever increasing scale.

The first big automation row in industry blew up last month at the automobile-manufacturing center of Coventry when the Standard Motor Company announced its intention of switching a large part of its activities to tractor manufacture by automatic processes. The firm announced that this plan would mean closing its tractor plant at Banner Lane during the whole of the summer and laying off some 3500 workers.

The firm at first stated that the men would be laid off only as a temporary measure and would be reabsorbed when the tractor plant went back into full operation. The workers at the plant had the suspicion that this was mere talk and that many of the men would find themselves permanently off the payroll. In any case, said the workers, there

Compared to the increases of the past year, the Gross National Product virtually stood still during this quarter, since it was only about a billion dollars over the previous quarter. However, all of this increase-and-then-some was due to the rising prices during this period. Measured in constant dollars, the GNP actually declined in the first quarter of 1956—although it was only by half a percent.

What the *Times* did was to make a comparison with last year. If they compared it with 1938, the headline could have shrilled at a louder pitch.

While the elements which point to the downturn have been emphasized, this by no means implies that the situation is entirely bleak. But as is usual when there is a turning-point in the business cycle, the indicators point in many directions. The question is: which way is the wind blowing? At this point the indication is that it is blowing downhill.

### BAD FOR BULLS

The optimists in the current situation, such as Martin Gainsbrugh, chief economist at the National Industrial Conference Board (the research arm of the NAM), point to those indicators which have not yet turned down: the high level of business spending on plant and equipment; the rising industrial and commercial construction; the level of consumer spending. Viewed in this way the auto and residential-home slump is just a "short-term indigestion." They also tend to view the present decline as a temporary setback which will be reversed by the last quarter of the year.

This is essentially the point of view taken by the Federal Reserve Board when it raised the discount rate, and thus interest rates, on bank loans in April in an attempt to head off the threat of inflation (sic). The criticisms, congressional and from leading industrialists such as Harlowe Curtice of GM, testify to views widely diverging from the FRB's estimate of the current situation.

While there is no reason to believe that the bottom is ready to drop out of the economy—at this time—it also seems that the fourth-quarter optimists are misreading the bullish signs. The strength they see in the economy has more to do with the \$40 billions of military expenditures and the Permanent War Economy than they acknowledge or are willing to admit in print. It would appear that the bulls are concentrating more on the political rather than the economic barometers. If the recession really picks up speed in the next few months, then there appears to be little doubt that it will be a big issue in the November elections.

moved into the car plant and that about 5000 workers there would go on a four-day week—in place of the normal five-day week—to make this possible.

This was a concession on the part of the management but still not big enough to please the workers who had set their minds on "no redundancy."

While the unions were considering the next step the Standard Motor Company launched its bombshell. It announced that 2640 were to be dismissed—not as a temporary measure but permanently.

This management move confirmed the earlier suspicions of the men that the firm had decided to reduce the size of its labor force but was holding back the news until a time which suited its convenience.

All over the week-end there has been a great coming and going of trade-unionists at Coventry. The shop stewards at Standard and the Coventry union officials concerned have called for a strike in the firm against the sacking of the 2640 workers and in two days time the leaders of ten unions concerned will meet to discuss this demand. The Coventry district committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, which has 5000 members working in the firm, has endorsed the call for strike action. Tomorrow the Transport and General Workers Union—Britain's largest union, which also has

(Continued on next page)

### BOMBHELL

The strike, which was "unofficial," received widespread sympathy from other parts of the country and very soon funds were pouring in to the strike headquarters. Faced with this position the leadership of the unions involved pressed the Standard management to open negotiations and give consideration to the men's plans for overcoming the sackings.

The firm, reluctantly, agreed. The men went back to work and, after some discussion, the firm announced that 1000 men from the tractor plant would be

# The Explosion in East Germany: Three Years After the June Uprising

By R. D. WYATT

This June 17 marks the third anniversary of the workers' uprising in East Germany against the Stalinist regime.

The anniversary, as usual, will not be honored by any of those voluble anti-Communists of the capitalist countries who fear the revolutionary workers' movement as much as or more than they fear Moscow.

It goes without saying that the anniversary will also not be honored by the disciples of Stalin who presently hold power in Moscow and are busily denouncing Stalin's crimes. It was these disciples and denouncers, after Stalin's death, who themselves put down the East German uprising with tanks.

These observations indicate the true nature of those stirring events, and explain why all independent socialists, genuine democrats and internationalists the world over will, and should, celebrate what was the greatest open demonstration against totalitarianism since the end of World War II.

In June of 1953, the working class of East Germany, after 12 years of brutal fascist dictatorship and a pulverizing war, followed by eight years more of a totalitarian puppet regime backed by the bayonets of thirty Russian divisions, rose on its own two sturdy legs, brandished a pair of bare fists in the face of tanks and heavy armaments, and cried, right into the face of the oppressor: "Freedom!"

The full story of the June days has not yet been told. The most reliable reports of the journalists who were on the scene appeared in the pages of LABOR ACTION at the time.

Last year, there appeared an excellent account giving personal histories of nine participants in the demonstrations. This unpretentious volume—*Explosion, the Uprising Behind the Iron Curtain*, by Rainer Hildebrandt, with an introduction by Norbert Muhlen, (Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York, 1955)—makes no attempt at political analysis of the June events. It seeks only to portray the events as they appeared to nine selected observers; and in this it succeeds in capturing the color, the mass excitement, and the tremendous individual heroism

of those few days that rocked the Stalinist empire.

Organizer of the "Combat Group Against Inhumaneness," a search organization for missing persons and a warning service against informers in the Eastern zone, Hildebrandt was in position to meet and interview more than a thousand participants in the uprising. His chosen nine are a fairly good cross-section of the population; but they definitely represent those in whom the author himself is most interested: the so-called non-politicals.

## TO BE FREE AGAIN

On a warm Tuesday morning in June, the 80 workers who walk off their construction jobs to protest the new increase in work quotas little realize that they are setting off the spark that is to ignite the entire country, and strike the blow against Stalinist totalitarianism which will destroy forever in the minds of millions any identification of that regime with workers' rights.

When they are joined by other building-trades workers, from the remaining blocks of Berlin's "model socialist" street—Stalin-Allee—and march together to the central office of the Ministry of Reconstruction to lodge personal protests, they are not yet fully aware of the mounting effects of their action. After all, stoppages and slowdowns have been rather a common occurrence during the past few weeks, but it is not until this precise moment that anyone has thought of marching to the government seat.

A banner flies over the marching workers: *We Want Lower Quotas!*

Within an hour, there are 1500 workers marching. And as they leave the Stalin-Allee area, their ranks begin to swell with passing housewives, streetcar conductors, professionals with briefcases.

Four thousand of them now, orderly, well-mannered, they ignore the Volkspolizei who, standing still at first in amazement, begin directing traffic around and away from the marchers.

Slogans begin to fill the air, most of them dealing with the quotas and other immediate problems of the workers. A chant begins:

"Berliners, join the workmen,  
So we can all be free again!"

## REBELLION MOUNTS

Passing the Russian embassy, the slogans cease; the word spreads: there must be no antagonizing of the Russian troops; this is a German matter.

But when the government buildings are reached, the pent-up antagonism grows as the crowd increases to six thousand. A table is hurriedly brought out of one of the government buildings, so some of the officials can speak to the workers and persuade them to go back to work. But the crowd will have none of them, and they are booed back into their offices, shaken and frightened.

One after the other now, rank-and-file workers mount the temporary platform and tell of their grievances, of their difficult living conditions, of their imprisoned friends and relatives. There are tumultuous cheers as a well-dressed woman with a shopping bag mounts the table and tells the crowd that all the people of Berlin support the worker's demands.

A deafening ovation greets a young girl, a Communist Youth leader, who rips off her official jacket and throws it into the audience, urging that the workers stick together: "Don't let them drive you apart!"

By now there are 10,000 people gathered; and when the Minister of Economics approaches to announce that the

government just agreed to lower the quota increase, he is interrupted by a burly hodcarrier, who tells the assemblage:

"We're not here only because of the quotas; we stand for all East Berlin and the whole Soviet zone. We want the government to resign and to call free, secret elections!"

And a young, building-trades worker calls for a general strike.

Thunderous applause, as these become the slogans now: every one a carefully articulated demand, crystallizing the deep-seated desires of all peoples under totalitarianism everywhere.

## SLOGANS SPREAD

It is this transformation of popular slogans, from *We Want Lower Quotas! to Down With The Government!—Ivan Go Home!—Free Secret Elections!—and Free The Political Prisoners!*—that lends the greatest credence to the theory that behind the uprising lies a directing underground movement of skilled, experienced socialist and communist fighters.

For when the explosion bursts in full on the next day, the 17th, these identical slogans appear not only all over Eastern Berlin, but through all parts of Eastern Germany as well.

Hildebrandt observes this phenomenon: not only do the same slogans appear in diverse parts of the country, but in city after city, and town after town, huge bodies of workers march to the government seats promptly and efficiently, sack the offices of the local Communist Parties, destroy the lists of political "undesirables" maintained by local police agents, free or attempt to free the political prisoners, and in some instances take over the local governments.

The pattern is followed in Halle, Magdeburg, Stralsund; in Gera, Leipzig, Chemnitz; in Erfurt, Bitterfeld, Gorlitz.

In Berlin, of course, tens of thousands are marching, led by the Stalin-Allee construction workers and 8000 Hennigsdorf steel workers, as a fearless young truck driver hoists down the Russian banner that waves over the Brandenburg gate, and raises in its place the flag of free Berlin.

## PROGRAM OF REVOLUTION

In places like Bitterfeld, the government actually changes hands. A local leader (electrician by trade) and a school teacher take over the city council with the help of the town factory workers, and issue a proclamation:

"To the so-called German Democratic Government in Berlin-Pankow:

"We, the working people of Bitterfeld County, demand—

"(1) the instant resignation of the so-called German Democratic Government which usurped power by election frauds;

"(2) the establishment of a provisional government made up of progressive working people;

"(3) permission to function for all major democratic parties of West Germany;

"(4) free, secret election within four months from now;

"(5) the release of all political prisoners, whether directly political, so-called 'economic criminals,' or victims of religious persecution;

"(6) instant abolition of zonal boundaries and withdrawal of the People's Police;

"(7) instant normalization of the social standard of living;

"(8) instant dissolution of the so-called 'National Army';

"(9) no reprisals against a single striker."

The above statement is drawn up shortly before the Russian troops arrive. It is not an isolated instance, it is repeated in towns throughout the Eastern zone.

Meanwhile, in the Western zone, confusion reigns at the American-operated radio station, RIAS, as broadcasters are forbidden by their superiors to use the term "general strike" in connection with the demonstration; and as the events

proceed, the West is a picture of impotence and fright, paralyzed by this mass workers' movement against Stalinism which at any moment threatens to spill over all borders.

The Russians finally come to the rescue . . . and with tanks and troops, at last restore "order" for their floundering puppet regime.

## VICTORY

It was not until three months later, however, that the government felt sufficiently secure to begin the arrest of the demonstrators. The estimate is that through 1955, more than 3000 men and women were sentenced to terms of 10 years and more, including those receiving the death penalty.

Of the thousands who fled to the Western zone, many were faced with the special dilemma of the Berlin refugee: they could not leave the city, trapped by poverty and unemployment; nor could they return to their homes and families to face certain reprisal. Some of them abandoned the political struggle altogether; still others, aware now of their potential strength and power are preparing for the next June 17.

On this third anniversary of the East German uprising, independent socialists all over the world will mourn those who died during the June days, remember those who still languish in prisons and camps, and solidarize themselves with those who remain in the forefront of the noblest struggle of our age: the fight for human freedom.

It was these workers who shattered the theory of the fainthearts, renegades and backsliders that, once Stalinism takes hold, the working class is doomed only to be a puppet of the state tyranny. Thus they gained a great victory.

They did so not because they won their fight in the immediate battle, but because they fought.

No fight for freedom anywhere is ever lost, no matter what the outcome.

## WHAT'S ON IN N.Y.

### Saturday, June 16

YSL Social-Educational  
TIM WOHLFORTH on  
Guerin's "Negroes on the March"  
At 541 E. 13 St., Apt. 5-A

### Sunday, June 17

JOINT ISL-YSL  
PICNIC AND OUTING  
TO CLOVE LAKE PARK  
(STATEN ISLAND)  
Boating . . . baseball . . .  
sun . . . fresh air . . .

### Thursday, June 28—ISL Forum

Abe Stein on  
THE CRISIS OF RUSSIAN  
STALINISM  
Labor Action Hall at 9



# LABOR ACTION

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## Strike — —

(Continued from page 2)

5000 men at work in Standard—is meeting to discuss the situation.

This flare-up at Standard Motors is only a forerunner of many others which will undoubtedly take place in the British automobile industry as the pace of automation develops.

## TEMPERS FRAYED

The whole process is further aggravated by the Tory government's credit squeeze which is hitting automobile manufacture by reducing the demand on the home market. The only possible solution in the present circumstances is for British automobile makers to expand sales overseas—and here competition is getting fierce. Of recent months British cars have not been selling at all well in comparison to those made by other European countries.

To further add to the rumblings of industrial discontent the Tory government is now making a serious endeavor to call a halt to further wage increases and is wailing to the high heavens about the "serious danger of inflation." Thus the workers in the factories are being pushed around from all sides and their tempers are becoming very frayed as a consequence.

Both employers and government are therefore watching very anxiously the moves of the trade-union leaders in the current dispute at Standard Motors. If the union leadership concedes to the growing militant feeling which now exists in industry and calls the Standard men out on official strike it could mark the starting point of a new series of hard-fought industrial disputes in Britain.

# THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT in the ALGERIAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT

By ANDRE GIACOMETTI

We have now described the developments leading up to the last regroupment of the right-wing and left-wing forces in the Algerian liberation movement.

As the picture now stands, the left wing is now reorganized as the MNA—Mouvement National Algérien—as the successor to the MTLD, led by Messali Hadj.

The right wing regrouped to include the former UDMA, the CRUA, the Moslem ulemas, and right wing elements from the "Messalists," all under the aegis of the FLN—Front de Libération Nationale.

There is an apparent paradox in the FLN: that elements among the most militant of the Algerian MTLD should have formed a coalition with politicians who distinguished themselves for years by the timidity of their positions on all issues.

These nationalist "extremists" of today are people who only yesterday refused to associate Algerian nationalism with the struggle of the Moroccan and Tunisian peoples, who advocated gradualist solutions, and who refused to raise the demand for independence.

Yet the contradiction is only apparent. It must be remembered that, under the present circumstances, anyone who does not advocate independence and the prosecution of the armed struggle has no place in the nationalist movement, not even in its most moderate sections. This is why national-reformism has disappeared in its traditional organizational forms—but it has not disappeared politically.

In the absence of an ideology and of a program of the CRUA, it has, on the contrary, taken the political leadership of the FLN. The thunderous proclamations of this organization cover policies that are still timid, still shallow. Its leaders are incapable of linking the struggle for independence to the social struggles of the working class, of giving a political and social content to the demand for independence. They conduct a battle that has been imposed upon them on a narrow, abstract, nationalistic basis.

## NATIONAL-REFORMISM

The FLN has become the expression of national-reformism in its new guise, the heir of the "Algerian National Congress" of the centralists: its soldiers are those of the CRUA, but its ideas and its politics are derived directly from the UDMA and the centralists.

This explains to a large extent why the FLN has been given more support and publicity by the French liberals (ranging from the Mendésists of *L'Express* to the Stalinoid-socialist coalition of *France-Observateur*) than the MNA.

It also explains why Ferhat Abbas, Khouane and their friends were able to take the plane from Algiers to Cairo via Marseilles, travelling on a French passport, while Messali remains confined on his small island.

Toward the Messalists, the FLN adopted from the start an attitude of aggressive hostility, which contrasted significantly with its friendly attitude toward the UDMA long before the latter had decided to join it. In its fight against the Messalists, the FLN at first adopted all the old themes of the centralists, attacking the "personal leadership" of Messali, then denying that the Messalists represented anything.

## SLANDER CAMPAIGN

In the last months of 1955, these attacks became part of an organized slander campaign, which culminated in an attempt to disorganize the Messalist groups by terror.

It might seem curious that the leaders of the FLN did not consider the struggle against the French as more important than the struggle against the Messalists. The reason for this becomes clearer if one considers the political aims which each group had set for its armed struggle.

After the outbreak of the insurrection in the Aurès, the French government dissolved the MTLD and suppressed the

press of both tendencies. While the centralists soon disappeared to merge with the CRUA, the Messalists reorganized themselves as the "Mouvement National Algérien" (MNA), incorporating the greatest part of the party organization in France. In Algeria, they proceeded to organize their own underground and their own partisan units.

The conditions of underground struggle make it difficult to judge the relative strength of both groups; however, it seems that the MNA, as well as the FLN, now controls substantial sections of the partisan army, while some sections seem to have remained independent of both parties.

Within the first months of 1955, the MNA had defined its war aims as follows: release of all political prisoners; free elections of an Algerian Constituent Assembly, by universal suffrage, without distinction of sex, race or religion; negotiations between the Algerian government, based on such an Assembly, with the French government.

As long as the French government maintained its position that Algeria was three (or four) French departments, that the Aurès insurrection was a matter for the police, and that negotiations were out of the question, the FLN had no reason to oppose the platform of the MNA: the main task, in the view of both organizations, was to assert the power of the partisan army as a force that could compel the French government to open negotiations. Thus, in September 1955, the partisans of the FLN whom Robert Barrat interviewed (in *France-Observateur*) laid down conditions for a cease-fire that were not much different from those of the MNA. In October, at meetings organized by the "Mouvement Liberté et Justice Outre-Mer," FLN and MNA both agreed on elections to a Constituent Assembly which would then negotiate the status of Algeria with France.

## NEW ROLE

After October, the position of the FLN changed: it ceased mentioning elections, stated that it was alone qualified to speak for the Algerian people, and demanded that the French government open negotiations with itself only.

By February, it was advocating all-out war until military defeat for the French army. In a leaflet distributed in Algiers on February 24, the FLN stated:

"No government will give independence to Algeria as long as the French army will not have suffered another Dien-Bien-Phu. The French are made that way: they give in only when they have the knife against the throat. . . . Mr. Guy Mollet has charged one of his political friends to go and meet the rebel chiefs. The latter inform the Algerian people that they refused to meet this personal envoy. . . . In Algeria, resistance is everywhere controlled by the FLN. The FLN alone is qualified to speak in the name of the people. Its representatives are alone qualified to meet the emissaries of the government when the conditions for a cease-fire will have been met."

What had happened to bring about this change? Two convergent series of events: the intensification of mass pressure in France for peace in Algeria which led, among other things, to the victory of the "Republican Front" in

the elections; the consolidation of the partisan army in Algeria and the extension of its influence, which made it evident for the French government that the war could not be ended quickly and at little cost.

These factors caused the French liberals to start looking for a "valid negotiation partner"—an Algerian Bourguiba or Sultan Ben Youssef. This is the role that the leaders of the FLN aspire to assume: it explains at the same time their claims to the exclusive representation of the Algerian people and the violence of their tone coupled with the moderation of their actual demands.

## THE DIRT FLIES

Their political platform has always remained vague, and they have never missed an opportunity to explain that independence could be obtained in stages and that "interdependence" would continue to be necessary between Algeria and France.

It also explains their campaign against the MNA: the latter, with its demand for free elections to a Constituent Assembly, refused to cast itself in the role of the "sole representative" and also makes it difficult for the FLN to do so. Thus the MNA had become an obstacle to the leadership of the FLN; to eliminate it, the latter did not hesitate to launch a large-scale slander campaign.

In this it was helped by the Stalinists, who have decided that potentially the FLN is an easier milieu to manipulate than the conscious and experienced cadres of the MNA.

The slanders were based on two themes: the "lack of representativeness" of the MNA, and the classical amalgam linking it with the administration and the police.

A typical example of this is the statement of the FLN to *France-Observateur* of February 23:

Question: "Do you feel that unity of action with the MNA is desirable now, possible in the near future and under what conditions?"

Answer: "Again, you ignore Algerian reality. The MNA is the trio Lambert, Messali, Merbah, racketeers (all revolutions have known these sinister types), police informers and traitors. You do not seriously think that we can accept an alliance with these people."

Lambert is a leader of the Trotskyist PCI, which has strongly supported the MNA.

The MNA, on the other hand, has always expressed readiness to cooperate with the FLN, and has deplored the division in the nationalist ranks as an additional handicap in the struggle against the French government. What it refuses to do, is to dissolve itself and accept the political platform of the FLN.

## ASSORTED LIARS

Professor Mandouze, a liberal Catholic from Algiers who supports the FLN, has found the courage to write: "Messali may again be utilized by imperialism to divide Algerian opinion. One should remember that this trump has already been used at times when the Algerian people had shown its unity, such as in 1946." At a time, that is, when Messali was in Tropical Africa where he was serving a sentence of forced labor.

Finally Francis Jeanson, a close collaborator of Sartre, a Stalinist apologist and a bourgeois without honor or conscience, wrote a dirty little pamphlet with Colette Jeanson, his wife, in which they suggest that the MNA resistance movement in Algeria is controlled by the police and composed of provocateurs. The pamphlet appeared in Paris when Mustapha Ben Mohammed, a top leader of the MNA in Algiers, had just been arrested and tortured viciously by the Algiers police.

It goes without saying, that the CP has done its share in this campaign, prohibiting the Algerian workers from

participating in May Day and protest demonstrations wherever it controlled the local CGT to a sufficient extent, using its relief organization "Secours Populaire" to blackmail the imprisoned MNA militants (on the theme "no assistance to your families unless you quit the MNA").

## LEFT WING LEADS

Since the slander campaign against the POUM in 1937, it is difficult to remember when so much dirt has been slung at a revolutionary movement. As in Spain, this campaign had deadly implications.

In December, the first reports reached France of attacks by partisan groups of the FLN against those of the MNA. These attacks reached a climax in March, when it seemed that the FLN was moving to exterminate systematically all the cadres and sympathizers of the MNA.

Fortunately, however, this campaign has failed. On the propaganda level it has been foiled by the strong resistance of French democrats and socialist militants, among the latter Déchezelles and, to some extent, Guérin, of the New Left, Pivert of the SP, the editors of *La Vérité*, and many others.

On the military level, the MNA revealed itself powerful enough to resist the onslaught and to force the FLN to accept local truce agreements. It is not unlikely that the FLN would encounter strong opposition among its own troops if it tried to continue an all-out fight with the MNA.

In France itself, the MNA has proven its power under conditions that satisfy the requirements of a controlled experiment in social science. During March and April, the MNA called a series of strikes against the vote of "special powers" to the government and against the repression in Algeria.

On March 9, thousands of Algerian workers struck in the Paris region, in Toulouse and in the North—the walk-out was almost general. On March 20, several thousand struck in the East (Moselle): 40 per cent struck in steel (representing 2400 workers), 80 per cent (12,000) in coal mining, 70 per cent in construction (5000).

On March 27 they struck in the North: 80 per cent for all trades (10-12,000), i.e., steel, textiles and coal mining. On March 30, they struck in the Center, that is in the region of St. Etienne and Lyon: the strike was 70 per cent effective in St. Etienne, 30 per cent effective in Lyon.

On April 4 the MNA struck again in Alsace, where the strike was 90 per cent effective (2250 workers walked out). In Lorraine, the same day, the strike was 100 per cent effective in construction and iron-ore mining, partial in steel.

## RIGHT WING FLOPS

On May 4 the FLN also organized a protest strike, calling on the Algerian workers to make it a "great day of struggle in all of France." In all, a few hundred workers followed the call.

In the East, in the North and in the Paris region, where most of the Algerians live, the strike fell completely flat. It was most successful in the departments of Isère, that is, near Grenoble, where 80 per cent walked out, in Seine-et-Oise (35 per cent) and Rhône (40 per cent)—however, only few Algerian workers work in these departments.

In general, the strike was followed mostly in small plants and outside the main industrial centers. In Moselle, all of 80 workers struck out of 16,000 employed in coal mining; in the Paris region, nothing happened; in Pas-de-Calais (North) a single steel plant and two coal pits followed the strike; in St. Etienne, nothing happened. In the Renault works, only 20 per cent of the Algerian workers walked out, in spite of full support from the Stalinists and the CGT.

In this manner, another "progressive" propaganda bubble was burst, and the MNA was confirmed as the leading organization of the Algerian workers.

## MNA FORGES AHEAD

Moreover, it must not be imagined that the Algerian workers in France live in a state of isolation from their homes in Algeria. There is constant traveling back and forth, and it is unreasonable to assume that Messalist workers become followers of the FLN when they cross the Mediterranean.

(Continued on next page)

# NORILSK: More Revolts In Russia's Slave-Labor Camps

By CHARLES WALKER

In the April 1956 issue of *Encounter*, an English monthly devoted to literature, arts, and current affairs, "The Strike at Norilsk," by Herbert Passin (an American anthropologist in Tokyo) and Fritz van Briessen (a Far Eastern foreign correspondent) is part of a symposium entitled "The End of Forced Labor?" The main source of information comes from repatriated Japanese prisoners.

The most outstanding example of hitherto unreported strikes in forced labor camps—at Norilsk, Magadan, Tayshet, Kirgil (Kazakhstan) and Muika (Czechoslovakia)—was at Norilsk. This camp "is located in the Arctic Circle . . . near the mouth of the Yenisei River at the northwestern corner of the Siberian plateau." Like Vorkuta, it is the center of "an industrial and administrative complex," was developed by forced labor, and is economically important, not for coal but for its unusual richness in rare metals and minerals such as nickel, copper, cobalt, platinum, gold, etc.

The Norilsk strike began on May 7, 1953 two months after Stalin's death—and lasted until August 11, 1953, about 100 days in all. It was two months before Vorkuta, and it continued afterward. It was concluded, like Vorkuta, by armed suppression and a massacre on the last night, when hundreds of prisoners were estimated to have been killed or wounded.

Norilsk is a prisoner's city of 300 to 400,000 and is composed of many nationalities. The great majority of prisoners were Ukrainians, many of whom had been in Ukrainian resistance movements in the collectivization period and during the Second World War. Other important nationalities were the Georgians and Baltic peoples, although up to 32 nationalities were counted by one Japanese "invalid lager."

The prison population, as distinct from the exiled "free population," had declined to 100,000 by the first post-Stalin (criminal) amnesty and then was reduced to 50,000 by that amnesty.

Stalin's death led to much unrest and hope, and was looked at as a turning point. Moscow decreed only minor "relaxations," and the disappointing "crimi-

nal" amnesty, plus the usual grievances, made the atmosphere tense.

## UKRAINIAN LEADERS

Spetz Lager 5, where the strike broke out, contained several score Ukrainians, previously involved in disturbances in the Kazakhstan camps in 1952 and only recently transferred to Norilsk. "These seemed to form an important focus of the strike, providing it with leadership and boldness."

These leaders had killed four known administration spies—without apprehension and even apparently with guards' assistance—and this weakened the administration, frightened its supporters, and emboldened the prisoners to follow the Ukrainian leadership.

The strike broke out on a construction project on May 9. The immediate cause was the wounding of a prisoner who had reached across barbed wire the day before for a note hurled from a nearby women prisoners' factory. Another minor wound was suffered when prisoners gathered on the spot to protest.

A group of prisoners obtained no satisfaction from the commandant when he was accosted, and the next day a "slow-down" occurred through brigade chiefs' apparently planned "confusion" over assignments.

On May 9, a night shift sit-down strike began, which lasted into the morning and prevented the day shift from going to work. Camp 4 began a sympathy strike that day.

On the morning of May 12, the Camp 5 night shift returned to camp. The prisoners then refused to go to work despite threats, and a group approached the commandant asking for "someone from Moscow" to hear their grievances.

This happened in Camp 4, too, and the next day a high MVD officer, described as "Beria's assistant," flew in from Moscow for negotiations. The prisoners refused to send "representatives" but only seven or eight "explainers" of their grievances. These were then talked with by the MVD officer.

## RAISE DEMANDS

The "explainers" offered 13 demands, formulated by the secret leadership of the strike without prisoner participation, but very enthusiastically received by the prisoners. As at Vorkuta (where there were also illegal committees, but composed of the national undergrounds) the first demand was for "application of the amnesty to the political prisoners."

The other demands were: (2) better food rations; (3) an 8-hour day, as against 10-12 hours counting travel; (4) better cultural facilities; (5) transfer to a better climate or more suitable work; (6) elimination of disparities in working conditions; (7) an end to discrimination against national minorities; (8) transfer of the camp commandant; (9) a rigid accounting of the Kombinat books ("camp officials are middlemen who exploit our labor"); (10) removal of identification numbers on clothing; (11) an increase in amount of money they could send home; (12) no locking of the barracks at night; (13) no reprisals.

Upon the promise on May 15 of investigation and action thereafter, the strike was temporarily ended. It flared up again on May 21, after the administration's evasiveness in giving a reply to their demands and several suspicious moves, such as transfers of several hundred foreign prisoners (mostly Japanese) and the removal of nearly half the prison population to Camp 4 and a new unnumbered camp.

Machineguns were heard moving the group along and rumors spread that dozens had been hurt. The general belief was that Ukrainian leaders were being isolated or killed, possibly even at the moment.

## GAINS MADE

The day after these occurrences (May 21) the strike recommenced in Camps 4 and 5, following an abortive night attempt to bolt the barracks' doors for further isolation. The prisoners arose, attacked the fleeing guards and "took over full control of the camp. They kept the guards out, and refused to pay attention to the administration. Orders passed around organizing camp activities, but nobody pried into . . . where they came from."

When prisoners didn't respond to threats to return to work, troops surrounded the camp, on May 24, and met resistance within the entered camp by point-blank fire into the crowds. This stunned the prisoners and broke the strike.

Other sympathy strikes occurred at the same time in political camps in the Norilsk area. The most important, in Camp 3, lasted until August 11, and it received support of the townspeople (mostly former prisoners) in the form of thrown-in supplies.

It, too, was finally forcibly suppressed at night and by a mass shooting which caused 1,500 killed and wounded out of 2,500 prisoners! During the strike the prisoners made leaflets, distributed these via kites flown into the wind, and "mysterious printed leaflets listing the strikers' demands began to appear in Norilsk town itself."

Despite the suppression of the 96-day strike beginning on May 7, some concessions were retained, whether partially planned in advance by the regime, or introduced, or speeded up by the prisoners' revolt.

Conditions were improved and existent regulations were enforced. The commandant of Camp 5 was transferred. Suit numbers were removed; barracks weren't bolted at night in most camps. There was an increase in small privileges, and also in take-home pay (some money goes to administration expenses!) — from 85

rubles per month to 200 rubles on the average.

Information on Norilsk ends in Autumn 1953, when the Japanese informants were transferred or freed.

## UKRAINIANS AGAIN

A less explosive but equally dramatic prisoner fight for reforms occurred in the coal-mining camps of Tayshet in the Krasnoyarsk region. Although isolated from the Norilsk events and general affairs in the Russian empire, the same unrest and hope occurred here, too, following Stalin's death. However, reforms were introduced here by the regime (subsequent to other regions) during 1953 and early 1954, without any strikes.

"But on May 5, 1954 a new development took place. Fifteen Ukrainians who had taken a leading part in the Norilsk strike arrived in Camp 13. Their transfer was part of the policy of dispersal of the strike leadership. For the first time the Tayshet prisoners learned of the strike, and for the first time they met fellow prisoners who were not afraid to stand up to the administration. The camp authorities seemed somewhat afraid of the new arrivals, so for the first few months they did not assign them any heavy work. *The Ukrainians excited the prisoners with their detailed stories about Norilsk. The moral of their story, they preached constantly, was that the prisoners should assert themselves and demand their rights.* [Emphasis added.]

"Something new is happening in the Soviet Union," they argued. "Beria's day is over!" they would shout back at the guards. "Now we are the ones who respect the laws of the Soviet Union. Don't try to pull anything on us!"

## THEY WILL WIN

In short, they took over the camp, after thoroughly beating the leader, a criminal prisoner, who went to the hospital and never returned. Regulations were now meticulously observed, and the prisoners' self respect increased when they "found it possible to stand up to authority without fear of reprisals and in the full expectation that they could compel the authorities to accept some of their demands."

On January 16, 1955, the prisoners of Camp 43—mainly foreigners—went on a 3-day strike for an improvement in their clothing ration. The strike ended with a promise by the authorities to investigate the matter.

Two final notes: First, it appeared that the prisoners at Norilsk did not repeat the Vorkuta failure to use the sit-down strike (in the mine shafts), thereby managing to avoid isolation and intimidation to some degree. And this shows that such problems can be solved "in isolation," despite the handicap this imposes on subsequent strikes (i.e., later at Vorkuta).

And second: Both of these strikes go against the view of Stalinoids, ex-socialists, "mechanical materialists" and liberals, that simple improvement of conditions and the standard of living of the masses in the Russian Empire can only lead to pacification on their part. These forced-labor camp strikes certainly point in another direction—obviously limited as they are—since they followed a general improvement in living conditions. The Russian working class will yet repeat its earlier progressive role in 1917, as the fight for genuine socialism continues.

## The Left in Algeria — —

(Continued from page 4)

In recent months, more and more Algerian workers have left France to return to Algeria (approximately 15,000 in February and March). The government has attempted to stop this migration by establishing a visa requirement between France and Algeria and screening all applicants.

In Algeria, the MNA is making up for the deficiencies of the MTLD as far as trade-union policy is concerned. At the end of February, workers of the MNA organized the first independent Algerian trade-union federation, the "Union Syndicale des Travailleurs Algériens" (USTA), which has already applied for affiliation with the ICFTU.

It is unlikely that its real strength will appear as long as it will not be able to function under normal conditions; however, it is practically certain to organize the majority of longshoremen, of transport workers and of hospital workers, where it has already manifested its activity. Its leaders have also declared that they intended to organize the mass of agricultural workers who have hitherto always been unorganized.

In one of their statements they said: "The USTA is open to all Algerian workers, without any distinction of origin, of political opinion or of religion. We are happy to have already received applications for membership from workers of French origin. . . . The essential struggle must be conducted in the agricultural sector; the agricultural workers constitute a class of pariahs and are shamefully exploited. However, miserable as their situation may be, we do not forget that there is an even more pressing problem: the problem of unem-

ployment. This is why we are demanding the right to work for over a million of our brothers living in a state of despair. . . . We feel that the French trade-unionists should consider with interest the situation that arises from the presence in France of over 300,000 Algerians who would like to unite their forces to those of the comrades from France."

The FLN retorted in March by setting up a rival organization, the "Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens" (UGTA) which has so far remained a shadow organization.

## SUPPORT LIBERATION

The liberation struggle of the Algerian people deserves the support of every democrat, of all labor organizations and of all currents of socialist opinion, even if it were led exclusively by people whose ideology is a muddle of reformism and chauvinism. In fact, if this was the case, it would need support more urgently. Whatever the leadership of the FLN may be, it represents in a distorted form legitimate demands of the Algerian people for self-determination and for control over their economic and political destinies.

Luckily, however, the Algerian people does not have to rely on the FLN. In spite of slander and terror from all sides, the MNA, a revolutionary socialist party, emerges as the representative current of Algerian nationalism.

It has deserved this position by its tradition, by the quality of its leadership, by its program, which expresses in simple form the fundamental demands of the Algerian people and, above all, by the consciousness, the courage and the tenacity of its rank and file.

## EVERY WEEK —

### Young Socialist CHALLENGE

appears as a section in all regular issues of *Labor Action*. Published, and independently edited, by the Young Socialist League, it is the only socialist youth weekly in the country. Don't miss it!

## NOTE

Challenge has been omitted from this issue to give room to the full report on the Washington hearing. NEXT WEEK: a report on the SDA Convention.

# Socialism vs. the 'List' System:

(Continued from page 1)

ets, of testing of the programs of the various parties in practice, and the peaceful transfer of power from party to party.

"If this opportunity is allowed to slip, the entire course of development of the revolution, from the movement of April 20 to the Kornilov affair points to the inevitability of a most acute civil war between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat."

## ABOUT DEMOCRACY

Mr. Groner then pursued the question of "force and violence" more specifically with reference to democracy.

Q.—"In the organizations' Leninism, is it a major position of the organizations that force and violence should be employed for the establishment of socialism wherever there is a good promise of success?"

—"No."

MR. MADDRIX (Counsel for the Government): "Excuse me, read that back." (The question was read.)

A.—"The answer is no."

Q.—"In the organizations' Leninism, what is the view of democracy under capitalism?"

A.—"To us, democracy is essential—quintessential—to the victory of socialism. There is a famous phrase of Lenin that we have often repeated . . . without democracy, socialism cannot be realized; without socialism, the fullest democracy cannot be realized."

Q.—"Would you agree that it summarizes Lenin's view that bureaucracy and centralism are characteristic of the type of organization that he wants for the leadership of the proletariat . . .?"

A.—"I have heard that point of view enunciated . . ."

Q.—"Do you agree that Lenin taught that?"

A.—"Lenin wrote something like that at one time, yes. [This has reference to the illegal period when Lenin's party was underground and illegalized by the Czarist regime and could not function openly through regular conventions and elections of functionaries but had used the system of appointments and co-optations.—A.G.] But that is essential to Leninism, that it is the outstanding characteristic, that could be said by only such persons that are unfamiliar with Lenin's point of view, in the context in which that particular statement was made. Lenin specifically rejected such a point of view. That is why we have the attitude that we do have toward quotations of Lenin, quotations from Marx and Engels and Trotsky . . ."

## THE ONLY SAFEGUARD

The examination continued on the question of democracy and revolution. Groner had asked Shachtman what the views of the organization are on democracy, having pointed out that in earlier testimony Shachtman had stated that the organizations adhered to democracy. He then asked:

Q.—"I wonder if you have any writing of these organizations which indicates support of that view and helps to explain it?"

A.—"There are a number. I will cite, if you wish, some of the most typical. I am quoting now from an article by Max Shachtman in the *New International*, May-June, 1950, from "Reflections of a Decade Past":

"The socialist movement, which is (or should be) nothing but the conscious expression of the fight of the working class, can be restored to a decisive political force if it realizes that, today far more than ever before, the all-around and aggressive championing of the struggle for democracy is the only safeguard against the encroaching social decay, and the only road to socialism. We are or must become the most consistent champions of democracy, not so much because the slogans of democracy are 'convenient weapons' against an anti-democratic bourgeoisie, but because the working class, and our movement with it, must have democracy in order to protect and promote its interests. Above all because the last thirty years in particular have confirmed or reminded us or awakened us to the fact that without the attainment of democracy all talk of the conquest of power by the working class is deceit or illu-

sion, and that without the realization of complete democracy all talk of the establishment of socialism is a mockery. A socialist movement, grant it the best intentions in the world, which ignores or depreciates the fight for democracy—for all democratic rights and institutions, for more extensive democratic rights and the most democratic institutions—which is suspicious about such a fight being somehow not in consonance with or something separate from (let alone inimical to) the fight for socialism, or supports it reluctantly or with tongue in cheek, will never lead the fight for socialist freedom."

## OUR GOAL

Shachtman continued: "Let me read you another excerpt, *The New International*, March, 1942, 'Socialism and National Liberation,' by J. W. Smith:

"The realization of 'complete' democracy is today not the task of the bourgeoisie but of the proletariat. The aim of the proletariat is not only to eliminate material poverty but also to free man in every respect. The socialists do not only want man to eat his fill but also to make it possible for him to develop freely in every sense. Consequently, it is not only the 'abolition of the poverty of the masses,' but also a 'complete and manifold realization of all democratic reforms' that is our goal . . ."

"... The difference between the revolutionary proletarian and the petty bourgeois reformer is not that the former would fight only for the socialist economic overturn and the latter only for political democracy. The proletarian revolutionist differs from the petty bourgeois reformer.

"1. In that he defends consistently democracy for all, while the latter can permit democracy only to a certain extent, so long as it does not exceed the limits of the bourgeois order;

"2. In that he knows that 'complete democracy' can be realized only through the socialist revolution, through the abolition of all class rule, and therefore judges every democratic demand *sub specie* this final goal."

## ON REVOLUTION

Groner then asked:

Q.—"When the organizations use the word 'revolution' what do they mean by that?"

A.—"The reorganization of society on fundamentally different economic foundations . . ."

Q.—"The socialist revolution will accomplish a society fundamentally different from the one we have. Would that be a fair statement of what you have said?"

A.—"That is correct."

Q.—"Do you use the word 'revolution' to indicate the means whereby this change will be brought about?"

A.—"No. That is not involved in the term 'revolution' as we employ it."

Q.—"When you use a word like 'overthrow,' 'overthrow the capitalist system,' what do the organizations mean by the word 'overthrow'?"

A.—"Change it from top to bottom in the manner which I indicated by the term 'revolution.'"

Q.—"Do you mean by the term 'overthrow' the use of force and violence?"

A.—"Insofar as we are concerned, absolutely not."

## AIM OF EDUCATION

Groner then examined Shachtman on the nature of the organizational characteristics of the WP, ISL and SYL, their internal technical functioning and main activities. Shachtman's answer dealt with the branch structure of the organizations, the role of conventions in establishing policies and electing national committees, the manner of political discussions and debate and, finally, the propagandistic and educational role of the WP and ISL. "Our main role," said Shachtman, "is educational and propagandizing of our point of view before the working class and socialist public of the country."

Q.—"... [to] advocate the use of force and violence to change the form of Government of the United States?"

A.—"Absolutely not. There is not a single instance."

Q.—"Has that been taught to your knowledge in any classes?"

A.—"Absolutely not. I am at least as

well acquainted with any classes run by our organization. I don't hesitate to say that.

Q.—"Is that advocated in your press to the best of your knowledge?"

A.—"Absolutely not. Our principal political slogan and political activity does not relate to that in any way. It deals with something considerably different from that. It deals with our main political slogan and objective for the whole coming period: the formation in the United States of an independent labor party."

## ORGANIZATION'S ROLE

In line with questioning by Groner, Shachtman went into a long explanation of the basis of the "labor party position" of the WP and ISL. Shachtman also explained why the Workers Party, formed with the hope of becoming a party, did not realize this goal and hence became the Independent Socialist League in order to conform more accurately with the program and perspectives of the movement. He pointed out that this was not unusual, since, under conditions existing in the country, all of the socialist organizations were propaganda groups, none of them having attained the stature of mass parties.

Groner asked whether any courses on military tactics were ever given in classes and schools of the organizations. Shachtman replied:

"Not at all. Nowhere. If anybody sought to do that, then our record on expulsion would be changed. We would expel him immediately. We would consider him an *agent provocateur*, a man who is trying to set up a frame-up. That is not at all in line with our point of view."

## "DEFENSE GUARDS"

On Thursday, June 7, under the direct examination of counsel John Silard, Shachtman continued to testify on a variety of positions held by the organizations. One question which the government had raised was the call by the Workers Party for the organization of Workers Defense Guards. The intention of the government was to convey the impression that this proved that the organizations advocated these formations as instruments of "force and violence" in the struggle against the government.

Under direct questioning, Shachtman pointed out the origin of this problem in the late Thirties at a time when the fascist German-American Bund, the Coughlinites and other native fascist groupings were openly and provocatively sending out "storm troopers" to break up meetings of radical and socialist groups. The Stalinist organizations were likewise using strong-arm squads to break up opponent political organization meetings.

Shachtman pointed out that this demand for Workers Defense Guards was a defensive act to defend meetings and distributors of literature and other persons, particularly Jews, who were often assailed by the Nazi-fascist groups. The problem was aggravated by the fact that

members of the police force were in many cases under the influence of the Coughlinite movement.

The Workers Party in its early years called for "Workers Defense Guards, particularly in the period when Gerald L. K. Smith broadened his fascist activity. The slogan Shachtman pointed out, was a carry-over from that period of the late Thirties and has not been used since then. The idea of Workers Defense Guards had never, in any sense, the significance attributed to it by the government.

## SUBVERSIVE BATS

The absurdity of the government's imputation of the role of such defense guards was manifested earlier during Groner's examination of Shachtman when he had asked the latter if the Workers Party or Independent Socialist League possessed any arms, guns, knives, clubs, etc. Shachtman replied that the organizations had none of these things, but at one time the Workers Party had had a few baseball bats ready in the national office when it expected an attack from the Stalinists, who had more than once attacked our meetings. Groner wanted to know if the organization still had these bats. Shachtman said they had disappeared and thought that perhaps Albert Gates had taken them because he was the "red-hot baseball man" in the organization. Gates informed Mr. Groner off the record that he had only one such bat and had taken it only because it was a "guaranteed home-run bat."

## CP COUPS

Silard asked the following question: Q.—"Have the organizations ever taken a position on the seizure of power in Czechoslovakia [by the Stalinists]?" A.—"Yes, repeatedly, in many articles in *The New International* and in *LABOR ACTION*. If you will permit, I would like to read you some excerpts to indicate our attitude toward the seizure of power . . ."

Another question asked of Shachtman related to the positions taken by the organizations on "the movements for national independence" to indicate the democratic views of the WP and ISL. On this question, the organizations have an exemplary record. The subject of national liberation had been debated for many years and the organizations have consistently supported all movements for independence. Shachtman pointed out in one of the writings in *The New International* of June, 1944, an editorial entitled "Promises of the Atlantic Charter" the following was said of the words of this document, that "If they do not coincide fully with the program of international socialism they are not in conflict with it. Their transmutation into living reality would unquestionably open up a new era for mankind . . ." What is wrong, said Shachtman, is that the Charter was never lived up to.

The concluding portion of this day's testimony dealt with the relation of the organization to the Socialist Workers Party, beginning with the split in the present day.

## Thomas, Macdonald, Fleischman, Widick Testify as Witnesses for the ISL

Friday, June 8

On Friday morning Harry Fleischman, the first of the organization's witnesses, took the stand. Under examination by Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., Fleischman identified himself as the former national secretary of the Socialist Party. He had joined the Young Peoples Socialist League in 1931 and had been a member of the Socialist Party for twenty-five years. In addition to having been party organizer in the Illinois-Indiana district, he was also editor of the *Socialist Call* and presently is a member of the editorial board of the *Call*. For fourteen years, he had been an official of the YPSL or the Socialist Party and was campaign manager for Norman Thomas in the presidential elections of 1944 and 1948. He is presently employed as director of the National Labor Service of the American Jewish Committee.

Fleischman related that he left the post of national secretary of the Socialist Party in 1950 because he disagreed with

the party policy of running election campaigns for the presidency, although he remained a member of the SP. He then worked for the Voice of America. The examination by Rauh continued:

—"Did there come a time in 1949 when you were asked to sign a joint statement on socialism with other socialist organizations?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"Would you describe what happened at that time, Mr. Fleischman?"

A.—"Well, perhaps I had better go back a little bit in order to give the context of what occurred. There was a column in *The New York Herald Tribune* called 'Feathers from the Left Wing,' on the editorial page of the *Tribune* and edited by a man named Rodney Gilbert [Fleischman then related the story of his acquaintance with Rodney Gilbert.] "In 1949, he came to me with the suggestion that it would be a good idea if the various socialist groups in this country despite their differences of

# The ISL's Washington Hearing

opinion on all sorts of issues. . . .  
 At this point, the Government objected on the ground that testimony of conversation was hearsay. The Examiner directed the witness to give the substance of the matter without quoting conversation.

A:—(continued) "In substance, the conversation was to the effect it would be an excellent idea if the various socialist groups in this country were to join in a statement to the effect that 'Stalinism is not socialism.' I agreed that that would be an excellent idea and I took it up with my National Action Committee of the Socialist Party, which approved the idea. Mr. Gilbert prepared the draft of the statement which those who were asked to sign it revised to some extent. I don't remember the precise extent to which it was revised. Suffice it to say that three individuals acting for their groups, August Claessens, national secretary of the Social Democratic Federation, myself as national secretary of the Socialist Party and Max Shachtman as secretary of the Independent Socialist League—I think it was called that at the time, not Workers Party—signed this statement which was then carried to seventeen countries over the Voice of America.

"It was carried by the Associated Press and the United Press. It was carried by European socialist papers and was carried in the Hong Kong and Formosa newspapers. And it was also distributed by bomber, I was told—"

MR. MADDRIX: "We object to that, whether it was distributed, did you say bomber—?"

A:—"That is what I was told."

## EXHIBIT INTRODUCED

Rauh then introduced into evidence the leaflet entitled 'Stalinism Is Not Socialism' and asked that it be marked as Defendants' Exhibit No. 1. At this point, Mr. Oren Waterman, government counsel, objected to the use of the word "defendant." "This has the connotation," he said, "of a criminal proceeding. This, as we all know, is not that. I think Mr. Rauh is using that deliberately. . . ." The Examiner expressed the opinion that it should be marked Organizations' Exhibit 1, "but if counsel insists on labelling it Defendants, why it may be so marked." Rauh adopted the examiner's suggestion and marked it as Organization's Exhibit 1, and it was received in evidence.

At this point the government, through Mr. Maddrix, examined Mr. Fleischman on the authenticity of the exhibit. Questioning followed along the lines of whether Mr. Fleischman had recently read the document and knew what was in it, whether the document in evidence had signatures on it, whether he had seen it before testifying, and so on. The witness explained that he had read the particular document in evidence at Mr. Rauh's office the night before and was fully acquainted with its contents.

Q.—"Now, you are positive that all of the wording there is identical with the wording of the original document which you signed on behalf of the Socialist Party?"

A.—"I signed on behalf of the Socialist Party, yes."

Q.—"That was in 1949 when you did sign it?"

A.—"Yes. To the best of my recollection, it was the same thing. I don't claim superhuman powers. But to the best of my recollection, this is the same."

Q.—". . . Do you know where the original document is and what happened to it?"

A.—"No."

Q.—"After you signed it on behalf of the Socialist Party, what did you do with it?"

A.—"Each—we signed separate copies as I pointed out before. I sent it to Mr. Gilbert—the original."

Q.—"What did you do with the copy?"

A.—"I said, the original copy I sent to Mr. Gilbert."

Argument then followed on the admissibility of the exhibit, and the document remained in evidence.

## PECULIAR OBJECTION

Rauh then asked: "What is a communist in your opinion, Mr. Fleischman?" The government interrupted to raise the question of the witness' qualification to answer. Maddrix asked: "Is he an expert on the theoretical and political philosophy

of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, or is it just his opinion of what a communist is, as a layman? He apparently has not been associated with any communist organization."

This was a peculiar objection in view of the fact that the witness has been in the socialist movement for twenty-five years, while the government produced as its "expert" a professor who belonged to no organization, had never even heard of the WP, ISL or SYL and, for that matter, in reply to a question, said he knew of no organization in the United States which was comparable to Lenin's party, either in doctrine, program or tactics. Nevertheless, the government raised the question of the qualifications of a witness who has been politically active in the working class movement and fully acquainted with all organizations and their ideas.

## DEFINITION OF COMMUNIST

The objection was overruled and Fleischman answered:

"My opinion of what a communist is, basically, in the context of today's situation—I would say that a communist is anyone who follows the line set down by the Soviet ruling body and follows that line slavishly through all its twists and turns. To me, this is the basic and essential hallmark of a communist.

Q.—"How would you define a communist organization?"

MR. MADDRIX.—"Same objection." MR. MORRISSEY.—"Objection overruled."

A.—"How would I define a communist organization?"

Q.—"Yes."

A.—"A communist organization is one which follows slavishly every twist and turn in the line of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, of the ruling Soviet body."

Q.—"Have you followed the literature of other socialist organizations?"

A.—"Not only other socialist organizations, but communist organizations as well."

Q.—"Have you ever followed LABOR ACTION and The New International?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"Have you ever followed other publications of the Workers Party and Independent Socialist League?"

A.—"From time to time."

Q.—"On the basis of following these publications, do you believe the organizations advocate the overthrow of the government by force and violence?"

MR. MADDRIX.—"We object."

## STRAIGHT ANSWER

A lengthy colloquy followed wherein the government argued that the witness could not answer such a question on the ground that it was within the province of the hearing examiner to find and recommend such findings to the attorney general, and that for the witness to answer the question he would be doing what the hearing examiner should do. Mr. Maddrix further objected that Mr. Fleischman was not really qualified to answer that because he did not really know the organization, "except casually." The objection was overruled and examination continued.

Q.—"Based on the readings of the literature of the three organizations and your experience in the Socialist Party, do you believe that these organizations advocate the overthrow of the government by force and violence?"

A.—"No."

Q.—"Do you believe that they seek to alter the form of government by force and violence and by unconstitutional means?"

A:—"Would you repeat the question?"

Q.—"Do you believe that organizations seek to alter the form of government of the United States by unconstitutional means?"

A.—"No."

## TESTING FLEISCHMAN

The government proceeded to cross-examination of Mr. Fleischman. It wanted to know whether he had attended any national conventions or national committee meetings of the organization. It wanted to know if he had read all the issues of Labor Action and The New International. To test his credibility, Mr. Maddrix asked Mr. Fleischman if he knew the periodicity

of issue of The NI and LA, and since he had lived in Chicago through the years 1939 to 1942, how he could follow the activities of the organization.

Further questioning by Mr. Maddrix dealt with his activities as national secretary of the Socialist Party in order to test his knowledge on the various questions brought out in the hearing and to show that Mr. Fleischman's activities would keep him too busy to know what the Workers Party and ISL were doing.

With respect to the "Chinese leaflet," the following examination occurred:

Q.—"You say it was disseminated over the Voice of America?"

A.—"That is correct."

Q.—"You worked for the Voice of America?"

A.—"I did, but not at that time."

Q.—"How do you know it was disseminated over the Voice of America?"

A.—"I saw a copy of the script from the Voice of America."

Fleischman explained how scripts were drawn up at the Voice of America and how he had received the information about this leaflet. The examination continued.

## COMMUNISM AGAIN

Q.—"Were you acquainted with the writings of V. I. Lenin?"

A.—"I have read some of them."

Q.—"Now, when you answered Mr. Rauh's question as to what you thought communism was, did you have in mind writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky. . . .?"

A.—"I had in mind Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin-Trotsky when he was part of the official Communist apparatus but not when he was kicked out of the official Communist apparatus."

Q.—"What is communism in the abstract sense? You understand what I mean?"

A.—"I understand what you mean, but I don't think it is a relevant question."

Q.—"I would like you to answer that if you can."

A.—"Communism is a variety of things. It depends upon whose definition. I have heard it defined as a belief in equal wages and equal rights for everybody—which is obviously not what communism is.

"I have heard it described in some publications, the way to spot a communist—if a person folk dances. . . this is also obviously ridiculous.

"I don't think a question of philosophical communism or communism in the abstract has any real meaning. . . communism as a movement controlled by a foreign power bent on the overthrow of the United States government, that is the communism that really concerns me.

Q.—"So, the definition you have given of communism is what you as a layman or you as an expert would determine it to be?"

A.—"I think that as an expert."

Q.—"You think you are an expert on matters dealing with communism?"

A.—"The government thought so. . . . I wrote scripts on this subject for the Voice of America."

Q.—"Let us look at the writings of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. What is communism, having in mind their writings?"

A.—". . . Marx and Lenin differed considerably and interpretations of what each said and what Trotsky said have been voluminous. I have heard Socialists quoting Marx and quoting him to mean diametrically opposite things from what Communists say. . . . We could get into very involved discussions on that, if that is what you want."

These were the important aspects of Fleischman's testimony.

## MACDONALD ON STAND

Dwight Macdonald then testified under examination by Mr. Groner, disclosing that he had been an associate editor of Fortune Magazine, 1929-36, an editor of Partisan Review, 1937-43, publisher and editor of his own magazine, Politics, 1944-49, and had recently been teaching at Northwestern University. He had been a member of the Workers Party of 1934, the Socialist Workers Party through the split of 1940 and the newly

formed Workers Party from 1940 to 1942.

Asked why he resigned from the Workers Party, Mr. Macdonald pointed out that he had developed a point of view different from that of the organization on Nazi Germany, that he had written an eighty page document on the subject and that the party had refused to publish more than twenty pages. He also felt that the party had a "closed mind" and "this crystallized a general feeling of dissatisfaction I had about a lack of open discussion."

Q.—"Was there free discussion at the meetings?"

A.—"Oh, yes, at the meetings there was free discussion."

Q.—"Was the Workers Party, from your knowledge of it, a Communist organization?"

A.—"No."

Q.—"What do you mean by that?"

A.—"Well, I mean it was not Communist. I define 'Communist' as it is used today, namely, somebody who is. . . a member of the Communist Party, anyone connected with the Soviet government and Russia. In that sense, it was not Communist and violently opposed. . . .

In another sense, where small "c" . . . that is, a classless society, in that sense, of course, the Workers Party was communist.

## FUNCTION OF PARTY

Q.—"Was the Workers Party a Marx-Lenin-Trotsky party?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"What do you mean by that?"

A.—"It was Marxist in its philosophy. It was Trotsky and Lenin because it revered the tradition. . . . considered their action on the whole good in the period from 1917 to 1929. . . . They considered the problem was the emergence of Stalin."

Q.—"Did the Workers Party advocate the overthrow of the government of the United States by unconstitutional means?"

A.—"No."

Q.—"What was the chief function of the party?"

A.—"Educational and propaganda—about the only function. It only had 500 members or so. That was our job. It wasn't an action party, in other words."

Q.—"How did the Workers Party believe that the socialist society would be achieved?"

A.—"Well, they thought the most probable way that it would be achieved would be that the—you mean in general?"

Q.—"Through what means?"

A.—"Well, through the operation of historical forces. . . . when the majority of the people. . . [became] receptive to our ideas. . . ."

## EXPLAINING VIEWS

Q.—"Was it the position of the Workers Party, was it the position that—here I quote something that has been testified to by another witness—"that force and violence should be employed. . . .?"

A.—"No."

Q.—"They didn't advocate the use of force and violence?"

A.—"No, they didn't advocate. On the other hand, it naturally came up in a hypothetical sense. It came up, as I recall now, it came up in this way: there was the matter of what would happen when you got a majority of the people and when the state began to make these very basic changes in property. . . . Well, we thought that the most likely thing that would happen, there would be violent resistance by the bosses, the capitalists, the employers, the owning class. . . . it would take the form of an attempt so to speak, to change the rules of the game, they would not abide by free, peaceful elections. If this took place, we would consider we would be using force to defend the right of the majority. . . . we would consider we would be defending something, not attacking.

Q.—"Did the Workers Party believe that the majority could win by peaceful and democratic means?"

A.—"Think it could?"

Q.—"Could attain?"

A.—"Yes. This wasn't ruled out as a

(Turn to last page)

# Socialism versus the 'List' System — —

[Continued from page 7]

possibility in this country. We thought we could. I think we thought that the probability was that there would be this violent resistance. But we thought it could, yes."

Q.—"... As to the means of gaining power, did the Workers Party believe that power could be gained by peaceful and democratic means?"

A.—"Yes, they did think so."

## "PEACEFUL MEANS"

The examination of Macdonald continued along similar lines. Macdonald pointed out that the question of any conflict that might arise after a socialist majority had been attained in the nation would arise only in the belief of the Workers Party through the resistance of the old owning classes.

Q.—"Did the Workers Party think it could accomplish the transfer?"

A.—"By itself? We are not lunatics. No."

Q.—"How did it believe...?"

A.—"It believed it would be accomplished by vast historical forces, specifically the world war—that this might have the result all over the world of workers' or socialist governments coming into power and as a result breaking down the old class structure, as a result of the war. That this might possibly happen in this country also. But it certainly wouldn't be because of what we would do particularly. We were just anxious to enlighten the masses to their real interest..."

Q.—"Did the Workers Party believe that socialism could not be effected by peaceful means?"

A.—"No, we didn't believe. We thought it was possible to be effected by peaceful means."

Q.—"Did the Workers Party have a position what its individual members should do during American participation in World War II?"

A.—"What do you mean, as far as going into the Army?"

Q.—"Yes?"

A.—"Yes, it did. It thought they should go into the Army. As Marxists, they weren't in favor of anarchistic, individual action. They thought that they should obey the law and go into the Army. Yes, like anybody else."

The Government did not try to contradict Macdonald's testimony.

## THOMAS AS WITNESS

The day's session was climaxed by the lively, forthright testimony of the veteran socialist leader and civil libertarian, Norman Thomas. Under the direct examination of Mr. Rauh, Thomas told briefly of his activities as the leader of the Socialist Party and explained his acquaintance with the literature, ideas and activities of other socialist groups.

"I could not help it," said Thomas, "it followed me a great deal of the time." Asked if this included the literature of the WP and ISL, Thomas said: "Most surely. They are very diligent in following you."

Rauh then asked Thomas if he had ever seen the "Chinese leaflet." Thomas said that he knew all about it from the beginning and added:

"I was very enthusiastic about the preparation of this document. I was very agreed that our socialist secretary, Harry Fleischman, should sign the document."

Then Thomas was asked:

Q.—"Mr. Thomas, on the basis of your following, on the basis of your experience as a socialist and on the basis of your following the literature of the Workers Party and the Independent Socialist League, will you state whether you believe that organization advocates the overthrow of the government by force and violence?"

A.—"No, I do not."

## INTERPRETS THE ISSUE

At this point the government raised the same objection as it did in the testimony of Harry Fleischman, namely, that this was a question to be decided ultimately by the examiner, and if Thomas answered the question he would be "usurping your prerogative." The objection was overruled and Thomas continued.

A.—"Do I believe they taught force and violence in the overthrow of the

government? Wasn't that the question in substance?"

Q.—"Yes, sir."

A.—"No, they didn't, to the best of my knowledge and belief. I suppose there is no better evidence... [than] in this *Fight for Socialism*. If it is permissible, there is a paragraph that seems to me to state their position.

"In substance, what they say is, that they believe it is inevitable, or practically inevitable, that the workers, having come to power by legitimate means... will be confronted with people who will not be dispossessed. It is only in that case, and they say the better prepared the workers are for this the less chance [there is for violence]..."

"If it is material and I am allowed to say so, I don't agree with their diagnosis of the future. I don't agree with this type of inevitability. I don't agree with many things about their views.

"But most emphatically, I don't consider, never have considered, that this particular group taught any force and violence."

## CROSS-EXAMINED

Then Thomas said that in his opinion what the organization believed was that the other side would resort to violence because "they will not accept the results of the peaceful revolution, the peaceful change." With that answer, Mr. Rauh rested and Mr. Maddrix cross-examined for the government.

He wanted to know how many issues of *Labor Action* and *The New Internationalist* Thomas had read and whether he had read all of them.

Thomas replied that he read the press frequently and added "I am familiar with *Labor Action*. A very aggressive and ably edited publication, with which I quite often disagree."

He was also asked whether he had read bulletins and pamphlets of the organizations or had read *The ABC of Marxism*. (The reference was to the unrevised edition.)

Maddrix read a single sentence from the *ABC* dealing with the question of force. Rauh objected to this question unless the government showed the document to Thomas so that he might see the context rather than a sentence extracted from a lengthy document. Thomas interposed:

"That is perfectly true. There is a vast literature which nobody, certainly not myself, [is wholly familiar with]... from the time of Marx on. You can pull out a sentence in that literature that, standing by itself, sounds like an exhortation to force and violence, but I have listened for years of my life... this includes an explanation of the readiness of the workers to defend what [they have won]..."

"They are simply discussing the future in terms of their interpretation of the past, a history which has had plenty of violence."

## MADDRIX SPARS

Thomas went on to say that the WP and ISL were not like the "tailors of Trolley Street about to take possession of City Hall." He added:

"They say in the long run... the workers may have to fight to keep what otherwise they have won. I don't agree with their analysis of history altogether or their prediction of the future. I am not even a Marxist, certainly not an orthodox Marxist."

In this connection Thomas said, "It is like Christianity. It depends."

Maddrix quoted from *The ABC of Marxism*: "The revolutionary party... back its determination with armed force." He asked Thomas what that meant to him. Thomas had previously said in answer to how often he read the press of the WP and ISL:

"... May I respectfully say if a party is teaching the overthrow of the government by force and violence from the period ever since its organization and you have been familiar at various times with what it was saying and you have engaged in personal argument with many of its members, and you have seen pamphlets and throw-aways they give out, and you haven't discovered that... they must be whispering very low."

So far as the specific quotation from the *ABC* went, Thomas said, "The next paragraph does not mean revolution

once more to *The Fight for Socialism*, he then asked what the publication date necessarily, a bloody affair." Referring of the *ABC* was, "I ask the date because I don't think this [the quotation] legitimate. A great many bodies can somewhat modify the emphasis and the way they state things... It is probably immaterial, except for the fact that I have not seen it in recent use."

Mr. Maddrix asked if he would like to see it. Thomas did not, because he had seen and read so much material in his lifetime, and added: "... For years of my life I have listened to Marxists who have belonged to many sects who have talked like that. Most of them are terribly peaceful people, quite legalistic. You would be surprised how they respect the law and customs... They have a lot more respect for the Supreme Court than some people do."

## WORKERS COUNCILS

Maddrix again referred to the section dealing with parliamentarism in *The Fight for Socialism* and asked: "Are you familiar with what Shachtman has to say about the employment of parliamentary means?"

A.—"Yes, I certainly am."

Thomas pointed out that the book by Shachtman favored "a device... something like workers' councils rather than what we commonly call parliamentarism."

Q.—"He does not have much faith in the employment of parliamentary means to achieve the state of socialism?"

A.—"He does not have as much faith as I do, and even I have moments."

Q.—"Does he have any faith in that book?"

A.—"No. May I say that here you are dealing, as I understand it, with certain techniques of government and I think he is much more concerned on how workers should carry on government than he is with the elections and other devices... at least, it is my interpretation and has been my interpretation... It seems to me that what we are dealing with now is a great government taking, as it were.

a pile-driver to destroy what it considers a cockroach. I am not making any invidious comparison... Whether or not they are advocating any specific and direct means within the clearly foreseeable future, force and violence—of neither of these have I seen the slightest trace in these organizations.

## "DANGEROUS"

Q.—"In other words, it is your considered opinion that these organizations which we are dealing with present no clear and present danger to the internal security of the United States? That is what you mean?"

A.—"Yes. No clear and present danger... this particular group has been in the forefront of those who have exposed the crimes, some of the crimes, now admitted by Mr. Khrushchev when he discussed his ex-god.

In a discussion once more of *The Fight for Socialism* in its historical and "prognostic" section, Thomas said that although in other contexts he would have other things to say about the matter, "I would never say it didn't have a lot of truth in the terms of history, from some of the things that happened to date, but I can say, it seems to me—I feel this very keenly—I think it is a very dangerous use of government to have the government come in and say that this historic and prophetic testimony, backed by a great many facts of the past and present, is something that dams an organization that indulges in it.

"As a question of violent revolutionary body, a conspiratorial body, it is neither one nor the other."

Thomas closed with, "The only time there has been force and violence... [was] in the years of slavery. We had force and violence when we had the Ku Klux Klan. Sometimes we have White Citizens Councils. That is where the force and violence comes in that you have to deal with."

The hearing adjourned, with further testimony and cross-examination of Shachtman to follow.

## Excerpts from ISL Exhibits

# Stalinism vs. Democracy

At one point at the Thursday session of the Washington hearing, indicated in the accompanying story, Max Shachtman, in response to questioning, read into the record excerpts from the *Independent Socialist press dealing with Stalinist seizures of power in various satellite countries since the end of the Second World War.*

"In Italy, the developments have already shown the tremendous revolutionary significance and power, both from the standpoint of the masses of people, and from the standpoint of revolutionary socialism, of the struggle for democratic rights. So far as the fascists are concerned, it is all clear. But especially so far as the 'democratic' imperialists are concerned, and the totalitarian Stalinists, and the capitalist liberals and right-wing socialists as well—they all fear the exercise of democratic rights by the people. They want to do everything from above, without the masses interfering, in the hope that this is an easier way to keep the masses in check.

"All of them are afraid of what the masses will say about them if they have the unrestricted right of free speech. They fear what the masses will say and plan in their halls and do in the streets if they have the right of assembly. They fear what the masses will organize if they have the right to organize. If the strength of the masses were unleashed, they would not hesitate for a moment to step right into industry and the machinery of distribution and, disregarding the profit interests of capital, see to it that there is food for the people and food equitably shared. They fear the power of an independent and untrammelled press at the service of the masses.

"They are afraid of elections, for then they must submit themselves to the suffrage and judgment of the masses, especially masses of people who are in a revolutionary frame of mind, who de-

mand deeds and not only words, who demand that promises be taken off paper and carried out in life. They are therefore also afraid of calling for a National Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal suffrage to decide the government of Italy. They prefer to do that in the dark of the moon, by bureaucratic arrangements with Anglo-American imperialism, with Moscow, with the monarchists and the bankers—all behind the back of the people." —*Labor Action*, May 1, 1944, "The Present Stage of the Italian Revolution," by Max Shachtman.

"The election in Hungary was a gross farce in which the forms of an election were adhered to but nothing more..."

"There are some workers and socialists, and some calling themselves Trotskyists, who think we are too much exercised by democratic questions..."

"Unfortunately such people do not begin to understand the meaning of democracy and the revolutionary socialist attitude toward it. We are the best democrats, Lenin was always fond of saying. Our opposition to bourgeois democracy is not that it is evil, but that it is not democratic enough; that democracy in bourgeois society is always incomplete and that under the guise of democracy, the bourgeoisie establishes its own dictatorial rule." —*Labor Action*, editorial, Sept. 8, 1947.

More excerpts next week, depending on how much space is available.—ED.

## American Politics

Rex Bell, a former cowboy movie star who is now lieutenant governor of Nevada, says that his life as a politician isn't much of a change. "It's not too much different from the acting business," he opined. "My social and public duties are about the same now as when I was in Hollywood."