

LABOR ACTION

JUNE 16, 1958

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SP-SDF Acts on Unity and Political Action

Independent Socialist League, Others Invited to Join; Referendum Pending

By H. W. BENSON

The biennial convention of the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation met in Detroit over the Memorial Day week-end. It touched upon many questions, but its essential significance lies in the attention it gave to two matters:

1. The unification of democratic socialism in the United States, including a debate on the Independent Socialist League and a better than 2-1 convention decision, to invite its members to join the SP-SDF. This decision, upon petition of 25 per cent of the delegates, goes to a membership referendum to be completed in about 5 weeks.

2. Electoral Policy. After another spirited debate, the convention voted to permit members as individuals to enter Democratic and Republican primaries and to support labor and progressive candidates "while not committing the Party as such to support for old-party candidates." This reverses a long-standing rule against such actions.

The convention was truly representative of the state of the socialist movement in the United States, its weaknesses and its new possibilities. National Secretary, Irwin Suall, reported that the combined Socialist Party and Social Democratic Federation membership was double that of the Socialist Party in 1956. Still, it was very small. Fewer than 70 delegates represented a listed membership of 1,300, only a small proportion active. There were few trade unionists or Negroes; there was scant attention to the labor movement. The Party has been held together by a tiny band of devoted old-timers aided by a small group of active, but relatively inexperienced younger people.

PROGRESS AHEAD

There was a universal feeling, however, that now at last the socialist movement could make real progress. "Not since the immediate post-war period," reported Suall, "has there been such a revival of socialist strength and morale as we have seen within the past 18 months . . . our socialist ideas are receiving a new and thoughtful hearing. Where are the newly radical young men and women to go these days? The Communist Party, as a result of the Khrushchev revelations and the Hungarian uprising, is thoroughly discredited and decimated. No other dissenting force which has substantial possibilities exists in American life but that of democratic socialism. This is our opportunity." It was in this context, not always clearly stated, that the convention considered socialist unity as a means of mobilizing for the new possibilities.

A Convention Committee on Other Organizations, chaired by Gustavo Gerber, proposed to bring a number of scattered socialist groups into the SP-SDF including several small foreign language groups, the Socialist Party of Connecticut and the Social Democratic Party of Virginia. Negotiations continue with the Jewish Labor Bund aiming at its affiliation as an autonomous section. However, there has not been agreement on the Bund's proposal

For the full text of the majority and minority reports of the Committee on Other Organizations (the unity resolutions) see page 7.

that the party adopt no position on Jewish affairs without its approval. Meanwhile, some members of the Bund, which allows dual membership, already are members of the SP-SDF as individuals. An invitation to join the party was issued, too, to "the group centering around" Dissent. On all these matters, the Committee and the convention were unanimous.

But, on the Independent Socialist League there was a sharp difference of opinion; a majority and a minority of the Committee on Other Organizations

made opposing reports. The discussion continued for more than two and a half hours; seventeen delegates spoke from the floor. A motion to exclude visitors and go into executive session for this point on the agenda was defeated 24-29.

DEBATE ON ISL

The majority report, presented by Gerber, invited all members of the ISL to join the SP-SDF and was finally adopted by a vote of 45 for; 17 opposed; 7 abstentions.

The minority report, defended by Robin Myers, former Party national secretary, proposed that the convention take no action, arguing that any decision would be "premature and ill-advised." The minority lost with 18 votes for; 40, opposed; and 11 abstentions.

Samuel H. Friedman, the party's vice-presidential candidate in 1956, proposed an amendment from the floor to "cordially invite the members of the ISL to make application for entry into the SP-SDF." His proposal would have permitted the Party to exclude individuals from the ISL whose members were asked to apply but not necessarily to join. It was defeated, receiving a few votes. The consensus on all sides was that if an invitation was proper it should apply to all without exception. Gerber pointed out that the proposal was not acceptable to the ISL and that it

would lose his respect if it agreed to desert any section of its own membership however tiny. After his own motion had been voted down, Friedman voted for the majority report.

FOR UNITY

The majority proposal had come highly recommended. Gerber was leader and spokesman of the SDF wing which joined the SP. On the eve of the convention, 23 prominent party members representing all shades of opinion and all localities signed a joint statement for the admission of the ISL. They were: Norman Thomas, Irwin Suall, Benjamin Williger, Mulford Q. Sibley, Charles Curtis, Vern Davidson, Phyllis Gangel, Morris Stempa, Arthur Bertholf, Jack Cypin, David Reynolds, Robert Alexander, Frank Marquart, Kenneth Cuthbertson, Max R. Wohl, Leo Leopold, Milton Zatinsky, Julius Bernstein, John Mecartney, Benjamin Miller, Virgil Vogel, Walter Bergman, and Fritjof Thygeson.

The minority position had been supported in the leading party committees by a group of active party leaders and organizers who had contributed heavily toward holding the party together in its most difficult days. Among them were Robin Myers, Robert Bloom, Herman Singer and Seymour Steinsapir.

The ISL question precipitated an inevitable debate, but it clearly could not provoke a lasting division in the party. It was vigorous and sometimes sharp but always within the bounds of a common fraternity. Notably, no hostility toward the ISL was expressed by either side; the exigencies of the debate almost made the opposing speakers seem more critical of one another than of the ISL. The minority argued not that an invitation to the ISL was outrageous or even impermissible but simply that, in its opinion, it was premature. In this respect, the debate itself helped to create such an atmosphere within the Party as makes a genuine and lasting unity readily attainable.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

Supporters of the minority generally expressed their willingness to accept ISL members into the SP if they applied as individuals but warned against inviting ISLers en masse. To take in the ISL, they argued, might alienate some of the party's own members and make it more difficult to recruit from the broad political arena; it would mean turning inward instead of outward. They feared that the ISL would inevitably act as a cohesive, unified group and dominate the Party at this stage; some warned against a repetition of the split of 1937 and feared bitter internal wrangling.

Some were afraid that the ISLers would try to bring a host of ex-Communists into the Party. Many argued that the ISL was not consistent in its dedication to democratic socialism because it did not attack Leninism or seemed to be "evasive" in dealing with the question, while they themselves were convinced that Leninism was the cause of Stalinism and hardly dis-

SPOTLIGHT

Death of the Fourth Republic; What Next?

By GORDON HASKELL

In the hour of its death agony, the conflicting forces which were squeezing the life out of the Fourth Republic came to bear with their full weight on its political keystone, the Socialist Party of France. Given what this party has become in recent times, the result was almost inevitable. The party split under the pressure, and the Fourth Republic settled gently and disintegrated.

On the eve of the abdication of the French democracy to the quasi-dictatorship of de Gaulle, a Vigilance Committee formed by its most resolute leaders was able to stage a demonstration of 250,000 people in Paris in defense of the Republic. Inspiring as this mass outpouring was, it represented fundamentally a negative gesture of despair. Its leaders had no clear-cut program for a solution of the crisis of French society. They were paralyzed by a legitimate fear of the Communists, and by their own inability to lift the struggle from the plane of parliamentary combinations to one of

a mass struggle for the reorganization of French society. Even while they marched, neither the leaders nor their followers had any confidence in the political forms which they were ostensibly defending; and they could agree on no alternative ones with which to replace them.

FUTURE UNCLEAR

While the Fourth Republic is dead, the future of France, even its short-run future, is far from having been decided. General de Gaulle has been given dictatorial powers, but he is still a long way from establishing a regime which can reorganize France by suppressing and subordinating all its social classes to the rule of a single will.

Above all, de Gaulle was brought to power by default of the parliamentary regime. A combination of a strong section of the army with the reactionary colonialists in Algeria was the active force which gave the Fourth Republic its coup de grace. But the Algerian colons bar the way to an end to the war in Algeria, and that war is dragging the whole of French society down to ruin. Either de Gaulle must end that war, or he must come into

(Continued on page 4)

(Turn to last page)

Is Government Wage-Price Fix Answer to Inflation-Recession?

By H.G.R.

Out of the recent—and continuing—inflation, two ominous, political moods are emerging among the bourgeoisie and their spokesmen. The first is an increasing determination to smash the unions; the second, which is of more recent vintage, is the realization of the "necessity" for price-wage regulation. This new cry for regulation is obviously—indeed, avowedly—an indirect method of union-busting. It is especially interesting for its dual admission that the unions are too powerful to be broken by other means, and that the capitalist system of pricing has broken down and inflation can only be avoided by direct government regulation of the entire pricing process.

This new attitude toward the hitherto sacrosanct pricing process is exemplified by two recent articles, one coming from the extreme left wing, and the other from the extreme right wing, of the capitalist camp. The two authors are Abba Lerner, ultra-Keynesian, and David Lawrence, ultra laissez-faireist. That these two could reach substantially similar conclusions on a matter of public policy is in itself man-bites-dog news. That they agree on the desirability of government wage-price regulation is man-eats-dog news. But sensational or not, it is certainly disquieting news.

LERNER

Lerner's article appears in the February, 1958, *Commentary* under the inexact title, "Halting the Current Recession." He calls the recent inflation a "sellers' inflation." As opposed to a "buyers' inflation," which is caused by excess demand, a sellers' inflation does not find its origin on the demand side but on the supply side. It is due to attempts of workers and/or capitalists to increase their relative shares of the product. "Sellers' inflation takes place whenever wage-earners and profit-takers together attempt to get shares that amount to more than 100 per cent of the selling price. When the sum of what they try to get comes to

more than 100 per cent of the selling price, it is futile to ask whether this is because the wages demanded are too high or because the profits insisted on are too great." Thus Lerner evades the onerous task of taking sides.

How is the inflation to be combatted? Since "neither political party can afford the blame for even a mild depression," this method must be ruled out. (We may remark that recent events seem to indicate that there is at least one political party which feels it can afford the blame, and also that a collapse of demand does not seem to rule out price increases.) Passing over this, however, we come to Lerner's "only too obvious conclusion that sellers' inflation cannot be cured or prevented by measures directed against excess demand by buyers. It can be successfully treated only by attacking the pressure on prices by sellers."

This means regulation: "Just as public utility prices can be, and are being, regulated so as to prevent monopolistic exploitation, so administered prices and wages can and should be regulated so as to prevent sellers' inflation." Lerner then presents an ingenious set of regulatory rules, which would avoid many of the "bad" aspects of regulation, and which might work quite well—except for their impracticability. But the details of his solution are of no particular importance; what should excite our interest is the principle of his solution, the principle of government regulation.

LAWRENCE

A similar tune is called by David Lawrence. He too is now capable of writing: "There is only one way to keep the American economy from again running into the ditch. It must be regulated on the wage and price front." (*USN & WR*, April 25, 1958) Although Lawrence naturally places the blame on "Big Unionism," which, among other sins, is guilty of having "foisted" a recession upon the country, he no longer asks for anti-union legislation as a cure-all. Instead, he proposes "that the excesses of the labor-union monopoly be regulated by government [that magic word!] so that adverse effects on the economic situation in the country may at least be limited." This is to be accomplished by "an independent board or commission [with] the power to fix ceilings on wages and prices." He is not explicit on the point, but we safely assume that he has in mind a commission something like the FCC.

The principle of regulation is more of a bitter pill for Lawrence, or at least for his readers, than it is for Lerner. He justifies it on the ground that "This is wartime in the sense that we are already engaged in a worldwide 'cold war,' and it behooves us to mobilize our economic forces so the enemy will not be tempted," etc. In rationalizations like this—and we have heard similar ones even from Walter Reuther—we can see all too clearly the drift into the garrison state, the conclusion to which all arguments lead.

This loss of faith in the viability of free capitalism is ominous because it is replaced by faith in government "regulation." It has its counterpart in the loss of faith in the free exchange of ideas, which is replaced by faith in government "loyalty" and "security" procedures. These corporatist trends in thought and policy are always defended as cold-war exigencies and are always aimed at the working class and its supporters.

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UAW Puts Up Shop-Level Fight As Auto Companies Get Tough

By JACK WILSON

Detroit, June 8

The uneasy armed truce in the auto industry between the United Auto Workers and the Big Three manufacturers reached a boiling point this week, notably at Chrysler where provocative actions of the corporations caused a revolt among local union leaders.

While General Motors and Ford have squeezed the UAW since the contracts expired, especially by weakening the bargaining structures through orders for shop bargainiers to work twice as much as they have—and thus have little time for handling grievances—at Chrysler the corporation ordered all chief stewards to work six hours a day and committeemen three. This compares to full time representation which the rank and file had in the past.

STEWARDS DISCIPLINED

Since Chrysler locals were under the mistaken impression that they could bargain as usual, under the National Labor Relations Act, Sect. 9 a, all stewards and committeemen resisted the corporation's drive to put them to work, and to tell them when they could handle grievances. Chrysler began penalizing the plant bargainiers and by the middle of last week 312 chief stewards and committeemen had been disciplined with time off.

At this point an emergency meeting of many of the disciplined stewards and committeemen was held at Dodge local. When two international union officials told the unionists they had no choice but to live with the situation, and obey company rules, a two hour booing and heckling session took place, the like of which hasn't been seen in a long time in the UAW.

Out of this crisis, a special meeting of all plant officials in the Chrysler set-up was called for Saturday, June 7. Over 600 attended, and again, with the exception of one speaker from the floor, critics went after the UAW's policy. Significantly, the sharpest verbal blasts came from the staunchest Reutherites in the shop.

WALK-OUT

In the former Briggs locals, now called the Automotive Body division of Chrysler, the corporation re-organized the bargaining districts, laid off 87 chief stewards (who held jobs by virtue of their positions), and cut out nearly 200 chief stewards. After this happened, the rank and file walked out and the plants were shut down. What happens this next week is anybody's guess in that situation.

What irked many plant leaders at the Saturday meeting, at which they were specifically ordered four times to maintain present policy and go to work under company established rules was that neither Walter Reuther nor Emil Mazey appeared at this meeting; the most critical the UAW has had in many years.

It was obvious, since the UAW top leaders hadn't spelled out what might happen if the plants worked without a contract, that many plant leaders were disorganized, embittered and suspicious of the policies of the international union. Speaker after speaker warned that the precedent set now might be a permanent blow to the shop steward system, which is the heart and soul of the UAW.

Actually, the violent and unexpected reaction of the secondary leaders has placed the top UAW leaders in a position where they must retain the shop bargaining systems, or else face a genuine political revolution within the union. Not only is this recognized, but the spokesmen for Reuther at the meeting made guarantee after guarantee that there would be no change in the bargaining structure when new contracts are signed. In that sense, the revolt has had a permanent positive effect, for Chrysler's efforts in bargaining to cut down on the stewards system now faces a brick wall of resistance.

CONFUSION

The confusion and anger of the secondary leaders in the Chrysler section of the UAW was so great that local union presidents, who on Friday had agreed with top UAW officials to sell the policy of living with the situation and ordering the stewards and committeemen to obey company instruction on working, flipped Saturday and three of them urged holding the line at any cost.

The difference between the Chrysler situation and that in General Motors and Ford seems to be that in the latter two the bargainiers in the plants expected company moves and were told not to resist them by international union officials. At Chrysler, the impression was given that the shop leaders should resist, and they did. Now the plant bargainiers are placed in the difficult and embarrassing position of backing down.

Aside from the need to save the shop steward system—to which top UAW leaders have paid too little attention in the past—the tensions created by working without a contract have heightened feelings in the shops so that the price of peace in the auto industry is going up daily. Reuther now has to win more than the corporations have offered thus far. Otherwise, the large degree of non-confidence that exists in large sections of the Chrysler UAW secondary leaders will spread to the two other major companies.

The impact of the corporations' drive against the UAW has been mainly to revitalize the secondary layer of leaders, and has heightened class antagonisms to a new high degree in the auto industry. Walter Reuther is no longer talking about free labor and free management living together. The language used to describe the corporations is more in line with the talk that prevailed in the 1930's, in the days of the sit-down strikes.

Occupation Babies

Not likely to receive too much attention in the American press is the publication in the German Medical Journal (*Deutsches Arzteblatt*) of figures on "occupation babies" born in West Germany and West Berlin.

During the decade between 1945 and 1955, American soldiers fathered some 36,334 illegitimate children in this area. Though most of these were born in the first years after the end of the war, a new increase in such births was noticed in 1952. Americans fathered 53.4 per cent of all the "occupation babies" in this area, with French and British troops coming next.

The real tragedy of the situation lies in the fact that only 6.7 per cent of the fathers admitted paternity, and there was no way in the past by which mothers could force fathers of such children to contribute to their support.

All this is, of course, part of the over-head of wars and occupations, whether by conquest or agreement. The picture on the Russian side is notoriously worse. Though the fates of tens of thousands of mothers and their little children may weigh lightly in the balance of world politics, is it not an additional argument for the withdrawal of troops from foreign soil, now better known as "disengagement?"

ROLAND BATES

It is a sad and mournful duty to report the sudden death of Roland Bates of Los Angeles, known to many throughout the country, particularly in California, as one of the finest friends of the socialist movement.

The cause of death is reported as a sudden heart attack of unknown origin. The shock is that Roland Bates was an enormously powerful man in the prime of life, without any significant illnesses. He will always be remembered by those who knew him as a man of outstanding integrity, with enormous feeling for his fellow men, his friends and for all socialists. His great zest for life was joined with the most natural helpfulness and concern for everyone. There are many indeed who carry the memory of that helpfulness and concern.

Many will remember his early socialist activity during his school years, and the years when he was a longshoreman in San Pedro and one of the most active union militants in Southern California. In more recent years he practised law in Los Angeles and the Southern California desert, where he had settled with his family in order better to serve an exploited Mexican population whose tongue was Spanish, which he spoke as one of them.

We express our sorrow at the passing of an old friend and comrade, and send our deepest sympathy to Roland's wife, Betty, his children Rosa, Rita and George, and to his mother, Rosalind Bates.

LABOR ACTION FORUM NEW YORK

Friday, June 20

HAL DRAPER

Impressions of European Socialism

LABOR ACTION HALL, 114 West 14 Street, N. Y. C.

VIEWS FROM VENEZUELA

Anti-Nixon Demonstration: Politics and Provocations

Venezuelan Democracy in Danger

By JUAN PARAO

The recent anti-Nixon demonstrations in Venezuela can be considered a symptom of the newly-liberated nation's desire for greater political and economic independence.

A large, non-violent mass of demonstrators went to wait for Nixon at the National Pantheon, carrying posters saying "We remember Guatemala," "Nixon, go home," "Down with petroleum restrictions," "Nixon stop supporting dictators," etc. This non-violent crowd, 12,000 strong, was composed of people of all political parties and of different classes and walks of life. Students and workers formed the nucleus of the demonstration. They were joined by small businessmen, middle-class housewives, middle-class intellectuals, and even priests. The Catholic Left distributed leaflets saying: "We condemn with equal vigor the Soviet intervention against the Hungarian people, and the North American intervention against the people of Latin America."

The majority of the demonstrators were undoubtedly left-of-center. The democratic-socialist *Acción Democrática* (A.D.), and not the Stalinists, were essentially in control.

PROVOCATION

The riots, in which Mr. and Mrs. Nixon and their escorts were stoned and spat at, cannot be blamed either on A.D. nor on the Stalinists. It is quite obvious that they were the work of a group of provocateurs of the fascist (Pérez-Jiménist) tendency, who stirred up some of the most backward members of the demoralized slum-dwellers of recent rural origin, who vegetate in shanty-towns on the outskirts of Caracas. The purpose of the stone-throwing riots was, of course, to discredit Venezuelan democracy and to show that a dictator was needed to keep our savage, blood-thirsty hordes under control. These deplorable incidents took place in an entirely different section of the city than the peaceful, organized demonstration.

The vast majority of the Venezuelan working class and middle class sympathized with the non-violent demonstration. The United States had backed the Pérez Jiménez dictatorship to the hilt. North American interests had done their best for many years to prevent Venezuelan native industries from developing, to create a climate of "social peace" by force, to keep the Venezuelan economy at a colonial stage of development, without influence on the formation of export and import prices. In the struggle for economic self-determination, the "nationalist bourgeoisie" (native manufacturers and agricultural producers) stands united with the working class and peasantry against United States economic imperialism. At least for the moment.

The nation was almost unanimous, on the other hand, in condemning the stone-throwing riots. The president of A.D., Rómulo Betancourt, certainly expressed the feelings of the vast majority of the working class when he said that he was shocked and saddened by the incidents. Betancourt and other comrades of A.D. pointed out that more than ever it is necessary to insist on the need for international solidarity between Venezuelan and North American workers and left democrats.

Without political support from United States labor, socialists, and left-wing Democrats, said A.D., we would have been less successful in carrying on continuous resistance work against the Pérez Jiménez dictatorship. And without the solidarity of the North American workers, we shall not be able to preserve and strengthen democracy in Latin America. No colonial or semi-colonial area can hope to achieve independence and democracy without help from the working class of the imperialist country. This is true of the United States and Venezuela as much

as of the European colonialist powers and their dependencies. Only a firm alliance between the socialists and labor movements of North and South America can succeed in building up a bastion against imperialist forces whose main mouthpiece seems to be, more than ever, John Foster Dulles.

The Role of Stalinism

While A.D. has taken the stand of leftist internationalism in the current anti-imperialist movement, the Stalinist position is one of narrow nationalism. To the bureaucrats of the P.C.V. (Communist Party of Venezuela), the United States is all bad. The "Yankee" is a nationally-determined bogeyman, and there is only a handful of "good Yankees," namely the "glorious Communist Party of the U.S." These "good Yankees" do not include Howard Fast, who, according to the P.C.V.'s newspaper *Tribuna Popular* has been "bribed by Wall Street" into breaking with the "glorious" ones.

The Venezuelan Communist Party supports the "nationalist bourgeoisie" completely. Its ambition is almost exclusively to become the anti-imperialist motor of the native manufacturing bourgeoisie in its struggle against United States capital. The place of the international working class has been taken by the Third Sputnik, which is an object of intense veneration.

LEADERS AND RANKS

But while the leading bureaucracy of the P.C.V. is hopeless from the revolutionary standpoint, the party's rank-and-file are splendid. Because A.D. is still dominated largely by idealist reformists, and is a multi-class party, in which the voice of the petty bourgeoisie is very strong, the Stalinists succeed in drawing large sections of the students and working-class youth into their ranks. Many of the best, most devoted and revolutionary young workers of the country join the P.C.V. Unless the Marxist wing of A.D. succeeds in gaining control of the party and in attacking Stalinism from the left, the P.C.V. is likely to continue extending its influence among young revolutionaries.

THE PRP

A small group of Left Communists attacks the Stalinists from the point of view of proletarian internationalism. This group, which between 1945 and 1948 was organized under the name of "Proletarian Revolutionary Party (Communist)," on many points follows the Trotskyist line without, however, being affiliated with the Fourth International. The group has a strong "economist" tendency, i.e., it distrusts parliamentary politics and believes in direct industrial action. One of its leaders, Rodolfo Quintero, is influenced by De Leonism (he has just published a biography of Daniel De Leon), and sympathizes with the Socialist Labor Party of the United States. The other leaders, Luis Miquelena, and especially Horacio Scott, are closer to Trotskyism.

At present, this left communist group does not form a political party. It limits itself to the trade union activity, and controls the Bus Workers' Union. It enjoys a great prestige among Venezuelan organized workers.

The group might be expected to join A.D. and work politically in that party's left wing. But apparently it feels that its divergencies with the right wing of A.D. are too great to make any sort of organizational unity possible.

The Policy of National Unity

Venezuelan political life has been dominated, ever since the January Revolution, by the slogan of National Unity. The four main parties—Christian Social (COPEI), Radical Democratic (URD), PCV and AD—feel that a united democratic and anti-fascist front is the only possible basis for resistance against imperialist-oligarchic counter-revolution.

In practice, this "national union" means a sort of "peaceful competition." The four parties refrain from attacking each other, and in time of crisis they issue joint democratic statements, but each party tries to extend its own influence in the fields of public administration, trade unions, control of the press and public opinion, etc. Ideologically, each of the parties tries to instill its own "content" into the form of national unity. Both the national-bourgeois and the lower-class parties agree on a program of greater economic nationalism, of land reform (but how much and how soon?), of defense of civic liberties, of economic planning for industrial and agricultural development, of slum clearance, struggle against illiteracy and development of the countryside.

The provisional government junta, composed of three military men and two civilians, has fulfilled its promises so far. In constant contact with delegates of the political parties, of the labor unions and of various other professional associations, it has reestablished civil liberties, purged the administration of Pérez Jiménists and corrupt officials, encouraged the growth of labor unions, undertaken emergency measures to fight unemployment, re-establish diplomatic relations with democratic countries with which Pérez Jiménez had broken. The government has also undertaken the first

What Would Karl Marx Think of Russia?

What would Karl Marx think if he were to visit Russia today? In welcome relief to the usual material dealing with "Marxism" which one finds in the daily press these days, the *New York Times Magazine* for April 27 carried an article "If Marx Visited Moscow Today" with a sub-heading "Communism's prophet would find the Russia built in his name far different from the classless, unexploited society he envisaged."

That about gives the substance of the article, written by Thomas P. Whitney, former diplomat and Associated Press correspondent in Moscow. Whitney quotes well-known Marxian passages about the abolition of classes, the withering away of the state, the end of exploitation of man by man, and the basis of compensation for work performed in a workers' state as well as in a fully developed communist society. To all this he contrasts the Soviet reality, with its class structure and differentiation, totalitarian rule, and constant increase in the size and weight of the state.

Of course, Whitney is not a Marxist. In fact, he appears to regard the rise of a new ruling class as a hopeful development in Russia:

"The fact, for example," he writes, "that Soviet society is a class society, that it has a big and growing upper class which dominates it, is sociologically natural and even inevitable. And it may, depending upon how that class conducts it-

steps toward the establishment of a national economic planning board based on the planning organization of countries like India, Bolivia, Ceylon and Indonesia. In the field of foreign trade, commercial treaties are being concluded with Great Britain and Yugoslavia, in an attempt to break out of the present bilateral U.S.-Venezuela trade pattern.

ONE CANDIDATE

An electoral law has been drafted by an inter-party commission. Elections for a constitutional government will take place at the end of November this year. All four parties will probably agree on a common presidential candidate of democratic bourgeois tendency.

The danger of a counter-revolutionary coup d'état, directed mainly against A.D., is ever present. There have been several bad scares in the course of the past few months. Prominent army leaders have suddenly been hustled off to diplomatic posts in far-away countries. The two civilian members of the government junta have resigned and have been replaced by two other civilians. The cabinet has been reshuffled. Alarmist rumors are persistent. United States and European resident businessmen scream about the Communist menace, and loudly wish that good old "P. J." were back. A few strikes have occurred and several firms have been forced to raise wages to a nearly human level. That, of course, is "communism."

Against the danger of counter-revolution, the working class stands firm and alert. The proletarian housing districts have kept the fighting-squad organization which was created in January. In every crisis or coup d'état scare, the workers immediately react by making molotov cocktails and piling up stones. Soviet-like block and district committees continue to exist and to issue warnings to the reactionaries. The majority of the working class supports A.D.

EXHORTATION

A.D. will not break the pact of national union, since such a break would almost certainly provoke a coup d'état. But the party does exhort the working class, peasants and lower middle class to be vigilant and to present demands for higher wages and for energetic social reforms.

The Venezuelan people are therefore justified in looking at the future with hope. A continuing "national unity" with in which the influence of organized labor, of A.D. and of the poor classes in general is growing, will mean the consolidation of bourgeois democracy. That means greater national independence, liquidation of feudal remnants, and a rise in the people's standard of living under economic planning. The working class is in the forefront of the struggle for the realization of the "bourgeois" revolutionary program.

self, furnish the foundation for internal social stability and prosperity—and perhaps also in the long run for a less aggressive Soviet Union in international life. Likewise, the existence of a powerful state apparatus in the USSR is hardly a reason in itself for condemnation of the system. The Marxian ideal of withering away of the state was never more than a myth anyway."

The ideas contained in that paragraph spotlight a good deal of the ambiguity and confusion in the attitudes toward Russia and its society which prevail in capitalist-minded circles, and which influence the development of their policy with regard to Russia. Although they fear the Russian ruling class, and understand that the extension of its rule to other countries involves the elimination of capitalism, there remains a feeling that these solid citizens in their limousines in Moscow at least should be the kind of people with whom one can reach an accommodation, unlike men who are intent on bringing into existence a really classless society in which there will be no exploitation of man by man.

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Marceau Pivert's Political Testament: "Traitor Guy Mollet Must Be Unmasked"

The following communications have been received from the staff of Correspondance Socialiste Internationale, the magazine edited by Marceau Pivert until his death this month.

Dear Comrades:

Our comrade, Marceau Pivert, died during the night of June 2-3. Exhausted by the struggle which he had never ceased to make in the name of the oppressed, he continued the fight to the very end. The two texts which we enclose were dictated by him during the days preceding his death—they are a sort of testament.

In the name of the comrades grouped around Marceau Pivert, in the name of a life of exemplary militancy, we ask you to publish these last lines for the information of your comrades.

Fraternally,

The Staff of Correspondance Socialiste Internationale

(The following are the last two political statements of Marceau Pivert referred to in the letter above.)

Paris, May 27

The political policy of the Party leadership since February, 1956, could not but lead to two results which we spoke of from the very beginning:

1) A reinforcement of the totalitarian tendencies of the colonial bourgeoisie which is unwilling to give up its last great domain of exploitation and natural wealth to the rightful control of the Algerian people.

2) The demoralization and disorientation of the democratic and proletarian forces which are alone capable of finding a peaceful solution to the problem of ending colonialism in North Africa.

Today, each one of us must know in which camp he fights. For us, the choice has been made from the very beginning. We are at the side of our class, the last bastion of democratic liberty. If the Communist Party is called to play a decisive role, that is not our fault, but it is not alone, it must not be left alone through the failure of the authentic democratic and republican forces.

Thus, the opposition within the SFIO must play a dynamic role in every sphere in unmasking, at whatever cost, the capitulators and traitors who make pact with Gaullism. In this task, it will find at its side men of character and action, political formations close to it, and those trade unionists who have not forgotten that the emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers alone.

Today, May 27th, de Gaulle already speaks as if he were head of the govern-

ment, of the navy and army. But there remain those who obey the command of their class.

Paris, May 28

The traitor Guy Mollet must be unmasked before the Party. It is no longer possible to coexist with one who has chosen the cynical service of the bourgeoisie, who prepares its military dictatorship, and yet is the official representative of a workers party.

Even from a point of view of simple democracy, we must scrutinize this "mandate" which he has. The mere fact that he wrote to General de Gaulle at the moment when he was recognized as leader by all the insurrectionists is a political act of incalculable consequences.

Who are the members of the Bureau, or of the Directorial Committee, who were cognizant of this initiative (even as the president of the Committee was kept in the dark)? If there are such, they too must be considered as traitors. All the rest of the members of the Bureau, of the Directorial Committee, of the Parliamentary Group, must immediately break off all relations with this citizen Mollet. For example, there should be a dramatic resignation of the Committee in order to demonstrate their disavowal of this action and their indignant protest against it.

There is at least one accomplice in this business, and that is Jacques Piette. Now we must cast some light upon the character, the origins, the antecedents of this person who played such a troubling role in this affair.

In all the sections and federations, any militant who has not disavowed the treason of the secretary general of the Party must be considered as unworthy of membership in the socialist movement.

We must recreate a truly socialist and democratic Party; we must demand the aid of the International. A representative of the International should be sent to France to help reveal the truth about all of this, and to assist in the rapid reconstruction of a truly democratic socialist organization.

Death of Fourth Republic — —

(Continued from page 1)
direct conflict with the French working class in an attempt to put the heaviest burden of its continued prosecution on their shoulders. The alternative is to get working class support for a head-on attack on the colons as a condition for ending the war by granting independence to Algeria.

So far, de Gaulle has sought to balance himself among all groups in a cloud of ambiguity and compromise. Everyone recognizes that this tactic is designed to gain time while he gathers the reins of power in his hands. But once the generals have been brought to heel; once the insurrectionary committees in Algeria have been tamed and dispersed, then what? Sooner or later the outlines of a program for France will have to emerge from the clouds of glorious rhetoric. When that day comes, another crisis, and another opportunity will present itself to the people of France.

MORAL DEFEAT

The ability of the French democracy, and above all of the workers, to prepare themselves for that challenge is clearly in doubt. The powerful Communist Party remains as a grave menace to democracy in the very heart of the French working class. The democratic and socialist forces are confronted with the problem of gaining the support of the Communist workers for the struggle against the forces of reaction without at the same time forming an alliance which would give the CP itself a powerful role.

The problem is further complicated by the serious moral defeat suffered by the Socialist Party. Its most powerful leader is in de Gaulle's cabinet, and played a key role in negotiating his advent to power. It's

MARCEAU PIVERT

By HAL DRAPER

The death of Marceau Pivert stills one of the last voices of authentic socialism in the French Socialist Party. With him, too, goes a chunk of history. When some of us were just getting into the socialist movement 25-30 years ago, Pivert was already embattled as a leader of left-wing socialism in France—a fight that he prosecuted with varying success and effect, but which he never gave up and which was never outdone for its honesty and integrity, for its devotion to the best ideals of the cause, and for its self-sacrifice. This was true when he fought for the left in the SP; this was also true of him as leader of his left-wing party, the PSOP, before World War II.

He was truly the Grand Old Man of the SP left. And not only of the SP left: specially in latter years, with the shameful degeneration of the party leadership under Mollet, Pivert worked with every genuine socialist and radical tendency still seeking to go against the stream in France—with the Algerian national revolutionaries, particularly the MNA; with the Union de la Gauche Socialiste (UGS); with the Spanish POUM in emigration; and others. He and the comrades around him in Paris steadfastly made their voice heard with their independent magazine, *Correspondance Socialiste Internationale*, which never pulled its punches for fear of Mollet's authoritarian inner-party campaign of expulsion, suspension, intimidation, or isolation of every real socialist left in the SP.

At the same time, Pivert never made the slightest—not the slightest—concession to any variety or degree of pro-Stalinism or of illusions about Stalinism. In the context of the French situation, this is more remarkable than most American socialists can probably appreciate.

In the face of a party degeneration that increasingly became a horror to him, Pivert never became a tired radical; he never retired from action; he never repudiated his revolutionary socialist views and past; he never moved to make his personal peace with the forces of society against which he had fought all his life.

In his politics, Pivert has stood consistently for the Third Camp—revolutionary opposition to capitalism as to Stalinism and Russian imperialism. Literally up to his last hours, he was still thinking, writing, advising and planning in the same spirit.

I last saw him on May 15, two weeks before he died, and two days after the reactionary coup in Algeria—when his doctor was allowing him only two hours a day out of bed, to save his heart. That day, the Stalinist youth had been pressing for a joint leaflet-manifesto with the "young Pivertists," i.e. the Young Socialists of the Paris region who followed Pivert and who had recently been suspended by the Party. Flat on his back, rallying his physical forces, he talked for hours with three of the leading youth—explaining patiently, for example, why they should not sign a political document together with the Stalinists even while participating in every action together with all opponents of the reaction, and from this going on to discuss with them some of the bigger problems of the struggle ahead against the anti-socialist traitors who were gutting the SP from within, and who, a few days later were even to come out for de Gaulle. He was not bitter; for he was teaching another generation, teaching them to be revolutionary socialists.

That is the picture of Marceau Pivert which remains with me.

Parliamentary delegation split wide open on the issue, and the majority which stood steadfast against de Gaulle until the end was unable or unwilling to impose discipline on its minority led by Mollet.

Actually this tragic debasement of the Socialist Party could be the beginning of a re-united and re-vitalized democratic socialist movement in France, provided there is time in which to rebuild it. The cry for the expulsion of Guy Mollet and his closest collaborators issued by Marceau Pivert from his death-bed (see elsewhere in this issue for the text) may find an echo in the SP. A showdown in these circumstances could lead either to a revitalization of the party as the center of a genuine socialist regroupment, or to its serious reduction as an obstacle to such a development in some other organizational framework.

The time element remains anyone's

guess. De Gaulle has no fascist movement at his disposal with which to batter down all opposition. While the army may seek to play an analogous role, it is ill-suited to such a political task. Some dramatic step would seem essential to maintain the prestige of the great man who steps in above parties and classes to restore the glory of France. But it is quite possible that in the actual circumstances the drama will be more in the realm of histrionics than of history for a few months at least.

That is not a long time in which to recover from the moral defeat suffered by the Socialist Party and by the French working class as a whole. But a cautious reading of history warns against counting the working class of any country out, even temporarily, until it has suffered a decisive defeat. That has not happened in France.

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Association of Polish Students Unique Organization of East European Youth

By PAUL GERMAIN

One of the most interesting and unique organizations on the East European youth and student scene today is the Association of Polish Students (ZSP). Described as a "student trade union," the ZSP was organized by Polish students for the improvement of their economic, social and cultural conditions of life. It claims a membership of 100,000, out of Poland's national student total of 130,000.

For many years the Association of Polish Students was completely under the heel of the Stalinist-controlled youth group, ZMP. However, with the rise of Gomulka, the Association experienced an immediate gain in power and popularity among the Polish student body—a condition that exists to this very day, despite the numerous political pressures, reversals and compromises that have befallen the more "liberal" and "revisionist" elements in Polish political and cultural life.

SUPPORT GOMULKA

The ZSP has been rather successful in repelling all attempts to discredit it as an "anti-political" organization, by pointing to its support of the pro-Gomulkaist National Unity Front in local and national elections. According to the February 10, 1958 issue of the publication *Zycie Warszawy*, it appears as if the Association has been upheld by the authorities, in its insistence that an organization dedicated to the furtherance of student interests must be involved in many activities other than those of a purely political character.

At the conclusion of the ZSP's national congress last December, an "All Polish Cooperation Committee of Youth Organizations" was established. In this new Committee, discussion and activity coordination of all Polish youth and student groups will take place, but individual group initiative will be maintained.

In a well-documented article on "Poland's Angry and Un-angry Young Men" (*Problems of Communism*, May-June 1958), George Sherman, East European correspondent for the *London Observer*, has some very cogent observations about the ZSP:

ACCEPTS LIMITS

"The success of the ZSP is attributable to the fact that from the start it recognized the limitations on its field of maneuver. Its work has been undramatic, but has concentrated precisely on those areas most vital to its members' well being [student exchanges, tourism, student canteens and restaurant concessions, proposals for reorganization of the state scholarship system, student and graduate unemployment problems, etc.] . . .

"Beneath all this activity lies a really democratic organization. Free debates and elections are conducted. . . . In the Gdansk Polytechnic Institute . . . a genuine student parliament has been established with tremendous response. . . . It constitutes representative self-government, including a responsible executive committee, ten parliamentary commissions to supervise specific ZSP tasks, and a student court. Judging from the publicity and praise given this experiment, such student parliaments may well spread throughout Poland."

As for the ZSP's pro-Gomulkaist attitude, mentioned previously, it appears to be based on the following line of rea-

soning, given to Sherman by a Warsaw Polytechnic student:

"The outcome of the Polish October was determined by the Hungarian November. . . . In October 1956 no one knew how the popular demonstrations would end, and we were desperate enough to fight for our rights. Then we saw what happened in Hungary. Now most people feel that nothing, absolutely nothing, must be done to weaken what limited independence and individual freedom we have achieved through Gomulka. . . .

ATTACKS PO PROSTU

"Of course, theoretically we all believe in freedom of the press . . . and we sympathized with the efforts of Po Prostu to keep things moving after October [but Po Prostu's uncompromising and unsubtle ultra-radicalism, after the Hungarian debacle, no longer suited the times.] Po Prostu went too far for our situation. It would have died a natural death through its loss of popularity. However, once the government did ban it last October, the so-called Po Prostu riots could have been avoided—if only the police had not moved so quickly and so brutally against the initial peaceful demonstration."

Sherman gathered in talks with many other students that the above explanation generally summed up the prevailing attitude toward Po Prostu and its downfall. Indeed, Flora Lewis, wife of N. Y. Times Warsaw correspondent Sydney Gruson, interviewed scores of Warsaw Polytechnic students right on the heels of the Po Prostu riots. Her findings, published in the N. Y. Times Magazine at the time, correspond to those of Sherman. Warsaw Polytechnic was the focal point of the demonstration.

The rather positive and optimistic attitude toward life, by the ZSP leadership, is a most interesting phenomenon. It contrasts quite sharply with the mood that envelopes practically all other centers of Polish youth. This mood has been variously described as "degenerate," "escapist," "pessimistic," "Bohemian," "aggressively anti-political," "intellectually nihilistic," etc.

NO ALTERNATIVE

These attitudes, says Sherman, reflect the discouragement bred by disillusion (because of frustrated hopes for quick and dramatic change), and resignation (because of the recognition that there is no realistic political alternative to Gomulkaism at the present time.)

He concludes on this note:

"Quiet optimism pervaded all of the writer's conversations with ZSP leaders. They have assumed a special attitude toward the dictum 'more work, less talk' which may portend well for the future.

"All right, let shoemakers make shoes, and politicians make politics," said one of the representatives. "We know we have no choice. But we do have a feeling of freedom around us, and that is what we wanted most. Now we are using it where we can. . . .

"Whether or not this attitude will spread to a significant sector of thinking youth, gradually dispelling the prevailing mood of disillusionment and resignation, is impossible to tell at this juncture. But at least the slow road of step-by-step advance toward limited goals, frustrating as it may be, helps a portion of the youth to keep up their hopes for the eventual realization of a fuller life and a freer Poland."

U. OF WASHINGTON

Dem. Socialist Club Has Banner Season

The University of Washington Democratic Socialist Club (*Anvil Club*) is completing its first academic year of existence, and it has been a very successful and fruitful year indeed.

To give some indication of the response the club has received from among the student body, there is the attendance at forums: forums were held once a week, with average attendance of 20 at the beginning of the year and now up to 50. The last meeting, with Ruben Rotondaro, a student from Argentina, speaking on "Nixon's Ill-Will Tour," drew 110 students. Other meetings have had Prof. Abraham Keller on "What to Do to End The Nuclear Arms Race," and Kenneth Kurihara, visiting professor from Rutgers, on the recession.

Further, the club and its members helped in initiating a widespread discussion on the nuclear arms race, which culminated in a large open air meeting at which seven students and one professor aired their views.

Activities this year were rounded out by a workshop on "Politics and Public Affairs in the Age of Sputnik." The University Citizenship Clearing House sponsored the workshop in cooperation with the Democratic Socialist (*Anvil*) Club, the Young Democrats, and the Young Republicans. Fifty-five prominent faculty members and private individuals participated in the 27 round table discussions. The panels covered such diverse areas as Algeria, the role of the political dissenter in America, juvenile delinquency, disarmament, civil rights, the labor movement, political parties, and functions of the student political club.

The club, like all campus organizations, faces many problems in the future, especially that of replacing the members who graduate. But their mood is extremely optimistic, they are positive that the voice of democratic socialism will continue to be heard on the University of Washington campus.

And more than that: the Democratic Socialist club feels that "the new atmosphere on campus concerning politics opens enormous opportunities to us to make the club the focal point of a liberal or progressive political movement on campus, one which can have an important influence in the Associated Students of the University of Washington and in the larger community. . . ."

YSL Fund Drive Nears Top

Against considerable odds, the Young Socialist League Fund Drive neared 80 per cent of its goal. Although the drive is officially ending, every indication points to an over-fulfillment of quotas.

Several factors worked to prevent fulfillment of the total by the end of the drive. The recession was, of course, an element of some importance. But even more crucial was the change in the composition of the YSL. Over the past year or so, quite a few of the older members of the organization had been "graduated," and the number of students has been on an increase. Part of this process was the organization of units in Denver and Seattle which are almost exclusively composed of high school students and college undergraduates. This meant that the resources of the membership declined, even as the numbers increased.

Even in the face of these difficulties, however, there is every indication that the final total will be met.

The Denver unit (included in the "At Large" quota because the unit was not chartered at the start of the drive) reports that it will be sending its money along. Albuquerque, which revised its original quota upwards, should make its full total. In Buffalo, members who will be off campus during the summer will be able to expand their contribution. The Bay Area unit reports that it will be able to meet its final quota. And there are still funds outstanding in New York which should find this, the largest unit

of the YSL, making its quota.

These additional contributions should make the goal of the fund drive—but it cannot be stressed how important they are. The unity perspective of the YSL remains in force and opens up the possibility of a really major socialist youth organization in the Fall. We have every hope that this will soon be a reality. Given this situation, the need for funds is even more imperative than ever before. For such a development would mean that the YSL would make a big financial contribution to organizing, and building.

In short, we are almost successful. Give! Make the last twenty percent!

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

	Quota	Received
Philadelphia	\$25	\$37
Albany	35	47
Pittsburgh	50	51
New Haven	60	60
Westchester	10	10
New York	620	548
Bay Area	125	96
Seattle	75	55
Los Angeles	50	31
Chicago	200	120
Buffalo	25	10
At Large & N.O.	150	36
(incl. Cleveland, Boston, St. Louis, etc.)		
Albuquerque	25	5
Total	\$1450	\$1100.45

Young Socialist CHALLENGE

organ of the Young Socialist League, is a regular section of *Labor Action* but is under the sole editorship of the YSL. Opinions expressed in signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the views of the *Challenge* or the YSL.

Young Socialist League
114 West 14 Street, N.Y.C.

Enclosed is \$..... as my contribution to the YSL Fund Drive.

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(Make checks out to Max Martin)

Workers Council—Trade Union—Party How They Operate in Tito's Realm

During a brief visit to Yugoslavia this spring, comrade Hal Draper had a series of talks with various government and party officials in Zagreb and Ljubljana. The following, which deals with the concrete relations between Workers' Councils, trade unions and the party in Yugoslav industry, is excerpted from a detailed write-up of these conversations. We believe this article should be of the greatest interest to anyone concerned with the reality of "workers' administration" under Tito's National Communism.—Ed.

By HAL DRAPER

From the government Information Officer in Ljubljana we were passed on to the corresponding official in Zagreb, a gentleman named Branko Raic. We gave him a rather long list of representatives we would like to meet, and he actually arranged for three of these. That afternoon we went to see the president of the city committee of the trade unions, Ico Simcic.

The most interesting part of our talk dealt with intrafactory relationship between (1) trade union, (2) workers council, and (3) party cell. He had made the standard claim that the Workers Council is the "manager" of the factory.

"If that's so," we asked, "then why is there a need for trade unions at all, in your opinion? It is the same workers in a factory who elect both the union and the Workers Council. According to what you say, on one day they elect a Workers Council to manage the factory, and on another day they elect a trade union committee to defend their interests against their managers." (We made clear the question did not reflect our opinion, but was intended to elicit theirs.)

His answer was in terms of the danger of bureaucracy in the Workers Councils: If the Workers Council gets bureaucratic, then the trade union can step in and remedy the situation.

"But there is the same danger of bureaucratism in the trade union itself, too, isn't there?"

—"Yes."

"And in the same factory, too. What then?"

"A worker may write to the trade union organization outside, and say: Come in, things are bad. But this worker would be afraid, otherwise, to attack the bureaucratic leadership at a meeting. So the trade union office outside can step in and change the situation by calling a meeting at which this worker can get up and criticize."

Plight of Critical Worker

"But suppose this critical worker, at this meeting, remains a minority, and the leadership is not changed. It will go pretty bad with him for having spoken up, won't it?"

Simcic did not seem willing to carry this line of thought further. We were touching on the heart of the insoluble problem of how the dangers of bureaucratism could be bureaucratically prevented. So I raised the \$64 question:

"In this same factory, which has its trade union and its Workers Council, there is also the party cell. The danger of bureaucratism applies there too. In fact, if the Workers Council and/or the trade union have become bureaucratic, it is hard to think of this happening unless the party cell is involved too." (Simcic visibly seemed to assent.) "What then is the role of the party cell vis-a-vis the other two?"

He started to answer in terms of the orthodox cant that the party is an "ideological force," but he readily agreed that it was not just a question of this; the party cell was the organized force in the factory. He volunteered the information that there were even bad cases where, in Workers Council elections, the CP cell directly chose the candidates instead of just "advocating" its candidates at the workers' meetings.

"Then the party cell is the key force in the factory? Suppose a worker was opposed to the policy of the party cell on some factory problems, would it be possible for him to organize a group of workers to oppose this policy?"

"He'd Have To Be Crazy"

Simcic's spontaneous response was a gem: "As far as the laws are concerned he could do it, but he'd have to be crazy."

We explained something about the right of factions in certain democratic unions in the U.S. He was interested. We were encouraged to go on.

"So it amounts to this: that here in the Yugoslav factory, the party cell is the only organized group. You know the power of organization. Nobody else can get together, pool their efforts, push together for a policy, propagandize, etc. . . ."

We let the point hang, since it was time to quit, but it was clear where it led: In point of fact, the uneasy relationship inside the Yugoslav factory jells only because it is held together by the party cell, which dominates all. The substance of the vaunted "economic democracy" is merely that—they hope—the Workers Council and trade union structure will provide safe-

guards against excessive bureaucracy; when the situation locally gets so bad that an SOS to the outside world might be enough.

Here is the best place to tell the story of our visit to a preselected factory and its Workers Council, arranged by Raic. We drove to the plant he had chosen, the Naprijed clothing factory, making ready-to-wear garments. For about three hours we talked with the president of the Workers Council in the plant, Ivan, an extrovert "operator" type; the plant secretary, a young but grim-looking hatchetman type; and later on, the party cell secretary.

This was our only conversation through an interpreter, and it was as unsatisfactory in this respect as we had expected. For any question of any difficulty, Raic would engage in an extended consultation with the two plant people, working out the answer, and then he would summarize it. Often, after a considerable consultation, we would get only an empty platitude as the summary.

Workers' Council Set-Up

We started on the Workers Council setup. I emphasized over and over that I didn't want repetitions of the formal theory but wanted to know concretely what actually happened in practice in this factory.

For example, how was the Workers Council elected? A list (slate) was drawn up and voted on at a factory meeting.—Had there ever been more than one list presented for vote in this factory?—Yes, about two years ago. The workers in one department had thought that the official list hadn't included enough people from their department, so they'd got up a rival list. There were (Ivan stressed heavily) no differences in policies, in politics or any views involved in all of this.

In this factory, the election for a new Workers Council was due next week, April 13. The trade union executive had brought in a list of 72 for a committee of 59, but now various departmental meetings had added nominees to the list so that it stood at 81. The departments did indeed exercise their right to add candidates to the official list.

But these candidates can also be stricken if the other departments object, even before the election.

"What!" we asked, "how can the other departments deprive one department of the right to keep its duly nominated candidate on the ballot?"

"The majority rules," they calmly told me.

"Very well, the majority rules in the election; the majority can defeat him in the election itself; but why not let him be a candidate?"

"The majority decides; that's democratic, isn't it?" they repeated.

Making a Mistake

When I pressed the problem in another question, Raic abandoned his role as interpreter and sharply told me: "I think you're making a mistake. You're trying to compare one system with another." We politely pointed out that although we might have mistaken views on the subject of democracy, right now we were merely trying to find out what their democracy was like in politics or any views involved in all of this.

We continued. I elicited the information that in this factory the following case had occurred in 1954: A department had nominated as candidate a man who (they told me) would have put the interests of his department ahead of the factory as a whole. All the departments had already held their meetings; when people found this man's name on the list, the other departments were reconvened in second meetings specially in order to vote to strike the miscreant's name from the ballot.

The decisive fact is that at these meetings, voting is by open raised hands; whereas in the election itself, the secrecy of the ballot is maintained. This is why the menace's name could not be allowed to go into the list.

We asked a whole series of questions on whether any differences over elections were ever based on matters of policy or views or opinions or program or premises, or whether they were only purely personal matters. With the strongest emphasis, and as if it were a point of pride, Ivan and the plant secretary repeatedly avowed that it was only and ever the second. Never any question of choice between one candidate advocating one thing, and another advocating another thing. His reaction and gestures were such as to say that if this were otherwise, it would be a scandalous thing to admit.

We went back to the 1954 candidate who had been stricken off the list: On the books was a proviso that a petition with 10 percent of the workers could get a candidate on the list; had this candidate tried to do that after being stricken?

The three of them, Ivan, the plant secretary and Raic, exchanged talk back and forth for quite a bit before Raic summarized the conversation: "They say they're not interested in such matters, and so they don't know." It was a long chinning party for such complete lack of interest in the only case in their experience where they had had to mobilize their whole apparatus to strike down a candidate.

We then raised the question of what happens in the case where there are rival lists, as two years ago. The workers first vote as between the two lists, in a preliminary meeting (we were told); then in the election itself, only the victor list is presented, and eliminations from this list take place on the basis of it alone.

This, we pointed out, deprives the minority, who presented the defeated list, of the possibility of having any representative at all on the Workers Council. There is no possibility for minority representation?

It seemed impossible to get them to admit that the idea conveyed a meaning to them. They blandly repeated: "Majority . . . democracy. . . ." The green plant secretary made one of his not very frequent interventions with this argument: "Why allow representatives of the minority on the Workers Council when, since they are a minority, they could not carry out their ideas anyway?" He leaned back in triumph, sure that it was unanswerable.

While we were talking about this matter, Ivan suddenly dashed out—for non-political purposes, we thought; but in a few minutes he was back and announced a "correction": The vote as between the two lists took place in the final election itself, not in a preliminary vote.

All of this brought another discussion of "Majority decides." When we started to express the opinion that this was not the complete content of democracy, Raic for the second time switched roles in order to say:

Dictatorship of Proletariat

"Haven't you heard there is a dictatorship of the proletariat in Yugoslavia?"

"Yes, but I want to know what you mean by dictatorship of the proletariat here, so I ask these question to find out. Surely that's all right?" We went on.

When I next broached the role of the party cell in the factory, they called in the party secretary to join the discussion. He—a cynical rising-bureaucrat type, youngish—was the party secretary for the whole factory; in addition there were also secretaries for the party cells of each of the factory's five departments.

It was explained that the party secretary at the moment was without a party office in the factory, because of lack of physical space, but that normally, as in other factories, the party would have its own office there. As it was, he conducted the party's business from his desk in the factory's norm department.

We asked about the party cell's role in the factory's life vis-a-vis the other two institutions, trade union and Workers Council. The secretary grinned broadly and said: "Give him the 200 pages of the party program." We said we'd read them, thank you, but weren't asking about its program but about its actual activities in this factory. We got an answer in platitudinous generalities like "political education," etc.

"Concretely," we asked, "why is it necessary to have such a big apparatus in the factory: five departmental secretaries, etc.?"

"Well, we take up the problems of the departments—hence the department secretaries."

"What do you take up that the trade union's departmental organizations can't or doesn't take up?"

Though there was a crisscross of talk among the four of them we could get no answer through Raic, so tried another tack:

"For example, in the coming Workers Council election here, does the party cell make up its own list for the Council?"

We got answers like: "Communists, of course, participate in the election," and "When the T.U. presents the list, Communists also express their opinion like everyone else." By very strenuous questioning, we did get the statement that before the T.U. decided on its list, the party cell had discussed it.

"Has there ever been any disagreement or difference between the party cell's list and the trade union's?"

Answer: there were sometimes discussions on this man or that—he wouldn't call these disagreements or differences, but they always managed to adjust them.

Where Is "Socialist Alliance"

It then occurred to us that here was the party secretary, but theoretically, the "Communist League" is not a party but an "ideological" club, whereas the single party of this one-party state is the so-called Socialist Alliance, the political front.

I asked: "There is an organization of the Communist League in this factory, but is there an organization of the Socialist Alliance?"

The party secretary's reaction was as if this was an utterly nonsensical idea. "No, there's no organization of the Socialist Alliance in any factory; it has territorial branches only."

"Why doesn't it organize in the factory too?"

"You see, it's a mass organization."

"So why doesn't this mass organization organize in the factory?"

He answered, textually: "But it would have no purpose, nothing to do," spreading hands in a wondering gesture as if to say, "isn't that obvious?"

"But you said a moment ago that the Communist League exists to further the 200 pages of its program. Well, the Socialist Alliance has its own program, too. Why doesn't it further it in the factory?"

"But it has eight million members, it's too big . . . it has weaker discipline, it's not so well organized. . . ."

"How many of the workers in this factory are members of the Socialist Alliance?"

(Continued on next page)

SP-SDF Convention Resolution on Unity

The Pre-Convention Committee on Other Organizations has fully investigated, studied and considered various organizations with whom Socialist unity has been proposed and situations under which the affiliation and joining of groups of members may be effected.

Included in these are the situations and proposals relating to:

1. The unity with the Jewish Labor Bund.
2. The ingathering of some of the other language groups such as:
 - (a) The Czechoslovakian-Social Democrats in Exile;
 - (b) The Friends of Austrian Labor;
 - (c) The Polish-Socialist Alliance;
 - (d) The Latvian Socialists;
 - (e) The Finnish Socialists; and
 - (f) The Italian Socialists.
3. The re-unions with
 - (a) The Socialist Party of Connecticut; and
 - (b) The Socialist Democratic Party of Virginia.
4. The invitation to and acceptance of the members of groups of independent socialist affiliations:
 - (a) The group centering around *Dissent* magazine; and
 - (b) The Independent Socialist League.

The Jewish Labor Bund

The matters pertaining to the Jewish Labor Bund are dealt with in a separate report, unanimously adopted by our Committee.

Miscellaneous Organizations and Groups

The remainder of our Report represents the endorsed and recommended action of the majority of the Committee membership.

The Foreign Language Speaking Groups:

With regard to the other named foreign language speaking groups, we find that they are all friendly to the SP-SDF and are genuinely inspired by the unity which

Yugoslavia —

(Continued from page 6)

They didn't know. A lot? A majority, anyway. "So why not organize these workers to push the program among the others. . . .?"

Who Are "Workers Leaders"

It was interesting to note the occupation of these "workers' leaders." Ivan, the Workers Council president, was a production engineer. The party secretary worked in the department drawing up the norms. The plant secretary, of course, was not a worker at all, but responsible for the operation of the concern.

An interesting relation: the norms, setting the pace and rewards of work, are theoretically subject to approval by the Workers Council. Here, the norms come down to the Workers Council straight from the desk of the head of the party in the factory; and it comes before the president of the Workers Council who, he said, "plans the production system." It is easy to see, in this factory which Raic selected for us, that a worker who saw things from a somewhat different angle, namely from the bench, might well appear to these worthies as a menace.

Then for about a half-hour we all strolled through the various workrooms of the factory. One walked right among and around the people at work at the benches. We were walking with Ivan.

We had gone through two workrooms and were in a third before we realized that a strange thing was happening. Here at our side was the president of the Workers Council, freely and happily elected by the overwhelming if not unanimous vote of his enthusiastic fellow workers—and not a single worker so much as said hello, greeted him, addressed a word to him, or even so much as acknowledged his existence! In the third workroom, a man standing in the middle of the floor exchanged a couple of friendly words with him. We inquired: this was the foreman. In a subsequent big workroom, Ivan, passing two men standing by the window (who may or may not have been workers) slapped their backs, and they greeted him politely in return. In another workroom, for the first and only time, one worker looked up and exchanged a friendly word with him. This was the entire score. There were several hundred workers on the shift.

As we drove back with Raic, he did not go into the standard song-and-dance about the great economic democracy represented by the Workers Councils. We said, referring to one of his remarks at the factory: "So you think one shouldn't compare systems?"

He replied with generalities about "different conditions," and concluded: "We hope that some day we will be able to come to your standards [of democracy] too."

I said: "I'm thinking of democracy not just as a goal but as a method—a method, now, of doing what we want to do."

His reply, entirely amiable, was: "Democracy as a method? Let's not talk about metaphysics."

our party has already accomplished. They have various and respective internal and other problems of their own.

Conversations should be continued not too long after this convention, and it is hoped that this phase of the further unification of the forces of democratic socialism in the U.S. will be on the way toward accomplishment.

In the meantime, a developing closer relationship to the Party is indicated.

Re-Union of State Organizations

The Social Democratic Party of Virginia

In the matter of the re-union with the Social Democratic Party of Virginia, it has been found that the looseness of its own organization will require some further preliminary work before the situation will be crystallized to the point where the necessary and anticipated results of organic union and integration into the Party can be achieved.

However, many of the leading members of the Social Democratic Party of Virginia are now members of the Party and it is confidently expected that actual merger may not be unduly delayed.

In the meantime, we heartily recommend close cooperation with the Virginia State Organization.

The Socialist Party of Connecticut

As a result of several intimate contacts with the Socialist Party of Connecticut, our Committee has been advised that at the first opportunity, Comrade Jasper McLevy and representatives of the Connecticut Socialist State Organization will visit with our national officers on the question of the merger of the Socialist Party of Connecticut into the national SP-SDF.

The Committee recommends that the convention endorse and extend warm invitation to the Socialist Party of Connecticut back into the fold of our united Party.

Groups of Independent Socialists

The Dissent Magazine Group

There has been maintained and established a close and friendly contact with that segment of independent socialist thought and sympathy which is grouped around the editorial board of *Dissent* magazine.

Comrades Norman Thomas and Herman Singer have been added to the list of *Dissent* magazine contributing editors.

Several leading figures identified with *Dissent* magazine have spoken around the country during recent months at various meetings of the SP-SDF. Likewise, *Dissent* magazine forums have been organized in several cities and members of the SP-SDF have been active in most of these.

It is recommended that this working together be continued and where possible, furthered.

The Independent Socialist League

The ISL membership presented our Committee and puts before our Party a unique and interesting as well as challenging situation. This has received from our Committee close study, intensive investigation and earnest consideration. We feel this merits a detailed report as basis for our recommendation.

The ISL has indicated and declared that it sees in the SP-SDF and the unity which we have achieved, the promise for the re-creation and successful re-establishment of a meaningful and effective democratic socialist organization in the U.S.

Our investigation and study and our meetings, formal and informal with outstanding and leading figures of the ISL disclose and establish:

(1) During almost a score of years, the ISL has been steadily evolving and moving from their prior organization viewpoints. Today, as is amply established by their writings and statements, private and public, over the past number of years, the ISL represents and supports a truly democratic socialist ideology.

(2) In their most recent national convention last year, the ISL formally resolved and declared their readiness to dissolve their own organization so that their membership can be free to make their respective individual applications for membership in the SP-SDF, pledging themselves to our principles and binding themselves to the discipline and control of our Party, on an equal basis, rights and responsibilities of membership in our Party.

(3) They seek, however, in light of these assumptions and such pledges, that none of their members, so applying for membership in our Party, shall be under any disabilities or objections because of their prior affiliations.

(4) Their semi-monthly publication *LABOR ACTION* and their quarterly magazine *THE NEW INTERNATIONALIST* will be put at the disposal of our Party, to be used, (or discontinued), as to our Party may appear best and most advisable.

(5) Their members, when admitted into our Party, will be distributed among and throughout our respective state and local organizations, as now we have them established and as we may in the future charter and create them. In this respect they will be treated even as all new members are treated. Pursuant to the estab-

lished rules of the Party, they will not be eligible for official place or designation in the legislative and administrative committees and offices in the Party, until they shall have proved themselves, under time requirements, as is provided as a limitation upon all new members of the party.

(6) The Young Socialist League, (in their affiliation an autonomous group), will be integrated with our Young People's Socialist League on such basis as will tend to achieve the best results for the upbuilding of our YPSL movement.

(7) The declared objectives of the members of the ISL and the YSL is to submit themselves and devote their energies toward the re-establishment of a live, significant and important democratic socialist mass movement, under the banner of our Party, in these United States.

(8) It is observed that in the membership of the ISL there is a relatively young group, with proletarian and intellectual status and experience of a rather high order.

(9) It is disclosed that many of their members are recognized favorably and hold places of trust and responsibility in the organized trade union movement, at all levels from the shop to and including international union representatives.

(10) The impression is that here is a membership active, dedicated and devoted to the labor and socialist movements, which can prove of considerable value and assistance toward the upbuilding of the growth of our Party.

(11) The general membership of the ISL, around the country, have for the past number of years, even before our unity, cooperated with the Socialist Party in furthering and supporting the public work and activities of the Party; and

(12) Since the Unity Convention of the SP-SDF, some of the outstanding members and leaders of the ISL, as well as their general membership, have actively and constructively participated in, cooperated with and supported SP-SDF forums, meetings, and the like, with the same zeal and application as though they were indeed members.

Your Committee is fully mindful of the history, in all its aspects, of the last many years. Your Committee is sensitive in considering the challenges and opportunities that face the SP-SDF in its declared and dedicated purposes to re-unite all democratic socialist forces in our country. Your Committee appreciates the needs to establish our Party on a proper footing so that it can stand shoulder to shoulder with the democratic socialist forces throughout the world. Your Committee indulges no illusions about the task ahead to prepare and develop the Party to adequately face vis-a-vis, the anti-socialist forces of the country and the world.

Accordingly, your Committee earnestly

RECOMMENDS THAT, in furtherance of the program initiated by our Unity Convention of 1957, this National Convention of our united SP-SDF extend comradely welcome into membership, in our Party, to all of the present members of the Independent Socialist League, who will make their applications for membership in our Party, under the program submitted and set forth;

and further

RECOMMENDS THAT, the incoming National Executive Committee, directly and through its delegated officers or committees, immediately take this matter in hand so that there may be promptly achieved the expressed purposes to bring these Socialists, from the ISL, into active membership in our Party.

Respectfully & Fraternally submitted,
COMMITTEE ON OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Minority Amendment on ISL

The Committee minority is committed, as is the Party, to achievement of unity of all democratic socialists in the U.S.A. Believing in an all-inclusive socialist party, we would not exclude individuals simply because they are members of another organization today. Thus we do not ask a convention decision excluding members of the ISL from such a Party. But we believe that any decision for unity is premature and ill-advised, because

1) reports from various sections of the country indicate divergences in types of ISL groups, some of which are new and some of which have a lifetime experience in groups alien to ours,

2) the proposal is actually not to take in individuals but to take in all members, that is, the group,

3) we do not believe, on the basis of our own study, that the ISL has yet clarified its own position. Because of distrust of the position of the ISL, serious Party differences exist on the advisability of unity with the ISL. The effect of the apparent unity would be a divided Party.

We therefore recommend that until the still open questions, particularly that of Leninism, are clarified, no action be taken either to approve or to disprove of unity with the ISL.

SP-SDF Meet Acts on Unity

(Continued from page 1)

tinguishable from it. They urged delay until all such matters could be clarified.

Majority supporters expressed their conviction that the ISL sought admission for its members into the SP-SDF genuinely to build a united, broad socialist movement and that it had no intention of organizing itself as a group or caucus inside the Party. They pointed to the fact that ISL members differed among themselves on a host of questions likely to arise within the Party and consequently would not automatically all assume the same point of view. The SP and ISL, it was pointed out, had cooperated in many cities amicably and to the benefit of the socialist movement. The spokesmen for the majority indicated that they too held, as the minority, that Leninism was akin to Stalinism and in this respect they differed with ISL spokesmen. And, although they disagreed with the ISL on its own assessment of Lenin and Leninism, they argued that the ISL was not Leninist. The ISL, they strongly insisted, was a democratic socialist group that believes in democracy as the only road to socialism and the only political system under which socialism can exist. Its members are active and aggressive; many have respected positions of trust and leadership in the labor movement. Their joining the SP-SDF will help rebuild the movement.

NORMAN THOMAS

Norman Thomas reminded the delegates that he had not been "the subject of eulogies" in the ISL press but neither in the *Forward*. No group was more effective than the ISL in criticizing the Russian regime; none was less likely to yield control to Communist Party supporters: It is sincere in its attitude toward race relations and civil rights; none was more consistent in its fight for democracy and civil liberties for all. It is integrated in the labor movement; it has proved itself in joint actions with the SP-SDF. "The task is not to hold to the sanctity we have but to strike outward. . . . If we hold ourselves as a kind of aristocracy we are in for trouble." What is important, he concluded, is not some doctrinal statement on Leninism but good faith and comradeship.

Summarizing for the majority, Gerber asked, "Did we really mean unity when we united the SP and SDF? Do we really want to recreate the organization or just talk of it? Now is our chance to show it." The choice, he said, was between a pure private club and "a movement adulterated with people." We must be prepared to move quickly when the opportunity arises, he pointed out. We have the chance to take in hundreds of trained people and we must seize it.

REFERENDUM

After the debate was concluded, and the vote taken twenty-five percent of the delegates petitioned for a referendum, and in accord with the SP-SDF constitution the convention decision will be submitted to a membership vote to be concluded in about five weeks. Until then, any application of the convention decision is delayed. Some minority supporters seemed confident that the convention would be overruled and hinted that the convention majority was "afraid of the membership." Others maintained that an expression of the will of the membership was essential if a proper comradeship atmosphere was to be created for the entry of ISLers. In any case, the decision is in the hands of the membership of the SP-SDF. It is impossible to predict the outcome of the voting but most Party

leaders are confident that the membership will uphold the convention.

ISL AND YSL MEET

Immediately after the convention action, a special joint meeting of the National Committees of the ISL and the Young Socialist League met in Detroit and voted unanimously to accept the terms of the majority resolution. The ISL National Committee gave full authority to its Political Committee to consult the membership and take steps to dissolve the ISL if the referendum upholds the convention decision.

Max Shachtman, national chairman of the ISL, expressed gratification at the firm convention majority for socialist unity. At the same time he indicated that he could understand the doubts expressed by those comrades who were not prepared to vote for unity with the ISLers at the present time, even though their doubts were actually groundless. Unity, he added, is not always easy to achieve; there was a fair and square discussion, he emphasized, and now we are eager to work harmoniously with all comrades in the Party to rebuild a strong movement, regardless of what position they may have taken on the ISL at the convention.

At the joint ISL-YSL meeting, disappointment was expressed at the section of the convention resolution which provided that ISLers must join the SP-SDF as new members and consequently cannot serve as convention delegates for two years after their admission. Shachtman agreed that it would have been more in keeping with the spirit of unity if ISLers had been granted the same rights as SDF members who dated their membership back to their joining the SDF. But, he added, if such a measure served to correct the misapprehension of those who feared that the ISL was a simply out to "capture" the Party, it was a justifiable concession on our part to facilitate the achievement of unity.

RESOLUTIONS

In the course of the SP-SDF convention, the Resolutions Committee reported briefly on a variety of subjects, some resolutions consisting only of a few lines, including statements on Ghana, Israel, South Africa, France, Foreign Policy and other questions. But none could receive adequate attention in the time available at the convention and none had been clarified in preliminary pre-convention discussion. It would be impossible to judge to what degree convention action on these questions corresponded to any generally accepted position of the membership or even to a more or less continuing or stable Party stand.

This characteristic was perhaps best illustrated in the resolution on foreign policy which calls for the immediate suspension of production of nuclear weapons by the United States and for recognition of Communist China and its admittance to the U.N. There would be nothing surprising here except that less than 18 months ago, the proposed SP-SDF unity statement on foreign policy was of a totally different stripe; it looked toward the "democratically established military agencies" of the capitalist world for defense against Russia and sought to give some of former President Truman's policies a "more socialist underpinning and direction." This change from one spirit to another, totally different in tone, came almost as an unnoticed routine, even though 12 speakers participated in the discussion.

ELECTORAL POLICY

But electoral policy was a case of a different kind. Here, in a resolution reported out by Norman Thomas, chairman of the Resolutions Committee, was a conscious, deliberate and important change in policy debated at length by 14 speakers and adopted by a vote of 29-17. In past years, the Socialist Party strained efforts and stretched resources to run its own candidates. It strictly forbade participation of any kind by SP members in the old parties and barred support for any candidates running on their

tickets. It categorized groups like the ADA and even the Liberal Party as rivals and prohibited SP members from holding dual membership within them. The SP tried to act like a major party in strict competition with all others. The convention changed this policy.

The effectiveness of SP election campaigns has diminished over the years until they have become a hollow formality, winning few votes from the electorate and rallying few members for election activity. And, although there was decided opposition to the new policy at the convention, no one thought of proposing a new round of intensive SP election campaigns.

FLEXIBILITY

The Resolution on Electoral Policy called for flexibility and experimentation. "We face a peculiar difficulty in that we must recruit and rebuild our movement at a time when, for various reasons, we are in most cases unable to offer potential members an electoral alternative, although we do present the more basic alternative of a sane society. The situation calls for flexibility in the electoral policy of the Party. It means essentially that we must recruit Democrats and Republicans—or people whose electoral allegiance will remain to those parties—provided of course, that they agree with basic socialist goals and policies. We must encourage a flexibility of electoral approach which, while not committing the Party as such to support for old-party candidates, can consider socialists or other independent candidates, entrance into primary elections, and action by individuals in support of labor or avowedly progressive candidates."

The resolution attempts to grapple with a genuine problem, not easy to solve: how to make it possible for supporters and sympathizers to participate in elections and still preserve their role as socialists.

Those who were for the resolution underlined the need for socialists to find their way into real political battles. Those who were against emphasized the corruption, conservatism and reaction of the old parties and warned against supporting their candidates. Both had part of the truth on their side.

WIDE LATITUDE

The resolution gives a wide latitude for Party members to try out almost any individual policy but it fails to indicate what the Party itself prefers. It permits members to run in old-party primaries and to support old-party candidates. It allows locals to run independent Party candidates as before, or to support non-Party independents. Virtually any combination is now permissible and it was this flexibility that doubtless proved attractive to a majority of the delegates, for each could vote for it and be allowed to pursue the course that he thought best. This fluidity, this decision not to impose a rigid and uniform policy from above upon all members and party groups is necessary now to hold together socialist tendencies of different kinds within a united movement and at the same time make it possible to recruit to the movement unionists and radicals who might support a socialist movement but who are not prepared to break completely from the Democratic Party and oppose it head-on. From this point of view, the resolution facilitates the construction of a united movement.

So far, that is only one side of the question: for it leaves a big void in Party policy. If the old line, strictly proscribed for all, is now withdrawn, nothing really takes its place. The Party is left not with a new electoral policy but with virtually none, except for this: the Party, as such, will not officially support old-party candidates. But if all tactics by members are permissible, what is preferable? And on what basis is that decided? If experimentation is to be encouraged, toward what end? What does the Party seek and what does it recommend? The resolution offers no hint of a reply to any of these questions.

DILEMMA

The crux of the dilemma of socialist electoral policy can be summarized in

these facts: The socialist movement is terribly weak. The labor movement is at the peak of its power, organizing the majority of the industrial working class. Socialism can become an effective force in politics only with the support of the working class; but right now it is incapable of offering genuine political leadership to this class. Organized labor continues to support old-party politics; more accurately, it supports the Democratic Party. Socialists must look toward the labor movement; but they must look beyond the Democratic Party which is supported by that labor movement.

Previously, the Party tried to pretend to be what it could not; it came forward in the elections as though it were a significant factor in politics and within the working class. It called upon the electorate. No one listened; for the Party today cannot command such attention.

TWO APPROACHES

With this in mind, and realizing that the new resolution permits all kinds of tactics, we can envisage two opposite approaches both of which would be just as futile as the old.

1. Party members can go deep into the Democratic or Republican parties, participate in primaries and support old-party candidates more or less like ordinary liberals. All kinds of arguments might be adduced to bolster such a view by its advocates, but its main tendency is inexorable. Socialists would tend to become ordinary liberals. The individual, perhaps, gets into "practical" politics; but socialism disappears. We would qualify this harsh judgment only to this extent: a man always active in old-party politics who comes into the socialist movement but continues to act as before inside the Democratic Party, has made encouraging progress in the right direction. But a socialist who goes into the Democratic Party merely to carry on ordinary Democratic politics, has moved in the wrong direction.

2. On the other hand, Party members might become active inside the Democratic Party and in its primaries and yet change nothing. Suppose, for example, the clear banner of the SP-SDF is raised in Democratic primaries just as the SP was once put forward independently in the regular elections. In that case, nothing has been achieved except to alter in a somewhat confusing manner the locale of previous activities. The problem is not where to participate in politics but how, with whom and toward what end.

LABOR PARTY

In our view, it is perfectly correct to allow the greatest leeway for party members to try out different lines. At the same time, however, the Party is entitled to exercise its moral authority to orient its supporters. Socialists should look toward the formation of a new, independent party based upon the labor movement and their electoral tactics should serve that end. At every stage, they should seek to participate in politics together with the labor movement or sections of it, to push it forward against the old-line party machines, and stimulate such political struggles as lead, in the end, away from the coalition of New Dealers and Slave Dealers that constitutes the Democratic Party and toward a new party. It was this spirit that was lacking in the convention discussion which virtually ignored the significance of such movements as the Liberal Party in New York and the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education. What is needed is not some new device for the Party's own election activity but association with mass movements against the old-party machines looking toward a new party.

In summary, the SP-SDF convention illustrated how modest are the forces of socialism in America, in strength, in experience, and in contact with the working class. At the same time, the delegates were confident that it was possible now to move forward; they adopted the indispensable measures to unify the movement and they sought new ways to spread socialist influence. In that, it was genuinely encouraging.

The Convention elected a new National Committee of fifteen members as follows: Robert Alexander, William Briggs, Emil Bromberg, Leon Dennen, Sam Friedman, Gus Gerber, Darlington Hoopes, Mitchell Loeb, Dave McReynolds, Robin Meyers, Ernst Papanek, Hans Peters, Morris Polin, David Rinne, and Caleb Smith. The National Committee, in turn, re-elected Frank Zeidler chairman of the Party, and elected Darlington Hoopes and Gus Gerber as vice-chairmen.