

## TWO WORLDS:

### Notes From a Diary

#### The Evolution of a Social Type

The invitation from CORRESPONDENCE to write a column is the more welcome since I have had an opportunity over the years to study and observe social types in the union and political movements in both the United States and Europe. I understand your correspondents are mostly young people, and some of the events I mention will sound "dated", but for my first column in any case I can begin with a story which is not so much past as present, not so much European as American.

Today everybody knows the Communist Party as the agent of the greatest barbarism on earth—Russian totalitarianism. But in those days, when the Russian Revolution had overthrown the Czar and established workers rule, the Communists were men of high principles who stood for a new social order, a totally new way of life, for tens of millions of people who hoped to rule themselves in production and in politics.

The problem in the American Communist Party was that the backbone of it was immigrant stock. Jay Lovestone was a new type in the early days of the Communist Party. He was not a hardy proletarian type. He was a college boy, or, as the phrase then went, "a petty-bourgeois intellectual." But he was American.

#### "Training Organizers"

He built up a whole theory of American "exceptionalism". That was quite a chauvinistic theory. It meant that America was so exceptional it need not follow any principles of independent workers activity, but could "get there" (to a new social order), through all sorts of fantastic schemes, playing around with liberals etc. Thus, just as his successors in the 1930's fell for the New Deal, he went hook, line, and sinker for La Follette's Farmer-Labor Party. But that was not his worst feature. I am told, that the part which the rank and file of the Communist Party of those days, hated most of all about his rule was his conception of "training organizers."

Before Lovestone's leadership in 1925-27, Communist organizers would go into the sweat-shops and learn from the workers their conditions as one of them, and with them, see whether the shop could be unionized. Lovestone's idea was quite different: he trained his organizers to work with the top leadership of the union. And suddenly there grew up the new type of organizer who was not of the workers but "for" them. The needle trades thus swarmed not only with regular labor bureaucrats, but the special "consultants" supplied by the Lovestoneites. That is how a new type, a combination "leader", union organizer and general debater arose. Here is the story of one such person I knew personally.

#### Not A Production Worker

She is still somewhere around, in Pennsylvania, I believe, as a union organizer. She was, at first, a terrific little activist and organizer of the same type as the immigrants, only she was American. Then she became Lovestone's secretary. A transformation occurred. She had learned to go to the shop not as a production worker, a floor girl or a pinker. No, from the start she was especially trained to be an operator. That assured her a skilled position immediately upon entering the shop, and of a place in the union as a "leader".

Thus, separated from the workers on the line, she would then proceed to orate to them at the meetings. The workers were supposed to "love" her for just teaching them how to turn the switch off, as if they did not know how to turn the switch off. She was the anticipation, and only the anticipation, of both the Communist Party organizers of the totalitarian period and the C.I.O. bureaucrats of this period. Now she and her ilk are around everywhere; selling "the American way of life."

#### Two Types of Bureaucrats

In Europe at this moment there are two types of American labor bureaucrats. Both wear fancy ties and smoke fat cigars and try to sell the "American way of life" as if that were one world, instead of two. One, like Reuther, is the roving kind. He comes to deliver a speech at a hand-picked labor congress, rides in a U.S. Army jeep. He ends up by telling the American workers how much better off they are than the Europeans, after he had just told the West German workers how much better off they are, with their unemployment, than the East German workers who must come for bread to the West. Then, through the Voice of America, he has the audacity to tell the East German workers who dared challenge their rulers at the cost of their lives, that they need "to believe in democracy."

The other, like Irving Brown, is the stationary kind. He is the international representative of the A. F. of L. who lives in Europe, is always there to meet the roving kind of bureaucrat, but at the same distrusts him. You see, he knew Reuther when he was the fair-haired boy of the Communist Party, and knows that he still is the planner, always ready to pull out of his pocket as many Five Year Plans as any totalitarian bureaucrat and therefore resembles too closely for Irving Brown's comfort the Communist fellow-travelers who are always "giving the line." Moreover, as one who has himself been the fair-haired boy of a former leader of the Communist Party, Jay Lovestone, he knows that he must sell Europe something more genuine than that all Americans are millionaires and that the American worker who is always wildcatting just loves his labor bureaucrat. He knows that this is the epoch of total crisis, including the crisis of the mind. He knows he cannot win the mind of the European masses who are struggling for a totally new way of life with such vulgar sales talk. So he welcomes them. He is also looking for some European names to fight the deep anti-Americanism here.

#### Plan and Planners All Around Us

To know the type Irving Brown is, let's take a second look at his leader, Jay Lovestone. As we have seen, he was a leader of the Communist Party in America in 1925-27. Now he is a highly-paid consultant to the American labor bureaucracy (I.L.G.W.U., I believe), who must be sophisticated enough to work with the European labor bureaucrats. At the end of the war he came to Rome, kissed the Pope's ring, then went into consultation with Bertram D. Wolfe, who is bureau chief in the Voice of America. He too is selling "the American way of life" and he was Lovestone's co-leader in the C.P. in the 1920's, as Irving Brown was the fair-haired boy in the Socialist Party days in the late 1930's. Now the point is none of them has changed any basically. That is why I went into their past, which, to all appearances, seemed so different. The leader type in those days anticipated in all essentials the labor bureaucrat of today. It doesn't matter that the C.P. produced them first; the age of state-capitalism produced them all — the plan and the planners. They are all around us now.

Before your readers say: "Yes, but the European workers should at least know that we have no use for 'our' labor bureaucrats, much less their consultants. Our way of life is quite different from theirs. We wildcat against management and the labor bureaucracy all the time, and the consultants are impotent." Before your readers say this, let me say: I know that. I know that the American worker has to keep his nose to the grindstone to make ends meet. He does not have either the money or the leisure to go on European junkets to tell them of "The American way of life." That is the way of the bureaucrats. But the European masses do not know that. These are all Europe Americanism there.

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Jean-Paul Sartre's "The Respectful Prostitute"

World War II brought the American Negro to Europe. The Negro G.I.'s daily relations with his European buddies and European civilians was one thing. Something quite different was the European intellectual's concept of the Negro. In the one case, it was concrete, alive, real, human; in the other case, it was abstract, "historic," unreal, a problem. Yet the European intellectual thinks he knows "the Negro Question."

Take the case of Jean-Paul Sartre, the leader of the Existentialist movement in France, and the most famous literary Communist fellow-traveller. His play, *The Respectful Prostitute*, deals with a white prostitute named Lizzie. Lizzie was a witness to the shooting of a Negro by a white man.

This white man turns out to be "a leading citizen" of the Southern town to which she has come to live. There

is a conspiracy afoot to frame the other Negro who was a witness to the shooting. He is to be accused of attempting to rape Lizzie and the murderer, the leader of the white community, is to appear as the defender of white womanhood. A cousin of this white man, named Fred, picks up the newly-arrived prostitute and spends the night with her.

Lizzie knows nothing about the frame-up plot when the curtain rises. She refuses pay from Fred because she has fallen in love with him. He asks her to sign the paper accusing the Negro of rape. She refuses. He offers her \$500. She still refuses. The police barge in and threaten to jail her. She does not budge. Then "the Senator" appears. Where bribery and intimidation failed, demagoguery wins. The Senator has "sweet-talked" Lizzie out of her signature.

### A Fantastic Conversation

The Negro reappears and asks Lizzie to hide him. She offers him a gun to protect himself, but he refuses, saying: "I can't shoot white folks." He kisses the hem of her skirt. The lynch mob is heard outside, but this fantastic conversation continues:

**Lizzie:** I told you not to touch me. (She looks him over.) Just the same, you must be a queer character, to have a whole town after you.

**The Negro:** I didn't do anything, ma'am, you know I didn't do anything.

**Lizzie:** They say a nigger's always done something.

**The Negro:** Never did anything. Never, never.

**Lizzie:** (Wiping her brow): I don't know what's right any more. (A pause.) Just the same, a whole city can't be completely wrong. (A pause.)

**The Negro:** That's how it goes, ma'am. That's how it always goes with white folks.

**Lizzie:** You too? You feel guilty?

**The Negro:** Yes, ma'am.

The question is: where did Sartre get such a character, except in his existentialist imagination? Surely Sartre himself knew no such Negro. In the concrete circumstances of France after World War II no Frenchman met any such character. Was there ever such a character in the Southern town in the United States where this play is supposed to take place?

I asked a Negro worker for his reactions, reactions that will help break down both provincialism and intellectualism. I doubt that Sartre has had the benefit of a criticism of his play by a live Negro worker. Here they are:

#### A Negro Worker's Reaction

"You know what I think of this Negro character? He is crazy. Do you know what I mean by crazy? Not that he became crazy first then when the lynch mob was outside, but that he was crazy, was born crazy. Any normal Negro would put up a hell of a resistance. My great grandmother who was a slave told me they had ways of fighting back even then.

"That is crazy talk the writer puts into the Negro's mouth. Afraid of gun and talk of guilt, that's crazy talk.

"Who is the author? He is a contradiction in himself. He shows up Southern white hypocrisy, but he has never seen an ordinary Negro, has he? You know that though he shows up the Southern Senator, yet he makes the Negro say just what the

Senator would like to believe he says.

"You know I have stopped going to the movies, and pictures like Pinky is the reason. When you go to the movies, it is a question whether you accept the plot. This play is worse. It isn't the plot. This author thinks he knows the Negro Question. He does not see the Negro as he is at all, not at all.

"The Southern whites wish such a character existed but they know better. They know no such character exists, or has ever existed here; but the French author, he makes him say what they would want him to say. You know what is worse even? He makes this character out to be normal. But they know that cannot be because the Negroes don't let it be."

#### In Conclusion

It is clear that it is not only in the United States that all politics are expressed most sharply in the Negro Question. It becomes necessary to tear

some pages from my diary on white-Negro relations. The next couple of columns will concern themselves with these relations.

Saturday, November 14, 1953

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#### Difference Between American and European Politics

Before I go any further with this column I would like to introduce a question implied in it, but never explicitly stated. That is the absence of a mass labor party in the United States. Americans take it for granted, but it hits any visitor from Europe immediately. I shall return to the subject again and again, showing the advantages and disadvantages for the American workers as well as the unique effect the absence of a mass labor party has produced in the radical parties. It is the fundamental factor in American life and underlies the politics of the big parties as well as the little groupings, the daily lives of people and the general direction of the nation's development.

Now many workers in the U. S. have no interest in the politics of small organizations because they see

no connection between these little sects and their own daily lives or their aspirations for the future. Yet every fundamental problem that confronts them both in their daily lives and in their desire for changes in the lives of their children has been anticipated in one form or another in these small groupings.

The absence of a mass labor party in this country has meant that many a middle-class intellectual who is an agitator and who would have found a place as a writer, speaker or organizer in such a mass movement has, instead, gone directly to the small radical organizations. That is why I wish to return to the case of Jay Lovestone, whom I analyzed several weeks ago as the specifically American prototype of the Russian Communist of today.

#### Leaders and Ranks

Lovestone has long since forsaken Communism. Nevertheless, the type is of utmost significance because nearly a decade before the New Deal and nearly two decades before the full bureaucratization of the CIO, we saw in the early American Communist Party, the anticipation of a certain type of labor bureaucrat that swarms through the world labor movement of today. In my first column I spoke of Lovestone's special-

ty in "training organizers" who were not of the workers but "for" them. I described a certain specific person whom he trained. I shall call her Minnie. I wish now to return to her not in relationship to the workers whom she "led," but in relationship to those in her own Communist group.

The reason is that it is there in the ranks that other types were sharpened in opposition to her.

#### Where Tendencies Take Shape

There were those in her group who went to work as ordinary workers rather than picking up the plums of the skilled jobs in the unionized shop. These had to reject a body of ideas that was very attractive because still untested in actual life: (1) that it was the unionized shop where the most "advanced" workers were; (2) that it was by "educating" these that you won converts to Communism; and (3) that the reorganization of society would follow such and such a path and none other.

Today it is well known that it was the completely new "raw" workers

who formed the CIO and changed the industrial face of America. It was not the A F of L which was transformed into the CIO. The CIO grew up out of other roots. Not only that. Even unions like the International Ladies Garment Workers Union which did form part of the organizing committee for industrial unionism came from the pressure of these unorganized workers.

The people most ready to reorganize society were found not in the union apparatus, nor even in the "leftwing" caucuses, but among these "backward" workers.

#### Every Sharp Turn a Crisis

This was not clear in those days, not to the leaders, nor to those who had no ambition to lead. To stand up then for the concept of the "backward" workers as the most advanced meant to engage in a struggle with intellectuals like Lovestone who had all the authority and prestige that goes with leadership. That was no small thing for a rank and filer to do. Above that, making a decision to fight for this idea meant you had to break close friendships, friendships with girls like Minnie who were also absorbed totally in the working class movement and were giving their lives to it like yourself. Finally you risked expulsion from the group into which you had thrown yourself completely.

At each sharp turn in policy you had to make such a decision. There were those who made every sharp

turn; those who straddled the fence; and those who fell by the wayside.

The point is all these different types were jammed up into one small group. Each thought it had the answer to the crisis of society because each was searching in the group for that answer (That is why they joined in the first place.) Thus the absence of a mass labor party not only brought many types into the radical grouping that would not otherwise be there. It was more than that. Because there was no mass labor party, no way to check practically with the masses, these different social types who were jammed up into that one group had to fight it out among themselves. Because theoretically they did fight it out to a finish, they anticipated so much of what was to confront the general mass movement at a later stage.

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#### TENSIONS WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION

Last July the U. S. Government Printing Office issued Document No. 69 entitled Tensions Within the Soviet Union. The study was prepared by some Library of Congress scholars at the request of Senator Alexander Wiley, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations. The honorable Senator got considerable publicity for the document and it is easy to understand why. For the political conclusion of these scholars is that the tensions in the Soviet Union exist, not between the rulers and the workers, but within the intelligentsia that rules.

Only seven pages of this 92 page document are devoted to the workers. It leads them to conclude: "This is particularly notable because the preservation of the Soviet regime may depend upon the Soviet scientist, since revolutions in our day need not be mass uprisings but may hinge upon the mood and upheaval of a few scientists in charge of extraordinary weapons."

The Senator himself adopts this myth and hurries to slander the Russian workers: "Oppression creates inertia, disillusionment, fatigue, aloofness and cynicism."

#### THE CONTINUOUS REVOLT OF THE RUSSIAN WORKERS

It is not easy to see the revolt of the Russian workers because the methods of struggle in a totalitarian land are not on the surface. The workers unions in Russia have been liquidated by being incorporated into the state apparatus. Nevertheless the struggles have been continuous and have been carried on so persistently at the point of production that the Russian economy is in a constant crisis. Crisis is not a state of mind, but a state of production.

1928-1938

1) Throughout the First and Second Five Year Plans (1928-1938) workers left the plants and returned to their farms with a disrespect for capitalist routines very similar to the Southern production worker in the Northern United States.

2) The passport system accomplished as little in disciplining the workers as had the 1932 laws which authorized the factory director not only to fire a worker for absence without permission but even deprive him of his food card and his living quarters owned by the factory.

3) It was impossible to decree slavery. Quite the contrary. The Russian worker, like the American worker, knows how to handle his job. Where he is forbidden to strike, he slows down. The Senators and scholars speak of "low labor productivity" in Russia as if that means the Russian workers are backward. Like the economists in the United States in relation to American workers, however, the Russian intelligentsia recognizes low productivity for what it is: a sign of revolt against the conditions of production. Figures show that to complete the First Plan even in a half-way fashion, 22.8 million workers were used where the Plan called for only 15.7 million. Labor turnover was no less than 152 per cent.

4) The totalitarian rulers have more power than any government has ever had in history. Nevertheless, they did not feel capable of disciplining this rebellious labor force. They decided instead to divide it, by finding some social basis in the factory, among a special section of the workers. American workers who have seen Reuther operating with the skilled trades will have no difficulty in understanding what Stalin was aiming at.

As early as 1931 Stalin called for the "liquidation of de-personalization." This was a very fancy phrase for a very ugly truth; he had no factory personalities to defend his regime. To get them he decided to give the skilled worker a personality and a wage to go with it and at the same time transform the skilled worker into a speed demon for a day. This man set the "norm," that is, the rate of speed, through especially good machines and supplementary help and at a pace which he knew he would have to keep up for only a single day. This time-study then became the rate for the worker to produce every day.

That is how Stakhanovism was born. It was four years in the making. This speed-up movement met with such resistance that it was not unusual for Stakhanovites to find themselves murdered in the dark of the night.

Correspondence, Nov. 28, 1953

9335



1940-1950

At the start of war the laws of June 26th and October 2nd, 1940, forbade a worker to leave his job and punished 15 minutes lateness with six months "corrective labor"—labor in the factory with 25 per cent reduction in pay. They established State Labor Reserves which gave the youth technical training of from six months to two years and then made it obligatory for them to work for the state for four years "at the prescribed rate of wages."

Yet, after six months of operation of these laws, the Pravda reported that truancies were greater than in the months prior to it. A declaration of martial law on the railroads was passed similar to Truman's proposal to draft railroad workers in order to prevent their strike in 1946.

In 1943 the conveyor belt system was first introduced. And on the basis of the discipline of the line, there was introduced competition by factories. This meant that Factory Stalin challenges, or, more correctly, is ordered to challenge, Factory Molotov. Factory Molotov must take up the challenge "to fulfill and overfulfill" its quarterly plan by ten per cent. All workers in both factories must pitch into this back-breaking state-ordered plan. This is called "socialist emulation."

Day in and day out the Russian worker has fought the mode of labor in the factory. For two solid decades he has been unyielding in his resistance. Had the revolt not been so continuous, the terror would not have been so violent. No one wants to put millions in forced labor camps. The millions in forced labor camps are a true measure of the never-ending resistance of the Russian workers to their oppressors.

#### BACK TO SENATOR WILEY

It is these Russian workers who, the honorable Senator tells us, are "aloof." With sure class instinct, he turns from the workers to the "scientists." Technocrats and capitalists have had their day-dreams of push button factories which would solve the class struggle. None, however, have been more naive than the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Russian specialists with their trust that "the few scientists in charge of extraordinary weapons" might substitute for mass uprisings. How Malenkov and Co. would love to believe that! But their ivory towers, unlike the Senate's, are too near the point of production in Russia where day in and day out they must contend, not with mythical scientists of "independent thinking," but with the very real mass resistance.

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#### INTELLECTUALS AND THE RADICAL WORKERS

The last depression gave rise to a number of small political parties, the chief of which was the American Workers Party (AWP), officially formed in 1933. Actually, it had existed from 1928 when it was called the Conference for Progressive Labor Action (CPLA). It was formed originally to defend Brookwood Labor College from attacks by the A F of L that the college was harboring Communists. The actual reason for the attack was that the college taught industrial unionism. The chairman of the college, the CPLA and the AWP was A. J. Muste. His followers referred to themselves as Labor Actionists. They were called "Musteites."

This small grouping of intellectuals and workers soon began to play an important role in the actual struggle of the workers for industrial unionism.

In 1931, they launched the great organizing strike in Patterson, N. J. They were in the forefront of the campaign to organize the West Virginia Mine Workers Union as well as the Illinois miners in 1932. They soon found themselves at the head of some 10,000 unemployed in the Midwest. They organized Unemployed Leagues in opposition to the Unemployed Councils organized by the Communist Party.

In 1934 a strike against Auto-Lite broke out in Toledo, Ohio. An AF of L local called the strike, but it soon became obvious it was impossible for it alone to fight all the forces of capital and the police arrayed against it. The local called upon the Musteite Unemployed Leagues for help on the picket line. When the organizing talent of the Musteites was added to the tremendous activities of the workers, Toledo, Ohio, became the birthplace of the auto workers union. Thus the Musteites were in the forefront of what became later the mighty upsurge of labor called the CIO.

#### THE "AMERICAN ORIENTATION" AND POLITICAL ACTION

But already in 1933 they had come to the conclusion that neither the struggles of the unemployed for relief, nor those of the workers for industrial unionism would be sufficient to change the world crisis into a workers world. Political action was needed. At the AWP founding convention in Pittsburgh, resolutions called for the formation of a genuine mass labor party, "an American orientation." This was clearly directed against the Communist Party. The resolution also declared that they would not affiliate with "any splinter groups from the Communist Party." This meant the Trotskyists.

The world depression had produced as great a crisis in the world of ideas as in the economic world. The Musteite leadership was in search of an ideology, a system of ideas. The "American orientation" was a shield to hide the deep divergence within itself and to give them time to resolve it.

A. J. Muste was a minister greatly attracted to the working class. He began by thinking merely of "educating" it and then found himself deep in the class struggle. He found himself up against the Communist Party at the same time but he had no theory with which to fight them. With him were Professors James Burnham and Sidney Hook. They agreed with Leon Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism (the Communist International), exposing its cynical theory of "After Hitler Us."

Pulling in the opposite direction was Louis Budenz, who was looking at the Communist Party with its daily paper, posts and behind it a whole country—Russia. Before that force his "American orientation" crumbled.

Dec. 12, 1933

Correspondence.

#### WHAT TO TELL THE WORKERS

There is no doubt that these intellectuals had turned to the working class because they believed that the capitalists had led the world from world war to world depression, and that only the workers could change society fundamentally. The difficulty was that the task for them as intellectuals did not end with their turning to the working class. It first began there.

What to tell the workers, that was the problem. In Germany, Nazism destroyed the organized labor movement. From Russia, Stalinist Communism shouted, "We have no unemployed. We have a Plan." In America, young intellectual planners like the Hisses rushed into the New Deal to plan for capitalism along with Roosevelt's Brain Trust.

What, between Fascists, Communism and the New Deal, would the intellectuals of the "American orientation" tell the workers?

The situation was a concrete one: in the unemployed leagues and in the strikes one strong force (the Communist Party) and one small force (the Trotskyists) were pulling at the Musteiters. The ranks were hungry for ideas. They were attracted to the Trotskyists who seemed to have a body of ideas from Plan to world revolution and who were saying to the Communists, "You went down before fascism without a fight. It is because your leader, Stalin, subordinates all struggles to the dictates of the usurping Russian bureaucracy. Only we stand for true workers interests on a world scale."

After the merger with the Trotskyists the ranks were the first to drop out. Trotskyism was completely isolated from the great upsurge that became the CIO. The Musteite leadership had failed to find a correct system of ideas to keep them and the ranks together. They now have neither ideas nor ranks.

#### COMMUNISM, TROTSKYISM, WHAT NOW

Part of the Musteite leadership, represented by Budenz, joined the Communist Party where he became the managing editor of the *Daily Worker*. He has now become the total stool pigeon.

Muste himself dropped out of the movement soon after the merger of his group with the Trotskyists. He now heads the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a pacifist grouping. Burnham broke with Trotskyism during the war. He saw a new society emerging, not from the workers, but from managers and planners. He is now the outspoken campaigner for "all-out Americanism." Sidney Hook is the advocate of "democracy" for all those who agree with him. It is hard to distinguish between him and Attorney General Brownell.

The unemployment situation and the crisis it will bring will certainly throw up groups of radicals who more than ever will need a system of ideas which will enable them not merely to agitate for the unemployed and take part in the workers' struggles, but will help them to meet the crisis. The time to do that is now. Every page of CORRESPONDENCE is engaged in this task.

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BERT COCHRAN, CAUCUS BUILDER

Workers in unions are familiar with the radical who writes programs for union caucuses. One of the most adept was Bert Cochran, the leader of the group that has recently split away from American Trotskyism. (CORRESPONDENCE, Vol. I, No. 7.)

During the depression Cochran was a student at the College of the City of New York. It was the period when young intellectuals like Cochran joined the strike movement of the workers and the unemployed and gave it "leadership." In 1934 when he was active in the famous Auto-Lite strike in Toledo, Ohio, Cochran met some Trotskyists to whom he was greatly attracted as "theoreticians" of the class struggle. When the Russian Revolution of 1917 made James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, break with the Industrial Workers of the World and accept the doctrine of "a vanguard party to lead the workers to power," the American crisis in the 1930's made Cochran accept the doctrine of the party to lead the workers.

His glib tongue and facile pen soon made him a "specialist" in trade union work. But Cochran's specialty was not to organize masses, but caucuses.

#### WORKERS, UNION LEADERS AND RADICALS

The average worker was in the struggle for unionization because he wanted a total change in the conditions of work and the relations at work. These workers were ingenious in the ways they were devising to fight the corporations and the fledgling bureaucracy. To keep themselves in leadership, the young labor bureaucracy was in need of an ideology, a system of ideas that would attract these workers. This is where the radicals came in. They wrote the programs for these union leaders. Homer Martin's was being written by Jay Lovestone; Wyndham Mortimer's by the Communist Party; Reuther's, it was generally believed, was also written by the C. P.

When GM first recognized the UAW it still had no intention of taking the union seriously enough to let the workers decide the conditions of work. Immediately there was a division between the union leadership and the union ranks as to how to enforce the contract. The workers took the road of "quicksies." Homer P. Martin, president of the UAW, opposed wildcats.

When the C. P. succeeded in prying Martin's first lieutenant (Frankenstein) away from him, Bert Cochran saw his chance to play a leading role. He came to Martin with a 20-point program which ranged from a fight against the "big corporations" to fighting Communist "collective security." In a word, Martin got from Cochran the program to fight the Communists, and Cochran got from Martin the post of UAW-WPA director.

The partnership didn't last long. At the very first strike Martin fired Cochran. That was a lucky thing for Cochran for Martin was soon to bolt the CIO.

Cochran produced a nine-point "Union Building" program and came with it to the Cleveland Convention of the UAW-CIO. The Trotskyists claimed that at least half of the points were accepted by the convention, that is to say, were bandied about by the union leadership.

Cochran never worked with the rank and file of the union for whom he had nothing but contempt. The few times he worked in the shop, he was known to the workers as a sloppy worker, one whom they had "to carry." But on the platform or in the caucus room, he talked down to them. He was as cynical as any labor bureaucrat from the smirk around his lips, the slouch of his shoulders, down to the thumb pointed at the audience as his voice rose to a crescendo.

Correspondence, Feb. 6, 1954

#### THE PARTY LEADER AND THE LABOR BUREAUCRAT

The Trotskyist leadership required of its members the following: 1) Every member who worked in a factory had to belong to a union caucus. 2) He had to attend all caucus meetings and vote. 3) He had to convert as many shopmates as possible to interest in caucus politics. 4) He must do all the legwork for the union bureaucracy.

When the Party rank and file has proven itself in caucus building, the Party leader makes a deal with the lower rungs of the bureaucracy for certain "key posts." That's what the Trotskyists consider having a "mass base."

Nomination for alternate membership in the National Committee (the leading body of the party) was the reward for becoming the intermediary between the labor bureaucracy and the party. The "politically advanced" member was the one who wrote the labor bureaucrat's leaflets and yet left the daily policy in the factory to the discretion of the labor bureaucrat. A full member of the National Committee gave the orders to the rank and file. Such an order-giver was Bert Cochran.

When in 1941 James P. Cannon went to jail for his anti-war views, Cochran blossomed forth as a "theoretician." He did it all on his own too. If, in the trade union he never worked with the rank and file, in his own party he did not even consult his co-leaders. He no sooner became editor of the Fourth International, the theoretical magazine of the American Trotskyists, than he spread himself out on a position which was in fundamental opposition to the Trotskyist theory that nationalized property equals workers' states. This petty type that Cochran is has as little respect for fundamental ideas as for rank and file people. Neither matter to him. Not long after Cochran had accurately described Yugoslavia as a capitalist country, he turned around 180° and declared it to be a workers' state.

Now this sudden involvement in international politics had nothing whatever to do either with actual world events or theoretical developments. What was bothering Cochran was not Europe, but the United States; not Communists, but the native labor bureaucracy. So long as the trade union leaders needed these radicals to write their programs, Cochran, the petty intellectual, was satisfied. But the period following World War II is one of total crisis, and no time to play at radical politics. The labor bureaucracy cleaned house, throwing out not alone the Communists but the Trotskyists from all union positions. And Cochran began to display the signs of a well-known political type—the man who is desperately determined to get out from where he is.

What American Trotskyism is reaping is the harvest they sowed with their theory of "a party to lead the masses." That accounts for the strange spectacle of the double attraction for Trotskyists: Communism and the American labor bureaucracy. Cochran did not leave alone. He took one-third of their membership—because Cannon taught them that the workers could get nowhere without a "party to lead."

## TWO WORLDS:

### Notes from a Diary

#### THE GANG LAWYER

I remember when I first saw the announcement in the paper that Roy Cohn would be McCarthy's attorney on the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. It sent a shudder through me. Without even reading the story of his life, the picture revealed the type. The worldly young man endowed with brains and wealth, through no effort of his own, believing that he can, with no roots in any civilization, do anything and everything; believing only in his own personality and using it unashamedly to breeze through any opposition.

He was only 25 then, the son of an old-line Democrat, a New York judge. Too young to be in the second World War, he had whizzed through Columbia University and law school during the post-war period in three and a half years, graduating so young that he had to wait a year and a half before he could take his bar exam. Every college student knows the type, the opportunist with brains and connections who develops them as fast as possible in order to put them at the disposal of the highest bidder. Cohn didn't have to wait long. The moment he passed his bar exam, a job was waiting for him as Confidential Assistant to the United States Attorney in New York.

#### OUTSIDE THE LAW

The Government gave Cohn the opportunity he needed. The Communists were being prosecuted for conspiracy. While the legal forms were being maintained in Court, a special department was set up by the Attorney General to deal with all radicals. The boy who had been born with a silver spoon in his mouth was now worth his weight in gold. While other government attorneys hesitated to bring in anti-Communist radicals under the same law which prosecuted Communists, Cohn was uninhibited by any democratic tradition. The end justified the means, legal or not. The older, more respectable attorneys protested, but in the end they always capitulated. Cohn knew that he could always sweep them along. All they wanted to do was go more slowly but their ends were no different than his. Cohn gathered around him a gang of younger men, as rootless and ruthless as he, anxious to put their highly-trained brains at the service of the most powerful bidder.

Now that his ability to bully his more liberal colleagues into illegal short-cuts had been proven, Cohn did not stay long with the U. S. Attorney. He was looking for more fertile fields. The new U. S. Attorney was anxious to move more slowly, to stay within the law. McCarthy needed a lawyer on his staff, as unscrupulous and as brazen and as shameless as he.

McCarthy and Cohn joined forces. McCarthy's smears are as unscrupulous as Cohn's, but his manner is shifty, sneering. Cohn brings to the proceedings the vigorous brassiness which paralyzes the opposition with its offensiveness.

#### INFORMERS' BEST FRIEND

The whole tradition of the American people fills them with horror and distaste for stool pigeons. But everything the Administration, Democratic and Republican, has done drives them towards identifying the informer with a patriot. When Louis Budenz, Elizabeth Bentley, Whittaker Chambers and the whole army of lesser fry stool pigeons take the stand to finger people, they are aware of the revulsion of the whole community. Cohn is there to give them the immoral courage to continue. Without any ifs, ands or buts he stands for the philosophy of glorifying informers. When he is present, they feel that it takes guts to be an informer. He bathes their dirty work in the aura of being with the elite. His very presence reassures them that if they lie, he will find the means legal or illegal to protect them. The American public knows the gang lawyer, the legal brain who puts his skills, experience and connections at the disposal of the gangsters and fixes everything for them. It also knows the prosecutor who uses the state's witnesses against criminals. But the type who is both prosecutor and gang lawyer is a product of a world in which all society is in such total crisis that the gangsters have taken over the government.

Correspondence, Feb. 20, 1954

#### AT YOUR SERVICE

Cohn served as a cloak for McCarthy's anti-Semitic attacks. At one televised hearing, Cohn shouted, "I am a Jew and that has nothing to do with the case." Every minority has its upper crust, exceptional individuals who see in their special qualifications a way to overcome the disadvantages which official society imposes upon the majority. They are the ones who buy acceptance with special services. Among the Negroes are the Talented Tenth leaders. Cohn is a Talented Tenth Jew. The way he puts it is that the Jew has a special obligation to repay American society for the advantages it has given him. The Jew should show his special gratitude by out-patrioting the patriots. He takes a special pride in prosecuting Jews and doesn't even wince at being called an anti-Semite. Hitler had Jews like that in his party.

The exceptional individuals in a minority very often anticipate the next stage of a society. They have, as members of the minority, no roots in the existent society. Their own people are seeking assimilation and integration in a way that demands the reorganization of society on a more democratic basis. When they turn their backs on their own people, and seek assimilation for themselves as exceptional individuals, they take the most reactionary features of the existing system to their conclusion. Very often a woman who wants to be up there with the men will be more venomous against other women than any man.

#### LIBERALS ARE HELPLESS

Cohn totally disregards and demolishes all civilized values. Respect for the individual, respect for truth, respect for freedom; he has none of this and he prosecutes any dissenters, not to protect democracy but to destroy one gang in behalf of another. The only question he is concerned with is this: whose side are you on? Anybody who is not in his gang, ready to go the limit with him, is on Moscow's side, to be mowed down.

In the face of this totalitarian philosophy, the liberal is completely helpless. The liberal press shouts against Cohn, but all it could do when Cohn and Schine made their 17 day book-burning junket abroad was ridicule them as spoiled brats and wail at the cost to American prestige abroad. The liberals are genuinely anxious to preserve democratic rights. They despise, loathe and fear Cohn as a menace to everything valuable in the American tradition. But in their minds also the only two worlds are Russian Communism and American Democracy. They cannot put up a resistance to Cohn's totalitarian gangsterism here any more than the liberal intellectual abroad can put up a resistance to the totalitarian gangsterism of Communism. They feel the crisis but they have no total opposition to the system in the concept of a new society built by the workers.

## TWO WORLDS:

### Notes From a Diary

#### RUSSIA IN ECONOMIC CRISIS

Russia is in the grip of an economic crisis. Agriculture is in complete chaos. Even compared to Czarist times, livestock production has shrunk three per cent while population has increased 40 per cent. Grain production is barely keeping up with the increase in population.

The Russian leaders themselves have had to admit that the state of collectivized agriculture is "alarming . . . wretched . . . negligent." A new decree was promulgated to send 100,000 youth to the far distances of Russia to plow up virgin soil. Just like the American labor bureaucracy, the Russian bureaucrats know only one way to meet the economic crisis, and that is to come up with yet another plan.

The American recession no sooner started than the American labor bureaucracy began a campaign to convince the Eisenhower Administration to go in for some New Deal planning. As if Roosevelt's planning hadn't led us directly from the 1929 depression into the havoc of a second world war! In Russia, where the planners have all the state power, they have, after a quarter of a century of planning, achieved the most lopsided economy in the world.

#### PLANNING—FROM CRISIS TO CRISIS

It is true that it is a characteristic of all capitalist countries to produce more and more producers goods and less and less, relatively, of consumer goods. But nowhere except in Russia has there been an increase in producers goods for the period from the end of the Second Five Year Plan in 1937 to the year 1953, of 72 per cent, and a decline in consumer goods of 23 per cent.

In human terms, this means that only the bureaucrat sees good meat or fruit or butter or coffee or milk in his regular diet. The average Russian worker must be satisfied with a diet of cheap sausage, cured fish, cabbage, potatoes, bread and macaroni. For this he works 48 hours a week on a piecework incentive basis.

This is the end result of 25 years of planning under Communism. Yet so deluded are people by the myth of planning in countries of free enterprise, where conditions are just as wretched, that, to this day, no one uses the words, economic crisis, to describe the state of the planned Russian economy.

Yet there is nothing new about economic crises in Russia. The first came at the end of the First Five Year Plan in 1932. All the rest of the world was also in the depths of depression. There it took a different form. Instead of breadlines they were dying by the millions. What had happened was that forced collectivization had brought about such wholesale slaughter of cattle by the peasants that to this day Russia has never got back to its pre-World War I state in regard to livestock production.

#### CRISES, PURGES AND FRAME-UPS

There was another crisis in 1937. The Russian workers had saved the country from the complete agricultural chaos by building up its industry. But the harder they worked and the more heavy industry got built up, the less they got of the benefits. A whole new class of industrial managers was added to the government and military bureaucracy and the weight of these new rulers was too much burden on the workers' backs.

This time too the economic crisis took a form different from that in ordinary capitalist countries. There, when there is centralization of industry, there is a firing of managers, bankruptcy of some capitalists and the monopoly and growth of others. In Russia it took the form of the gory frame-up trials which killed off not only those who had led the Revolution, but part of the new Stalinist bureaucracy. Thousands and thousands of workers who had resorted to slowdowns against the inhuman speed of the production line filled the forced labor camps. Then, like in the rest of the world, came the war. And now there is another economic crisis.

Nearly a year has passed since an alarming state, at least in agriculture, was admitted by the Russian totalitarian bureaucracy itself. The Russian people were promised more consumer goods and a reorganization of the agricultural front, which included prying the swivel chair agronomists out of their chairs and sending them into the fields. That was not so easy and the farmers did not wish these bureaucratic overlords. Then they decided to send youth, mostly city-bred, to plow up virgin territory in Siberia, the Urals, the Volga region. So far the result is next to zero.

Correspondence. May 15, 1954



#### **GREATER SPEED-UP IN STORE**

In his speech to the Moscow electorate on March 12, Premier Malenkov had this to say: "Soviet men and women, our whole people must become well aware of the fact that the principal decisive requisite for the further advance and all-round development of the national economy is the utmost rise in labor productivity in all fields, in industry, in transport, and in agriculture. All of us must know that without a considerable and uninterrupted rise in labor productivity it is impossible to achieve a substantial and rapid rise in the welfare of the Soviet people."

In a word, all that is in store for the Russian workers is greater and greater speed-up.

Labor turns the wheels of industry and agriculture and neither the tractors nor the hydrogen bomb have changed that single source of all produced wealth. Just before the Nazi invasion of Russia, the head of the State Planning Commission gave it all mathematical precision. "The plan for 1941," he said bluntly, "provides for a 12 per cent increase in the productivity of labor and a 6.5 per cent increase in average wage per worker."

So long as the worker is paid the minimum necessary for his existence and the maximum is extracted from him to maintain a productive system ready for world conquest, that is how long we will have economic crises.

#### **CRISIS ROOTED IN METHOD OF PRODUCTION**

At this point the economic crisis is severest in Russia because the restlessness of the masses there and in its satellites upsets the best-laid plans of the biggest bureaucrats. But it isn't the state plan that produced the crisis any more than it is the private plans of private capitalists that is producing the recession here. In both cases it stems from the method of production. So long as the workers themselves do not control and manage production, that is how long the method of production will produce the crises.

The answer of the American rulers is to explode another hydrogen bomb. The answer of the East German workers was the revolt of June 17th. In one case the very fate of civilization is in question. In the other case a new civilization free of all domination was opened up by the East German workers who revolted both against Russian domination and the speed-up of the production line.

## TWO WORLDS:

### Notes From a Diary

#### THE STORY OF MORRIS, A NEW YORK GARMENT WORKER

The article, "Electing the National Editorial Board," which appeared in the Special Supplement (CORRESPONDENCE, No. 14) has sent me leafing through my Diary to the year 1937 and the story of Morris, a New York garment worker.

Morris was one of a mere handful of young American workers who sided with Trotsky in the fight which split the world Communist movement in two: Stalinism, or Russian Communism; and Trotskyism which retained the principle of world revolution. Morris was no theoretician, but an ordinary rank and file member. American Trotskyism was totally isolated from the labor movement and Morris felt very uncomfortable in the new grouping. But whatever had to be done he did.

In the early days of Trotskyism the Communists tried to destroy them physically. They would beat up individual Trotskyites who tried to sell their paper or distribute a leaflet. They would try to break up any meetings called by the Trotskyites. Morris was a brawny fellow who made a good showing in any fight. He would accompany the leaflet distributors and paper salesmen. He formed a guard to protect the Trotskyite meetings from Communist attacks.

#### THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

In 1937 the world was aflame with the mass outburst of the Spanish people against the fascist plot attempted by Franco. It was the greatest demonstration the world had seen of a mass mobilization that was organized completely from below, from the local factory and workers' committees. It was accomplished despite the hesitation of the national leadership. The workers armed themselves, took over the factories, set up the defenses against the fascist onslaught.

Morris felt it in his blood; he was in his element then. He joined the Eugene V. Debs Brigade, the volunteer pioneer fighters against world fascism.

With his own eyes, from the thick of the battle, Morris witnessed how every organization that called itself working class and revolutionary met the test of the Spanish Revolution. He saw the tiny, insignificant Communist Party buy its way to power with the gold and military power of Russia. He saw this party become the executioner of the Spanish workers, driving them out of the factories they controlled, sacrificing them to Franco, rather than permit the workers to run their own lives.

He saw the powerful Socialist and Anarcho-Syndicalist (union) movements disoriented, made impotent and then destroyed by the maneuvers of the Communists. And he saw the total impotence of the Trotskyites. In a letter to me he put it pungently enough: "Their policies are as effective as trying to piss against the wind."

#### BACK IN AMERICA

Upon his return to America and the Trotskyite party, this worker who had proved himself ready to give his life for the workers' cause was treated with intellectual disdain. He had been no theoretician when he left and was none when he returned—a battlefield is hardly comparable to a library. What he had lived through and the eyes with which he saw it could not be found in any books. Nevertheless his opinion on this crucial world event was not solicited.

The theoreticians continued "to bring up to date" the abstract theory called "permanent revolution." The journalists continued to rewrite the New York Times dispatches on the Spanish Civil War. Morris was a worker when he left the country and a worker when he returned, but the "class angling" of the newspaper reports was left to the professionals. Naturally such a leadership mentality could not possibly have led to the nomination of Morris to the leading committee.

Correspondence, May 29, 1954

#### WORKERS AND INTELLECTUALS

This does not mean that intellectuals don't "want" workers on leading committees. They know that without the working class no progress at all can be made in present day society. But they are incapable of hearing a worker except when he speaks what they want him to say. Where the worker has not been turned into a hack, where the intellectuals have not succeeded in using him against "the college boys," that is to say, other intellectuals with whom they do not agree, they do not know how to listen to the worker. It happens that Morris had sympathized with the "other" intellectuals, the minority in the party before he left for Spain, and it is for this reason that the majority leadership never thought of putting him on the National Committee, the leading body of the party.

That is not the point. The point is that when, through the direct intervention of Leon Trotsky himself, Morris was made an alternate to the leading committee, he was not listened to any more attentively than when he was a rank and filer.

#### SILENCED BY LEADERSHIP

The truth is the very functioning of those leading bodies makes it impossible for a worker to say anything. The agenda, to begin with, creates no place for the worker to express himself. Even when there is a shop problem that is taken up, it isn't the simple problem you discuss but "the politics of it." The very atmosphere of leaders talking to each other makes a worker withdraw. How could Morris' pointed analysis of the impotence of Trotskyism in Spain fit in with the highly intellectualized discussion of "the permanent revolution" which had as much relevance to the living struggle in Spain as the "politics" of the shop problem had to the life of the worker.

What the leadership could not achieve when Morris was a rank and filer, it achieved in making him part of the leadership—it shut him up completely. Fresh from the experience of the life-and-death struggle with fascism, he could not stand the stifling intellectual talk of leaders for leaders. After sitting it out a few months, this worker who was ready to give his life for the workers' cause, dropped out of "the workers movement" altogether.

## TWO WORLDS:

### Notes From a Diary

#### "RUSSIA, MORE THAN EVER FULL OF REVOLUTIONARIES ..."

"You all seem to be so skeptical about the chances of a revolution in Russia. I am not sure myself. But, believe me, Russia is more than ever full of revolutionaries."

Thus Brigitte Gerland addressed her co-journalists attending the Four Power Conference in Berlin last January. Miss Gerland, a German journalist who had been arrested in 1946 and sent to a Russian concentration camp, was one of several thousand German inmates who had suddenly been amnestied for the show at the Four Power Conference. Her audience was very skeptical because she was not telling a tale of woe, but of revolt. She would have found sympathetic listeners had she engaged in an abstract discussion of whether a revolt can occur under a police state, but not when she related that one has happened.

#### RUSSIAN YOUTH IN REVOLT

Gerland relates that she met students from the big cities of Russia, Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Odessa. The outstanding among these were the sons of Old Bolsheviks, that is to say, the leaders of the 1917 revolution who had been executed by Stalin in the infamous Moscow Trials of 1937. Those "children of the 'generation of '37' . . . had been educated in State orphanages and had managed to fight their way to the universities only by endless efforts and tricks. Now these would-be philosophers, historians or economists sat in the camp, with twenty-five years of forced labor as their only future . . ." But they weren't broken or resigned.

"In their view," continues Gerland, "the Socialist State of the future would not be run by either one or several parties, but purely by workers' and peasants' 'syndicates'—they used the French word, picked from a study of the Paris Commune of 1871, which Lenin himself had hailed as his model before he seized power."

Translated, the word Marx used in describing the Paris Commune was "the self-government of the producers." In any case, the program of the youth "had been born from a desperate rejection of the alternatives of the system of Stalinist oligarchy on the one hand, and of Western 'bourgeois' democracy on the other. The parliamentary forms and the capitalist economy of the West held little attraction for these young people thirsting for social justice, who, as they put it, 'were not ready to be seduced by motor cars and nylons.'"

It is this youth group which Gerland credits with the "courage, vitality and initiative that a new kind of play is now being enacted against the same old backdrop of the camp system, while the big officers of the secret police look on and do not believe their eyes."

#### THE STRIKE IN THE FORCED LABOR CAMP IN VORKUTA

The reference to "the new kind of play" is to the strike at Vorkuta, in European Russia. There are between 35 to 50 mines and 250,000 workers, some free, but mostly slave. Vorkuta supplies the coal for the industries of Leningrad, and no one had ever before heard, and the totalitarian bureaucracy had surely never conceived of a strike of slave laborers. They began sending their big shots, their top names, down to the struck mines to offer some concession.

Gerland reports from her vantage point in a woman's camp. She speaks of the three types of resistance: the students already mentioned, the "believers," a religious group and the Ukrainians. The Ukrainians had all been in the underground movement. This week the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine is in session. Premier Malenkov and Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the Russian Communist Party, are both there. The whole agricultural campaign, over which Khrushchev is boss, is dependent on this rich "breadbasket of Russia."

Of all the nationalities in Russia the Ukrainians are the ones who are carrying on actual guerrilla warfare against Russia. It is clear that this is still going on. But at this point we are concerned only with the Ukrainians that were in this forced labor camp in Vorkuta and participated in the mine strike. At the time Frau Gerland left last August 5th the strike was still going on.

Another eye-witness report by a Dr. Joseph Scholmer who had directly participated in the strike, shows that the strike continued for several weeks. "Order" was finally restored, that is to say, troops opened fire: 64 were killed, 200 wounded.

Dr. Scholmer had been in the anti-Nazi resistance movement during World War II and arrested by the Gestapo in 1943, only to be rearrested by the Russians in 1950 and sent to a forced labor camp for 25 years of hard labor. He was one of those amnestied and returned to Germany.

#### THE WAY TO FREEDOM

Dr. Scholmer was asked for the motives of the strike. "Our motives?" he asked, "Oh, they were fantastically mixed. Some wanted a little better living and working conditions. Others were hoping for a 'new era' now that Stalin was dead. Some wanted to imitate the 17th of June in Germany, which we had heard described over Radio Moscow and in Pravda. Others wanted to destroy the system, and there was an old man in my barracks who cried over and over again, 'Have we torn down the barbed-wire fence yet? Is it down, is it down?'"

No, the barbed wire had not been torn down, and freedom from Russian totalitarianism was not won by the East German revolt either. But two new pages in history were written: whoever before June 17th had heard of a mass revolt against a totalitarian dictatorship? Whoever had before July heard of slave laborers forcing concessions from a police state? Two pages in history that have shown the way to freedom.

That is why the former inmates, Dr. Scholmer and Miss Gerland speak not so much of suffering as of revolt, of freedom. Not yet? "Not yet," they too say, and go back to the quote from the great Russian poet, Pushkin, who back in 1827 wrote to his imprisoned friends:

Deep in the Siberian mine,  
Keep your patience proud;  
The bitter fall shall not be lost,  
The rebel thought unbowed . . .  
The heavy-hanging chains will fall,  
The walls will crumble at a word;  
And Freedom greet you in the light,  
And brothers give you back the sword.

## TWO WORLDS:

### Notes From a Diary

#### DAVID WALKER'S "APPEAL"

Readers have asked repeatedly, "What good does it do that a worker's experience or gripe is written down?" Or, "What do you hope to accomplish with this paper?" Now the American people have had some fundamental experiences answering just these questions. We will take up just one example here, the appearance in 1829 of the *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the United States*.

At that time slavery had fastened itself so firmly on the South that even masters who wanted to give slaves their freedom were forbidden to do so by law. The North made up what it lacked in actual slavery by the bitterness of its race prejudice. All the educated ones, the politicians, the preachers, the editors of newspapers proclaimed that there was no perspective of freedom for people so completely degraded.

#### THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

The slave had begun to run away from the South in large numbers. Increasing numbers of white people were providing the runaway with food and shelter and means of conveyance from one place to the next. The master, who close on the heels of the runaway still could not catch him, declared in disgust that they must be disappearing down some underground road.

Who was publicizing these powerful blows being dealt the slave system and pointing them out as a sure signpost of the future? Nobody. Those actions, that railroad to freedom, were underground and the educated ones were determined to keep it there. Once a year on Sunday, in churches all over the country, the people were told that for sweet charity's sake the Negro had to be thrown out of the country. This had the backing of all the highest authority and learning in the country: the former president of the United States, everywhere revered as a great liberal, Thomas Jefferson; Francis Scott Key, who wrote the "Star Spangled Banner"; a nephew of George Washington—and so on.

But all of these were to be demolished by Negroes who had no press, no money, no vote, no party; armed only with the strength of their feelings and experiences and the certainty that they were in the right and could not and would not be kept down.

#### THE PAMPHLET

David Walker was a free Negro who had come up from the South and settled in Boston where he earned his living by collecting rags. He had seen something of the country and had spoken to people wherever he went. He wrote those conversations down, dealing first of all with those of his own class who thought they were well situated and that "there is no use bettering our condition for we cannot. I will ask one question here—can our condition be any worse? Can it be more mean or abject? . . . Can they get us any lower? Where can they get us?"

He dealt with those experts like Jefferson, always full of expert advice about what the Negro was capable and incapable of doing on account of his "unfortunate" skin color. That prejudice, predicted Walker, would yet "root some of you out of the very face of the earth." Among whites themselves brother would be fighting brother in the most devastating war of the century, a war that would leave its scars in the minds of men to remember what slavery had wrought. More films and books are being produced about the Civil War right now than at any other time.

#### MADE TO TAKE SIDES

The pamphlet proved true not only in its predictions but in its own time. Over 50,000 copies were sold and circulated from hand to hand. Those who could not read asked others to read it to them. When it hit the South state legislatures went into session. Ships were searched for copies, railroad cars ransacked and homes broken into. Walker's arrest was demanded, and when the Mayor of Boston protested that he had never heard of that insignificant person, the slavemasters put a reward of \$3,000 on Walker's head which any gangster was free to collect. The way the South quaked and trembled over a pamphlet revealed before everyone's eyes that rather than see the slave laborer change his conditions of life, the slavemasters would rather plunge the whole country into the same state of terror they imposed on the slave. Walker nailed the slavocracy on the one point from which they could never escape no matter what tricks they tried.

Those who declared slavery wrong but freedom impractical were being driven completely onto the side of slavery or into the perspective of freedom.

#### WHAT WALKER'S METHOD ACCOMPLISHED

Fifty thousand readers is a natural form of organization when they are moved by what they read.

The slaves' actions had produced this pamphlet and the pamphlet produced a mass convention where the free Negro told the country that he would never allow himself to be separated from his slave brethren in the South. The homeless runaways were settled in a colony across the Canadian border. From there 500 conductors would return to the South to conduct whole families of slaves to freedom.

The pamphlet gave the reader back his own feelings and experiences in a form that he could recognize as changing history in a fundamental way. Before the pamphlet people could not be sure where they themselves stood. Their own thoughts were blocked and their deepest feelings suppressed. When the pamphlet appeared and was circulated everywhere and the slave South shook on its very foundations, the reader made up his mind in relation to that and therefore to the future of the country as a whole.

Walker's pamphlet is part of our history and CORRESPONDENCE is part of that proven method, which enables all the insignificant and obscure people in the world to clear their own minds from the hypnotism of the plans and programs put out by the elite, and trust only themselves to change their conditions of life in a fundamental way.

## TWO WORLDS:

### Notes From a Diary

#### ON BOTH SIDES OF THE IRON CURTAIN

In the closing moments of its session Congress rushed through an Act, The Communist Control Act of 1954. This law, which purports to have as its aim the outlawing of the Communist Party, is solidly anti-labor.

So great was the haste to railroad this through before the people knew what it was all about, that the Congressmen themselves didn't have the law before them when they voted for it, changing it hysterically from paragraph to paragraph as the so-called liberal, Senator Humphrey, vied with the McCarthys and McCarrans to make it more repressive.

#### THE NEW LAW AND THE UNIONS

Their fantastic haste and confusion would be grotesque if it weren't so sinister. Let's listen to ex-Gov. Herbert, the head of the Subversive Activities Control Board, who will be the one to administer the new law. The Governor appeared recently on "Man of the Week," the TV show which interviews what they call "news-making personalities." The interviewers asked him to interpret the phrase, "Communist-infiltrated" union. They wanted to know who decides what is a "Communist-infiltrated" union. The Governor was hedging on the ground that he had not "studied the law thoroughly yet."

They then cited the case of the Montana copper miners who belong to the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, which had been branded by the CIO as being Communist dominated. The interviewers recognized plainly (1) that the miners were not Communists; (2) that the miners knew of the charge that their union was "Communist-infiltrated" since the whole CIO campaign was based on it and (3) that they overwhelmingly, by secret ballot, nevertheless voted to remain in their union. How, concluded the interviewers, would the new law operate in face of this vote of confidence by the non-Communist rank and file?

After considerable hemming and hawing the Governor had to admit that the vote would count for nothing at all; that what mattered was not the democratic vote of the membership but the ruling of Attorney General Brownell.

#### A CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

By a stroke of the pen Congress thrust democracy out of the window. The Attorney General's decision has become all-important and the workers' vote has been declared null and void. Yet the Senators and Congressmen had the gall to pronounce this a law against "the Communist conspiracy." In truth, this law is the greatest conspiracy against the American people.

Only one thing the Administration cannot control in this headlong rush to make this country like Russia: the American people won't take it. To aim at such totalitarian power is one thing. To succeed is another. When a law is in fact a conspiracy against the people it cannot and does not function.

Senator Taft, in his day, took the occasion of the general strike wave, at the end of the war, climaxed by the power strike in Pittsburgh in 1947 to steamroller through the Taft-Hartley Act. But to this day they have not been able to make that function.



#### THE ATTORNEYS GENERAL: BROWNELL AND VISHINSKY

The Taft-Hartley Law is child's play compared to the present act. Day in and day out the Administration is fighting hard to make this country more and more like Russia. The latest act abolishes any serious distinction between Attorney General Brownell and Attorney General Andrei Vishinsky of the infamous Moscow Trials.

The Attorney General of Russia could become the sole despotic interpreter of the vicious Russian laws because long before the purges the rights of labor had been taken away and the trade unions had been incorporated as part of the state apparatus.

The present administration in Washington did not reach this ultimate in totalitarianism overnight. Eisenhower thought he could buy himself the voluntary cooperation of the trade union movement by appointing a labor leader to his cabinet as Secretary of Labor. But it was not long before even the willing labor tool, Durkin, who was ready to compromise on everything, including Taft-Hartley, had to resign from the cabinet. This mild flirtation over, the administration no longer considered it enough that they had the voluntary cooperation of the Reuthers and Lewises, Dubinskys and MacDonalds in suppressing the workers.

#### UNIONS AND THE ONE PARTY STATE

So desperate is their need to control every phase of daily living, especially the way workers work, the way workers turn the wheels of production, that they are now driving to make the unions an actual part of the state apparatus under the control of the Attorney General. This is inseparable from suppression of all political opposition.

The naming of the Communist Party is a cheap Moscow-type trick. The truth is that they have defined Communism so loosely that they can use it against any opposition. It is not accidental that the very first attempts are against labor. Right now Brownell is threatening to use the law against the Detroit strikers in Square D.

The law has not been tested in court and, most important of all, the American workers have not yet had their say. There is no doubt whatever that they will not give up their hard-won freedoms to men thirsting for total power.

For one who has studied Russia as closely as I have, I cannot help but feel that economically and politically the administration is moving in the same direction as the one-party totalitarian state on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The ultimate in that was the incorporation of the trade unions into the state, and it is to this ultimate that the administration is aiming with this new law.

## TWO WORLDS:

### Notes From a Diary

#### EDITING AND TYPOS

I was sent leafing through my diary to find the record of a conversation by one of the great political writers of this century, the deceased Leon Trotsky, on the relationship of editing and typographical errors to political theory and practice. The thing that set me on this task was a discussion I had with the technical editor of CORRESPONDENCE over a serious error which occurred in the article, "Workers and Civil Liberties," in the column by Stefan, Experiences and Expectations, which always appears on the back page of the paper.

When I asked that the paragraph in which the error occurred be reproduced, the technical editor said he didn't see the necessity for it because (1) if anyone had read the article up to the point where the error occurred and then finished it, he "could make out its meaning" and (2) reprinting the paragraph, on the other hand, would create more confusion than clarity.

Now if to these two arguments, he had added another—that the American people aren't like the Europeans, that is to say, aren't sufficiently interested in theory to feel concern over such errors, he would have been in the unfortunate position of the American Trotskyites who said precisely those three things to Leon Trotsky who had asked that an essay by him be reprinted. Here is what occurred then, January 1933.

#### LEON TROTSKY ON THEORY AND PRACTICE

Leon Trotsky had written a foreword to the first translation of Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto in the Afrikaans language. This foreword, which was published in the magazine of his American followers, The New International, contained many typos. Trotsky asked that the errors be republished and, alongside them, the corrections. The American editors replied with the three points I listed above, adding that it is practice, not theory, that interests the American working class.

Out of his vast experience, not alone in journalism, Trotsky replied:

"You are standing everything on its head. It isn't the American people who show disinterest in theory; it is the editorial board of The New International.

"This is due, not to the fact that you are too much engaged in practice but quite the contrary. It is being serious about the class struggle that makes one serious with theory, not the other way around.

#### LOOKING DOWN ON THE WORKERS

"If even you were right and the 'American people' weren't preoccupied with theoretical questions, still if just one reader, a single one were interested, it would be worthwhile to reprint. That is one way of eliciting theoretical talent. The individual who thus comes to the fore is not 'an individual.' He is a representative, an integral part of the American working class. To prejudge this is to look down upon American workers. This blinds you from seeing that the best theoreticians of Marxism will appear on American soil.

"Typos represent more than technical carelessness, even as cobwebs in a house tells more than a failure to dust one day. As a matter of fact, I could always tell the state of your organization through the number of typos in your press."

No one, of course, dared buck Leon Trotsky. But, significantly enough, the correspondence between them was not published and, instead of printing the errors alongside the corrections, the whole article was printed again in corrected form. In a word, the whole process of error, and what may be called error as the dynamic of truth, was lost. That is to say, nothing was learned through the error. In a not unimportant way this little experience illuminates the whole sorry state of theory and practice of the old radicals in this country.

Correspondence, Oct. 16, 1934

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#### STEFAN'S ARTICLE

Now I know there are too few of us doing too many tasks and the state of finances of the paper preoccupies us to the exclusion of all else. But the truth is that carelessness with typos tolls more than fatigue, just as preoccupation with the state of finances must be not so much with money as with the working class nature of the paper.

Types disclose an attitude to the appearance of a workers' paper, the first such in America. Take the article by Stefan. After stating that "Governments exist by the sufferance of its people," the typos made such a mess of things that the following two sentences made no sense whatever. They read: "It's quite true that most government's existence. The confidence lease on life by resorting to force and violence against its own people."

Now this not only makes no sense. Concretely, it made hash out of the conclusion a worker arrived at on the important question of the use of force and violence.

Here is the whole paragraph as it should have read (the lines that were messed up are in bold face).

#### THE ORIGINAL PARAGRAPH

"In any case laws have never guaranteed and insured the stability and permanence of any government. Governments have secured a longer lease on life by resorting to force and violence against its own people. But this is a sure sign that such a government is on its way out."

To state, as the technical editor did, that the readers "could make out its meaning" appears to give high credit to our worker readers. But the truth is always concrete. And the truth is that the attitude to the readers is revealed more clearly than you think in the attitude to the worker writer.

The specific point at issue was not whether the worker readers could, or could not, make out the meaning of the article out of their own vast experiences. The point at issue was that one worker named Stefan wished to express himself in a very precise way and not in a way that others could "make out the meaning." And it is the attitude to that worker and that article by which we are, and should be, judged.

I hope that our readers will write in fully on the whole question of typos and attitudes involved.

## TWO WORLDS:

### Notes From a Diary

#### CROSS CURRENTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Recently I made a brief speaking tour on the subject of CORRESPONDENCE. My audiences were mostly young adults and, at first, they remained unimpressed by the reference to how young America is. It sounded as abstract and far away as a history book.

When, however, I moved from the parallel I had drawn between CORRESPONDENCE and the Liberator, the paper of the Abolitionist movement, which began publication back in 1831, to an incident in my own life, the audience responded as one does to a concrete thing which is within one's grasp. Yet the cross currents in it show where the socialist movement met that far-away movement for the abolition of slavery, and how the world wide outlook of these same Abolitionists predated the Russian Revolution of 1917 by 86 years.

#### AN INCIDENT IN MY LIFE

When I was 12 years old I went to hear the American socialist, Eugene Victor Debs, who had the previous year been released from the Atlanta penitentiary to which he had been sentenced for his anti-war views during the first World War. No one who had heard that gaunt, very human socialist ever forgot him. His body bent forward into the audience, his hands outstretched, his voice seemed to issue from the audience itself. But I had to strain hard to understand for I was an immigrant.

Strangely enough I did understand. This was not alone because I had already lived through the Russian Revolution of 1917 and he hailed it as "the greatest, most luminous and far-reaching achievement in the entire sweep of human history." Even then I was critical of the great American socialist who remained a leader in the Socialist Party which rejected the Russian Revolution he praised.

No, what kept me glued to my seat was that he made American history real for me. He told of an incident in his life that took place long before he became a socialist.

#### AN INCIDENT IN DEBS' LIFE

He spoke of the fact that when he was a young man, he, as secretary of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, invited Wendell Phillips, the great orator of the Abolitionist movement, to speak to his union. Phillips was then 70 years old but still in the forefront of every social movement. He was the only one of the Abolitionist leaders who had made the transition directly to the labor movement. Debs was very proud that he had chaired that meeting.

I do not know how many years after that I first read Phillips' "full body of faith": "We affirm as a fundamental principle, that labor, the creator of wealth, is entitled to all it creates."

"Affirming this, we avow ourselves willing to accept the final results of the operation of a principle so radical,—such as the overthrow of the whole profit-making system, the extinction of all monopolies, the abolition of privileged classes, universal education and fraternity, perfect freedom of exchange, and . . . the final obliteration of that foul stigma upon our so-called Christian civilization—the poverty of the masses."

I do not know how many years later it was when I finally read Phillips' own speech, but I do know that I no longer felt foreign in that strange land, and that I turned to a study of the Abolitionist movement, which was not taught in school, before I finished high school. Long before I had a theory of it I had the instinct to search for illumination of the present day in that movement.

#### THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT

In truth, the real mass organization of the population for a profound political purpose, such as the abolition of slavery, involves all the modern problems, including what we now call the problem of worker and intellectual, and what was then concretely the relationship between the revolts and movement of the slaves and the small group of talented journalists and speakers who headed the Abolitionist movement.

In its own organization the relationship of white to Negro was not what it was outside—the principle and need to abolish slavery. In its own organization that relationship of white to Negro became a relationship, a new relationship, between human beings. For the ex-slave often became a leader of the Abolitionist movement heretofore led by an idealistic white group of intellectuals. Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman are but a few names of escaped slaves who became leaders. In truth, Abolitionism moved from a mere idea to an organization when the white intellectuals surrounded themselves with the bitterly militant ex-slaves.

A new relationship of men to women was also first worked out in that movement to abolish slavery. From the first, women were active in the anti-slavery societies. The world anti-slavery movement forbade women's participation and this split the movement. The American Abolitionists not only welcomed their participation but some of them, in turn, became involved in the women's movement for their own rights. Frederick Douglass was among the first to come forward and champion the independent movement of women. It was he who chaired the first meeting of the Woman Suffragist Movement when the women still felt they needed a man to chair their meeting.

Finally, take the question of a world outlook. William Lloyd Garrison, the founder and editor of the *Liberator*, from the first made the slogan of his paper, "Our country is the world—our countrymen are mankind."

Thus every fundamental modern problem—relationship of white and Negro, new relations of men to women, the uniqueness and the deep-rootedness of the American problem and its worldwide connections—all these were first posed in America on the eve of the Civil War. It is thus always in serious crises—you see the problems of the future illuminated.

#### BACK TO DEBS

Abolition was the new dimension in the American character that Eugene Victor Debs saw in that great orator, Wendell Phillips. And "the full body of faith" now included socialism. Or, as Debs put it, it was the gleam of the bayonets of the Federal troops called out to put down the great Pullman strike for elementary rights that transformed him into a socialist: "In the gleam of every bayonet and the flash of every rifle the class struggle was revealed. The capitalist class. The working class. The class struggle."

The problems that faced Debs when that "war to end all wars" only ended in a depression are still with us and American history has many lessons for today if only we see it not as the dry texts of history books but as the history which is reliving itself today.