

A MARXIST
QUARTERLY

SUMMER
1954

Fourth
International

McCarthyism: Key Issue in the 1954 Elections

- *Is McCarthy still winning?*
- *Will he take over the GOP?*
- *Is the White House next?*
- *Who can stop the fascists?*



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Vol. 15 - No. 3

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MANAGER'S COLUMN

The Spring issue of **Fourth International** met with a good response. Jean Simon, writing from Cleveland for extra copies, reports: "Our complete order was sold out, both our newsstand bundle and our other bundle. We find the magazine very readable and saleable. We share the universal opinion that it's a tremendous improvement over the old format and content. You may also be interested to know that one of our readers, a scholarly gentleman, asked me yesterday whether the author of 'The Myth of Women's Inferiority' is an anthropologist. He thought it was a fine job."

St. Louis Literature Agent Dick Carter writes: "My opinion is that the two latest issues of the **FI** are out of this world for well written magazines. Both were superbly

written, but I believe the Spring issue is especially good for introducing the magazine to new readers. Both of the last two issues sold soon on the newsstands."

Los Angeles wrote to increase one of their newsstand bundles and to order extra copies of the Winter issue. Literature Agent Bob Monroe reports: "The new **FI**'s apparently have much more appeal. The Winter **FI** was very popular and we quickly sold out."

Pittsburgh ordered extra copies of the Spring issue and raised their regular bundle order. Mary Butler writes: "The last issue of the **FI** was so good that we want an extra bundle to use in a special effort to introduce the magazine to new readers."

"The Spring issue of the **FI** is selling very well," reports Seattle Literature Agent Helen Baker.

"Ann and Jack sold three on their **Militant** route the first Sunday it arrived, and all to women who were interested in the article on women. I put five copies in a bookstore. The saleswoman in the store was reading the article when I left. My copy was borrowed the day it arrived in the mail and the woman who borrowed it is going to buy the magazine now that we have our bundle."

A circle of readers in Canada ordered extra copies of the Spring issue and raised their bundle order. They comment: "You are improving with age — the latest issue is better than the first in the new format."

Reader L.F.H. of Ripon, Wisc., asks us to enter his subscription. He writes, "I think the new **Fourth International** is superb. The first article in the Spring issue is an excellent analysis and survey of 'The Opposition to McCarthyism.' I have been trying to make a survey but have not been very successful. I was unable to get hold of certain publications so my survey was incomplete. I would appreciate it if you or Mr. Art Sharon could give me the addresses of the publications cited in the article. I am familiar with **The Militant** and can hardly wait until it arrives at my home each week."

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HIS IDEAS STILL LIVE

Leon Trotsky

FOURTEEN YEARS ago, on August 21, 1940, Leon Trotsky died from the blow of a pickaxe driven into his brain by one of Stalin's hired assassins.

The murder of Trotsky was greeted with joy not only by the bureaucrats who usurped power in the Soviet Union, but by reactionaries everywhere. They viewed Trotsky quite correctly as the living symbol of Marxism, that great structure of scientific thought which has already vanquished capitalism in the field of serious economic, social and political theory. The silencing of Trotsky's voice, they felt, would stay the working class a bit longer from establishing the new world order of socialism.

The removal of that great mind from the world scene amid the cataclysmic events of World War II undoubtedly had its effect. But the capitalists and the Stalinists did not understand that the silencing of Trotsky's voice could not silence the voice of Trotskyism. The fact is that all the great questions for which Trotsky offered the only correct answer — the Marxist answer — remain to this day insistently facing mankind. Let us list the main ones:

Can world economy achieve stability and deliver the abundance it is capable of producing? The capitalist sectors display only symptoms of advanced decay. Even the economy of the U.S., which emerged victor from the war, is mined throughout with the time-bombs of depression. Every worker who gives a thought to tomorrow is aware of that.

Can war be finally crossed off as a possibility in modern civilization? The fact is that never before have the great powers prepared with such assiduity and thoroughness for war, a war this time that they themselves acknowledge can mean atomic annihilation and even the wiping out of all life on this planet.

Can the threat of fascism be definitively liquidated? Right now in the United States we are faced with the



1879 - 1940

rising menace of McCarthyism, the American form of fascism. This movement gives promise, if it succeeds in taking power, of putting into the shade the horrors of Hitler's concentration camps and gas chambers.

Can the colonial world with its mighty human resources be drawn in equal partnership into the modern industrial complex of the metropolitan centers? The colonial peoples have made heroic efforts to shake themselves loose from the despotic rulers, both foreign and domestic, who stand in their path, but every one of them remains under the ominous shadow of Western imperialism; and some of them have experienced one blood bath after another, either instigated or directly inflicted by capitalist empires.

Can Stalinism, that reactionary throwback, be rooted out and workers' democracy restored to the Soviet Union? Trotsky's answer was: Yes — but not by imperialist intervention or by gradual evolution. In the absence of revolution, the bureaucracy remains entrenched, a giant obstacle to the working class in its search for the

road to socialism. What the workers must and will do about it was indicated by the June uprising in East Germany last year — but the task is yet to be accomplished.

This brief list is sufficient to indicate that the major problems Trotsky dealt with still plague the world fourteen years after his death. Must we then say that without Trotsky they cannot be solved?

Trotsky would not agree with that. In his view, the solutions in main outline were achieved in Marxist theory. What remained to be done was to put the theory into practice. This means above all building a revolutionary socialist party that knows society can be saved only by transforming it and that has the will to achieve this end no matter what the obstacles.

It is true that great numbers of workers in the United States — as in the rest of the world — know little about Trotskyism, which is the correct name for living Marxism. It is equally true that millions and hundreds of millions of these same workers, the world over, know the essence of Trotskyism in their blood and bones.

And in the course of the great class battles that lie ahead, these workers will come to know that their feelings have a theoretical counterpart whose name is Trotskyism and which can guide them to victory.

In his final remarks to the John Dewey Commission that established his innocence of the frame-up charges in the Moscow Trials, Trotsky spoke of his "faith in the clear, bright future of mankind," his "faith in reason, in truth, in human solidarity," and of the "revolutionary optimism which constitutes the fundamental element of my life."

Today, on the fourteenth anniversary of Trotsky's death, we proudly reassert the same faith and revolutionary optimism, and our determination to carry on the fight until the workers of the whole world can shout with one voice on that glorious day, "We've won!"

— By the Editors

McCarthyism: Key Issue in the 1954 Elections

by Murry Weiss

SENATOR McCarthy took the 36 days of the Army-McCarthy TV hearings as a priceless opportunity to shape a political image before millions of viewers — the image of himself as savior of America. He played up to the mass audience, pandering to their prejudices, shocking, arousing, repelling them — and at the same time fascinating them with his brazenness, his arrogant assurance, his utter contempt for his opponents. Above all, he pounded tirelessly on his fascist charge of “20” and “21 years of treason.”

The hearings over, the Wisconsin fascist leader retired to a secret hide-out to recuperate and plot his next move. The sudden relief the liberals felt from the daily fascist rasp on their nerves induced reckless speculation: they told each other that McCarthy was finished, and they held funeral services for him in their newspaper columns. He had turned out to be his own worst enemy, the liberals assured themselves. The American people, they declared, had got a good look at McCarthy and his methods and had decided they didn't want any part of either.

But life is unkind to illusions. McCarthy returned, and it became clear that the fascist beast was still alive and kicking, and that the nightmare wasn't over by any means.

The next act of this political drama is now to be played against the backdrop of the 1954 elections. What

will McCarthy's role be? Will he split from the Republican party after the primaries and form a separate fascist party? Or will a new *modus vivendi*, based on common determination to win a witch-hunting victory over the Democrats, be established between McCarthy and the other Republicans?

To assess the role of McCarthyism in the coming elections, it is first necessary to make a realistic estimate of the results of the Army-McCarthy hearings.

It is possible to draw a pleasing sketch of McCarthyism in decline since the beginning of the year. A superficial comparison of McCarthy's power before and after the hearings has led commentators to the hasty conclusion that McCarthyism is routed. Not only the highly impressionable liberal columnists but some of the more sober observers, including those in the official trade union camp, have drawn this conclusion. *Labor's Daily*, July 13, announces in a headline, “Joe's Strength Ebbing Fast,” and opens its story: “Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy was under attack from all sides today and it appeared his strength was ebbing even in his home state.”

There is some truth to the contention that McCarthy has suffered a setback. But only a grain of truth. And this grain cannot be properly understood unless it is put in context. For while suffering blows and tactical

setbacks, McCarthyism has in the same period made important advances in its basic development as a fascist movement.

The year 1954 opened auspiciously for McCarthy. Early in February, he went on national tour under the official sponsorship of the Republican National Committee, and proceeded to denounce the Democrats for their “20 years of treason.”

Within the Senate, McCarthy seemed unassailable. On Feb. 2 the Democrats and Republicans collapsed and voted 85 to 1 for the appropriations he demanded for his committee. McCarthy's Senate power was further strengthened by his appointment to the all-important Rules Committee.

McCarthy's prowess as a witch hunter was at a high point. In his first public skirmish with the Army, over the Peress and General Zwicker affair, McCarthy scored a hands-down victory, the Army beating a fumbling and apologetic retreat before him. The extent of his power in relation to the Army Department was revealed in the fantastic picture that came out later, in the Army-McCarthy hearings, of Army Secretary Robert T. Stevens chasing up and down the country trying to curry favor with Pvt. G. David Schine, a McCarthy protege.

And McCarthy's success in building a spy network in government agencies was evidenced in the appointment of his personal henchman, Robert E. Lee, to the Federal Communications Commission, and the placing of his lieutenant, Scott McLeod, in charge of State Department security.

A Pleasing Score Card

If we now list the tactical blows and reverses McCarthy has suffered during the last few months, without examining the situation further, it is quite possible to draw the altogether erroneous conclusion that McCarthy's power is being smashed.

Since the hearings, McCarthy's faction has been on the defensive. A majority bloc of the three Democrats on McCarthy's committee, plus Republican Sen. Potter, has forced McCarthy to accept the resignation of his personal favorite, Roy M. Cohn, chief counsel of the committee. Sen. Flanders' resolution to remove McCarthy from his committee chairmanships is still pending. McCarthy's attempt to investigate the Central Intelligence Agency has been temporarily blocked. And President Eisenhower himself has finally spoken out against McCarthy, censuring him for his "reprehensible" methods.

Even the press seems to have swung against McCarthy. The mass-circulation pro-McCarthy press has adopted a more cautious attitude, and the mildly critical tone of such papers as the *New York Times* and *Herald Tribune* has given way to a crusading anti-McCarthy editorial policy.

In the electoral field there are indications of a shift against McCarthy. The outspoken anti-Semite and McCarthyite, Jack Tenney, was badly defeated for State Senator in the California primaries. And in the Maine primaries, Robert L. Jones, McCarthyite opponent of incumbent Sen. Margaret Chase Smith, was swamped by a 5 to 1 margin.

Finally, it can be said that McCarthy's prestige as a witch hunter has suffered. The fact that he was forced to defend himself at the hearings, and to demand rights he never gave others, damaged his awesome appearance as the grand inquisitor who stood above all questioning.

And yet, despite this superficially comforting picture of McCarthy's fortunes in decline, it would be disastrous to fail to see that actually American fascism experienced a profound development precisely during the last months.

Deepening of the Process

The point we must grasp is that while the incipient fascist movement has experienced tactical setbacks, these setbacks are related to the deepening of the process of formation of a distinct fascist faction in the administra-

tion and in the Republican Party. They are also related to the mobilization of a fascist mass following. Without such blows a fascist movement does not develop. The blows from the old-line capitalist political machines represent their resistance to the emergence of a powerful fascist threat to their own form of capital-

defeat immediately before Hitler took power?

When we look at McCarthyism as a fascist movement in the process of formation, the figure of "only" 25 percent looms as the most ominous political fact of 1954.

If we regard the events of the first six months of 1954 as a test of whether



Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy and Roy Cohn (left), the fascist senator's chief counsel who recently resigned, in whispered conference during the Army-McCarthy TV hearings.

ist rule. Historically, the fascist movement has always used such attacks to enhance its appearance as the party of the "underdog," the "little people" who hate the powers that be.

If we listen to pollsters who have sampled public opinion since the hearings and who prove that McCarthy has no more than 25 or 30% of the populace in his camp, we might conclude that McCarthyism is no longer a threat. But the conclusion is false — for the simple reason that fascism is not running for election in America. Is it necessary to recall that the Nazis suffered a serious election

McCarthyism was just another strain of the reactionary breed of capitalist politics, or something qualitatively different, then the fact that the McCarthy faction has withstood all attempts to integrate it into the Republican machine is a strong indication that McCarthyism is no ordinary current. The growing differentiation of a fascist faction within the capitalist parties is a sign of the maturity of the threat to the working class.

One of the gravest signs of the extent of the fascist danger is the hardening of the core of McCarthy's following through the "ordeal" of the

hearings. The fascist movement is crystallizing, not only among government functionaries and national politicians, but at the grass roots. The selection of a fascist cadre with a broad following is taking place. The process is by no means complete, and before it is complete the working class will have its opportunity to reverse it; but it is already developing in outline form. We leave it to people who believe in miracles and the Democratic party to ignore such a phenomenon.

We must look at the social base of McCarthy's mass support. Who are the hard-core McCarthy supporters that make up 25 percent of the population? Unfortunately the pollsters do not take their point of departure from the reciprocal relations between the three social classes in American society — capitalist, middle class and working class. Nevertheless, they do indicate in their findings that the main support for McCarthy comes from sections of the lower middle class and among unorganized workers. Insofar as social composition is treated in the polls, there is a high percentage of the uneducated, the small farmers, small businessmen and declassed elements in the pro-McCarthy columns.

Will this mass following go all the way with the fascist movement? That depends. It depends above all on what the workers' organizations do. During the hearings the labor officials stood aside and watched the Democrats carry the ball. All they did was to cheer a little from the sidelines. As a result McCarthy gained where it hurt labor most — in the consolidation of a mass following. History will not permit many blunders like this without visiting severe punishment on the working class.

A New Test

The army-McCarthy hearings, which disclosed the whole anatomy of a conspiracy to shackle the United States with a fascist dictatorship, should have been the signal for a mighty offensive of the labor movement against this ominous threat. The moment was missed. And now a new test is before us—the 1954 elections.

The elections will not pass without McCarthy utilizing them in the same way he utilized the hearings — to build a mass following, to cultivate the legend of invincibility, and to grab every bit of radio and TV time possible for his fascist propaganda. He is planning to open his first big skirmish with the labor movement precisely during the election campaigns. What else does his plan to investigate "subversion" in defense plants signify?

But the labor bureaucracy persists in its strategy of leaving the defeat of McCarthy to the Democratic party. They preach that with the election of a Democratic majority in Congress in 1954, and a Democratic president and administration in 1956, all the basic problems of the working class, including the problem of McCarthyism, will be solved.

The Democratic statists, in their turn, also promise that McCarthy will be taken care of if a Democratic majority is elected to the Senate. They argue that if they are the majority McCarthy would be removed as chairman of the Permanent Investigations Subcommittee without even a struggle — since under the ordinary rules of Senate procedure McCarthy would then be replaced by the senior Democrat on the committee.

Can anything more asinine be imagined? The whole problem of defeating American fascism is reduced to the electing of Democrats instead of Republicans — to a maneuver in Congress — to a re-shuffling of posts! And all this, after the experiences of Italy and Germany and Spain!

Perhaps salvation lies not with the Democrats but with the Eisenhower Republicans? After all, they have been doing the main fighting, even though they are somewhat inept and at times downright idiotic.

The extent to which the Eisenhower Republicans can be depended on to handle McCarthy can be measured by the fact that McCarthy has no reason to split from the Republican party at this time. McCarthy aims at 1956 and the presidency. The organization of a separate fascist party can wait until the experiment of cap-

turing the Republican party has played itself out. In the meantime, the GOP is a perfect arena for McCarthy at this stage of development of his fascist movement.

The fact that McCarthy doesn't have the support at this time of the main sections of the Big Business rulers of the Republican party is not decisive in his calculations. His is a long-term perspective. The crisis of world capitalism is having an explosive effect on the stability and inner equilibrium of the American capitalist political structure. McCarthy obviously senses this. He is ready for sharp turns, sudden upsets, and for any number of cleavages and weaknesses to develop in the most solid and conservative section of the bourgeoisie.

Those who think that the biggest and most powerful sections of American finance capital will never throw in their lot with McCarthy do not know these capitalists, their moods or their problems. It is not only the new and fabulously rich oil tycoons who are fascist-minded. The key sectors of America's rulers would turn to fascism in a moment if they thought that it could solve their problems. That's what McCarthy must prove to them, and that's all he must prove.

Aim to Win the Elections

The Republican aim is to win the elections. That's the Democratic aim also. This is not meant to be facetious. American capitalist politics is unprincipled to the core, dominated as it is by an overriding concern for the enormous advantage that control of the administration gives to the capitalist group in power. In order to win, each side will resort to any lie, trick or device that can bring victory.

Last November Brownell showed how the Republican strategists operate. He accused Truman of harboring and promoting a Russian agent. The whole charge was calculated to swing the tide against the Democrats in the California Congressional race then pending. The string of Democratic victories in the nationwide off-year elections had unnerved the Republican high command, and they resorted to

this smear to discredit the Democratic party and stop the Democratic election trend.

What was the result? In answering Brownell, Truman characterized Brownell's method as "McCarthyism." Whereupon McCarthy demanded and got equal time with Truman to answer him. Having seized the initiative, McCarthy took over the debate and beat the Republican party and even Eisenhower himself over the head with the same club he used on Truman. From then on it was McCarthy's show.

But this experience didn't inhibit the Republican high command from playing ball with McCarthy. They sent him out as their chief spokesman in opening the 1954 election campaign.

Feeds on Witch Hunt

McCarthy took advantage of this opening so aggressively and skillfully that the Republican administration had to make a stand against him. The line between the permissible and the impermissible had to be drawn — and the administration made its stand through the Army-McCarthy hearings. But it is precisely these hearings which revealed that their strategy is not to destroy McCarthy but merely to establish a *modus vivendi* in which the fascist demagogue would voluntarily restrict himself within certain limits.

These limits are exactly what McCarthy *must* overstep in order to build his fascist movement. He overstepped them before, in taking advantage of the openings his Democratic and Republican opponents gave him. Such openings arise from the official witch hunt and its inevitable consequence — inter-party and inner-party witch hunting. Is there any reason to believe that McCarthy's opponents will now at long last refrain from creating new openings for him? It can be confidently predicted that the temptation to witch hunt opposing candidates in the prevailing fetid atmosphere will not be heroically resisted by the power-hungry contenders.

While McCarthy makes the "treason" charge the kernel of his fascist program to "save America" and to establish his own dictatorship, the

old-line machine men of the Republican party can see a lot of merit in that charge as a formula for winning elections — if the necessary hysteria can be worked up to swing it into high gear. And isn't the Republican administration, with Eisenhower and Brownell in the lead, working day and night to build the hysteria and create precisely such a national lynch atmosphere?

The moment another episode like Brownell's smear of Truman last November takes place, McCarthy will at one stroke wipe out any tactical losses he suffered in his fight with the Army and the administration. He will be completely vindicated. All grounds for anti-McCarthy maneuvers within the party and administration will be removed. McCarthy will then be able to make a new and powerful push in building his fascist network in all government and military agencies, as well as in mobilizing a mass following.

The present relationship of forces between Democrats and Republicans in Congress is very close in both the Senate and the House. The Democrats are obviously depending on the usual



SEN. RALPH E. FLANDERS

mid-term swing against the "ins" during periods of economic decline. The Republicans also are worried that the recession — which looks very much like a depression to the workers — will provoke a swing to the Democratic party in 1954 that could roll on to 1956. At the same time, the farm vote hangs in the balance, and there is already evidence that a section of Eisenhower farm support has turned against him. Under all these circumstances, with the fate of their whole administration at stake, it can hardly be expected that the Republicans will not use the witch hunt technique.

There is no getting away from it. The witch hunt has a logic of its own, independent of the intentions of its authors and users. It was inevitable that the witch hunt, started by the Democrats under Truman, would develop until the capitalist politicians began to devour one another. And in this process, a fascist movement can maneuver with ease, gaining the initiative at every critical turn.

A New Force in Politics

This election year of 1954 is not merely another year in the see-saw between the two capitalist parties. Something new has been added. For the first time in American history a powerful fascist movement is on the political scene. And the defeat of this fascist movement is now the main order of business before the working class of this country.

When the Socialist Workers Party says that the drive of a fascist movement toward power must be met by a counter-drive of the workers toward power, the labor officials and liberals smile indulgently and return to the "practical" questions of the day. But there were a lot smarter labor officials and liberals in Italy, Germany and Spain, who rejected the reality of the struggle with fascism — and woke up in concentration camps or in exile.

Other elements in and around the ideological fringe of the labor bureaucracy talk airily about "fighting fascism," but are too sophisticated and too lacking in revolutionary faith in the capacity of the American prole-

ariat, to talk of such "cliches" as a "struggle for workers' power."

The worst of these elements within the labor bureaucracy (or trying to crash the bureaucracy) is the Stalinists. The Stalinists not only refuse to talk of an orientation toward workers' power; it is their prime objective to prove that they have nothing to do with such "irresponsible" perspectives. For them, all strategy in fighting McCarthyism is reduced to the slogan: Get into the Democratic party.

And yet any sober reflection on the real situation in the United States and the experience of Europe shows that we face precisely that alternative: workers' power or fascist power.

It may be objected: Are you serious? To whom are you addressing this program of struggle for workers' power as the only means to smash the fascist menace? To the American labor movement, with its corrupt, capitalist-minded labor bureaucracy? Isn't this somewhat ludicrous?

The need for a revolutionary socialist strategy to successfully fight McCarthyism is not a laughing matter. What is ludicrous is not the distance between our socialist program and the program of the labor bureaucracy, but rather the disproportion between the program of the labor bureaucracy and the objective reality. That is both ludicrous and tragic.

The Reality in America

Our program conforms to reality. It is based on both theoretical analysis and historical experience. But the program of the American labor bureaucracy is based on memories of the past, on a relation of class forces that is about to be blown up by the deepening of the world capitalist crisis within the American sector. That's why it is a worthless program.

The reformist program of the bureaucracy and the Stalinists had some semblance of "realism" in the epoch of the rise of capitalism, or in countries like the U.S. where the crisis of capitalism was delayed by way of imperialist expansion — that is, by way of thrusting the rest of the capitalist world into a deeper crisis.

As long as capitalism operates more

or less efficiently, the relations between the three classes, capitalist, middle class and working class, are maintained with a degree of equilibrium. The middle class follows the capitalist class, and even drags the workers along with them through the labor bureaucracy. The class struggle, while constantly upsetting this equilibrium, doesn't fundamentally destroy it.

But as soon as capitalism enters its decline, this relationship of class forces is sharply altered and the brittle political superstructure resting on the previously stable class relationships begins to crack up.

The crisis of capitalism brings ruin and despair to the middle class and the working class. The alternating currents of boom and bust resolve into the alternatives of catastrophic war or catastrophic depression. This whole process creates an unbearable social tension, and a collective conviction arises that a change must absolutely be made.

In such times the working class is presented with the opportunity to take the helm and steer society out of the capitalist morass. The middle class, suffering acutely from the effects of the capitalist crisis, is at that point the natural ally of the working class and would readily follow its lead toward a fundamental change in the social system.

But should the working class falter, should it prove unable to rise to the tasks imposed by revolutionary times, then the whole situation deteriorates. All the worst features of the middle class — its prejudices, its inability to act as a cohesive class pursuing its own interests, its collective hysteria in times of crisis — become favorable factors for the rise of a fascist movement.

The fascists then issue a counterfeited of the revolutionary program that the workers' organizations failed to present. They turn the program into its opposite. While appealing to the mass feeling that some change is absolutely essential, the change which they offer is a counter-revolutionary fascist change. All this is dressed up with whatever unrestrained demagoguery the moment requires.

At the same time the capitalists, who have lost the ability to rule through middle-class liberal politicians and the labor bureaucracy, become receptive to the idea of using the fascist movement to establish their unquestioned rule by means of a blood-purge of the working class and the establishment of the iron-heel dictatorship of Big Business.

This, in broad outline, is the perspective that confronts this country. There is no use looking the other way, or bemoaning our fate. There is no use complaining that the alternatives of fascism or socialism confront us too soon — that we need more time.

The alternatives are here, now. The fascist movement is not waiting. The workers cannot and dare not wait.

Thus the problem of problems now before us is to hasten the awakening of consciousness in the working class to the fact that the next few years will decide who will rule in the United States. A showdown crisis is before us. Either the capitalists will rule through a fascist dictatorship, or the workers will rule through a Workers and Farmers Government.

Those who think that all is lost and that fascism must succeed are the worst traitors and liars. The American workers have a tremendous capacity to rise to historic needs. The workers have learned a great deal since they first organized and beat the corporations in the Thirties. Everything intelligent, everything heroic, everything that made the American workers the most productive and most militant working class in the world will become aroused and active in the mortal struggle with fascism.

For our part, we proceed with the utmost confidence. The present labor leadership will be shoved aside. Its pro-capitalist political program will be rejected by the new, young, militant layers of leader-fighters which are today taking shape even during the darkest moments of reaction. And the program and leadership of the revolutionary socialists will be embraced by these millions of proletarian fighters who will smash and scatter the fascist movement.

July 10, 1954

The Continuing Struggle For Negro Equality

by Jean Blake

DEVELOPMENTS since the May 17 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that segregated public schools are unconstitutional have made clear that whatever decrees are issued by the Court to implement the decision following the submission of additional briefs in October, school segregation will not be abolished in fact in the United States until all forms of racial discrimination are ended.

From an historical perspective, the Court's action was simply the latest in a series of shifts in policy on official discrimination, resulting from the particular political needs of the capitalist class.

A brief summary of these shifts demonstrates the contradictory interpretations of the Constitution possible under democratic capitalism. The only underlying principle involved is the maintenance of the capitalist system. Consequently no court decision on segregation is irrevocable or irreversible.

March 4, 1789, the Constitution went into effect, specifically recognizing slavery and discrimination.

Dec. 15, 1791, the Bill of Rights went into effect, including the Fifth Amendment, with the clause "No person shall be . . . deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law. . . ." But this guarantee did not apply to Negroes' rights, since Negroes were considered property, not persons.

March 6, 1857, in the Dred Scott decision, the Court held that a Negro who had been a slave could not become a citizen by residing in an area where slavery was banned.

Dec. 18, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery, was declared ratified. But it was still necessary to pass the Fourteenth (July 28, 1868), and Fifteenth (March 30, 1870) Amendments, specifically granting the "equal protection of the laws" and the right to vote.

1873—1879, in the first cases interpreting the Fourteenth Amendment after its adoption, the Court held that the amendment banned all state-imposed discrimination against Negroes.

1896, in the notorious Plessy v. Ferguson case, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was not unconstitutional so long as the separate facilities provided were equal.

1954, in cases from Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware and the District of Columbia, the Court holds that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" and therefore violate the Fourteenth Amendment and the Fifth Amendment.

What is the reason for the Court's reversal of its previous interpretation, in the Plessy case, that segregation is not unconstitutional? Chief Justice Warren, in delivering the Court's opinion, specifically cited only one new factor in the situation, "the extent of psychological knowledge." Modern psychology, he said in effect, reveals that separation of Negro children from white in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children even though the material facilities provided are equal. "Any language in Plessy v. Ferguson contrary to this finding is rejected."

Psychology was a major element in the new interpretation — that is true.

But it was not the psychology of the effect of segregation on colored children. It was the psychological effect of U.S. Jim Crow on the colored colonial peoples, and the political needs of American capitalism's propaganda campaign for domination of the world, that were decisive in reversing the Court's previous position.

While not a word of this appears in the decision, it was clearly the policy of the administration in Washington to secure an interpretation aimed at convincing the opponents of American capitalism abroad that the "imperfections" in U.S. democracy are being corrected internally. That was why the Justice Department filed a brief as friend of the court specifically requesting a re-examination of the "separate but equal" doctrine. That was why Vice President Nixon, on his return from a "good-will" trip abroad, publicly reported that the practice of discrimination in this country is harmful to U.S. foreign policy.

And that was also why the Voice of America began broadcasting the news of the decision within two hours after it was rendered; so that the peoples in Asia and Africa and Europe heard it before many Americans.

Reactions to Ruling

In the weeks following the ruling, reactions at home varied. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which led the fight against segregation, and supporters of the struggle for Negro equality, saw the ruling as an important legal victory. On the whole, they recognized that it would be necessary to follow up this moral victory with additional court actions as well as organizational and other measures, in order to implement the decision and to combat attempts at delay, evasion and circumvention.

Southern extremists varied in their comments. Governor Talmadge of Georgia, who had repeatedly declared "there never will be mixed schools in

Georgia while I am governor," expressed his intention to defy the court ruling. He challenged the authority of the Court and threatened to abolish the public school system rather than end segregation. On an NBC-TV "Meet the Press" program, he said his state would not "secede from the union," but he indicated that troops would be used to uphold the state laws.

Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi declared: "The South will not abide by or obey this legislative decision by a political court. Integrated schools are not desired by either race in the south. An attempt to integrate our schools would cause great strife and turmoil." Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia said that the decision "will bring implications and dangers of the greatest consequence."

Senator Eastland and his fellow Mississippian in the House, Congressman John Bell Williams, have introduced resolutions asking Congress to approve a constitutional amendment which would destroy the Court's jurisdiction in matters of racial segregation.

But the dominant opinion of the Southern ruling class was better expressed by Governor James F. Byrnes of South Carolina, who said he was "shocked," but proceeded to note that the Court did not order an immediate end to separate schools. He went on to advise South Carolinians to "exercise restraint and preserve order" while he — the "benevolent Bourbon," as one Negro writer characterizes him — studies the decision and decides on recommendations to the Legislature.

The Bigots Mobilize

That, on the whole, is shaping up as official policy in the South: continue segregation, since there is no order in the Court decision banning it; and devise ways and means to continue segregation by legal and extra-legal trickery, whatever the Court may rule.

Unofficially, other methods are being prepared to maintain segregation. These methods range from social,

economic and political pressure and intimidation of Negroes, to outright force and violence.

On June 10, for example, a group of former Ku Klux Klansmen announced that they have reorganized under the name of the "White Brotherhood," pledged to preserve segregation by legal means and to "try to avoid killing and violence." (My emphasis. J.B.) Bill Hendrix of Tallahassee, Fla., former KKK Grand Dragon, is spokesman for the group.

At the same time, as though to emphasize the fact that the old forms of intimidation in the South have not been entirely abandoned, a *Pittsburgh Courier* headline on June 5 reported: "Lynching in Alabama!" The victim, unnamed when the paper went to press, was found hanged in a wooded section near a Negro church outside of Vredenburgh.

Earlier, on May 26, the new home of a Negro dentist in Birmingham, Ala., was damaged by arson. The following weekend the pattern of segregation by intimidation was repeated in the northern city of Cleveland, Ohio ("best location in the nation"), with three new cases of attacks on homes by paint-smearing, rock-hurling bigots, and a similar incident in nearby Lakewood.

Law Needs Teeth

The long history of incidents such as these and similar attacks in Chicago and elsewhere apparently have influenced the thinking of Southern white supremacists. They are beginning to hold meetings of governors and other law enforcement officers to consider how to segregate Negroes, as the North has done, without legal sanction.

Negro leaders, too, recognize that the Supreme Court decision and further decrees can remain a dead letter from the outset unless the action of the Negro people and their allies puts teeth into the law.

In an "Atlanta Declaration" adopted by a southern conference of the organization, the NAACP announced a campaign by branches in all areas affected by the Court decision to peti-

tion local school boards for immediate ending of racial segregation in schools and to offer assistance in working out problems.

The next day the Supreme Court acted on six more cases involving segregation. In three cases the Court denied hearings, thereby letting stand lower court decisions (1) banning segregation in low-rent housing projects in San Francisco; (2) banning segregation on the old "separate but equal" doctrine at Hardin Junior College of Wichita Falls, Texas; and (3) ordering the city of Houston, Texas, to permit Negroes to use municipal golf courses on a segregated basis. Only the first case involved a principled opposition to segregation.

In the three other cases, involving admission of Negroes to the University of Florida and Louisiana State University, and to a city-owned Louisville, Ky., amphitheatre, the Supreme Court merely ordered the lower courts to reconsider their decisions "in the light of" the May 17 ruling and "conditions that now prevail."

These actions should make it clear that the Court does not intend to take a clear-cut, principled stand extending its ruling against segregation in the schools to segregation in all other fields, as some had hoped. If they intended to do so, they could have commented on the cases they refused to hear, or they could have heard them and ruled to uphold the decision of the lower courts while clarifying the basis for the decision as the unconstitutionality of segregation.

In the three cases that were referred back to the lower courts for re-examination, the Court could have been less ambiguous if it had wished to outlaw segregation.

But the Court did none of these things, because the main task had already been concluded May 17 with the ruling on school segregation: the Voice of America had its story.

There will be other by-products of the Supreme Court decision. Machine politicians already are attempting to credit or blame the Democrats or the Republicans, or one candidate or another in primary elections, for the decision against school segregation, in

order to win votes in the November elections.

McCarthyite Smears

McCarthy-type smears will be dragged in to discredit opponents of segregation. Senator Eastland started this process on May 27 when he asserted that the "court has been indoctrinated and brainwashed by left-wing pressure groups." His proofs: Justice Black received an award April 14, 1945, from the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, which Eastland called a notorious "Communist-front" organization; Justice Minton, who was then on the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, made a speech at the same affair; Justice Douglas accepted a \$1,000 Sidney Hillman award from the CIO in December, 1952; Justices Reed and Frankfurter gave character-witness testimony in behalf of Alger Hiss, former State Department official convicted of perjury in 1950.

But such developments are secondary to the main line of policy on segregation. There is no basic disagreement between the Democratic and Republican parties on this question. The history of the past half century and more demonstrates that the ruling class, through both capitalist parties, has no intention of ending discrimination against Negroes. At present, in the attempt to make Washington's foreign policy less objectionable to the world's colored millions, Wall Street is willing to grant a concession: a statement that public school segregation is unconstitutional.

At the same time, a small legal victory might strengthen the arguments of those Negro leaders who preach support of capitalism as the system under which equality will eventually be achieved.

But will the Supreme Court ruling achieve either of its real aims — winning the confidence and support of the colonial peoples, and of the American Negroes, for capitalism?

In the first place, it won't win the support of the Chinese, Koreans, Indo-Chinese or any other colonial peoples fighting for freedom from imperialist domination. Their distrust of the

United States is based on more than the obvious hypocrisy of the U.S. claim to leadership of the "free world" while practicing discrimination at home.

The basic antagonism is between people who have been super-exploited for generations by foreign imperialism, and the capitalist rulers of the U.S. who must find new fields of exploitation in order to maintain the profit system. This antagonism would exist even if there were no problem of Jim Crow in America. The U.S. government knows this, too, and is not halting A-bomb and H-bomb production in favor of Supreme Court rulings as a means of winning world domination.

Similarly at home, a few colored politicians, or others with a vested interest in a segregated community, may be satisfied with democratic platitudes and abstractions; but the mass of Negro workers want integrated schools so that their children — not some great-great-grandchildren of the future — can have the same education and the same opportunities for jobs as other children. They want equal job opportunities and equal pay right now, so that they can provide decent homes for their families and get out of the demoralizing slums. They want their right to live wherever they wish, under civilized conditions, without danger of threats and violence.

They also want, like other workingmen and women, freedom from the fear of war and of unemployment,



and all the traditional freedoms they have been taught are theirs — the right to think, speak, write, meet, vote.

But the Supreme Court ruling will not even result in the one limited ob-

jective of integrated schools. The majority of the states now requiring or permitting segregation will, it is true, get in line with the Court ruling by revising their laws and ordinances requiring separate schools — though whether they effect these legal reforms sooner or later or not at all depends on how principled, militant and uncompromising a struggle the NAACP and the Negro people and their allies conduct.

New Forms of Segregation

But the outlines of the new forms of segregation in the U.S., even though state laws requiring separation of colored and white children in schools may be wiped off the books completely, are already clear. Numerous Northern newspapers and magazines have pointed out that in most cases colored children will "naturally" continue to go to the same schools they went to previously, since they live in segregated ghettos and could logically be expected to attend schools in their own neighborhoods.

For the majority of Negro children, the Supreme Court decision will mean no change at all. Only those living on the borders of the "community within a community" will be faced with the problem of enforcing their right to attend mixed schools.

The NAACP recognizes this and has announced it will now broaden its campaign to combat segregated housing and discrimination in employment, while at the same time it seeks implementation of the ruling against school segregation. Employment of Negroes in the least skilled jobs in heavy industry or the dirtiest, most difficult and lowest paid jobs in consumer goods industries, tends to make it difficult or impossible for them to move out of the ghettos because of the higher cost of transportation and of buying or renting newer homes.

Finally, those few who are able to overcome the legal and economic barriers find that the white supremacists do not hesitate, as a last recourse, to use naked force. Bombings, arson, destruction of property, beatings and even murder are the means. Very seldom do the law enforcement author-

Sex and Labor In Primitive Society

by Evelyn Reed

ities take action against their silent partners who carry out the dirty work. Local police subversive squads can track down every detail in the history of a socialist, a militant unionist, or a persistent fighter for equal rights; but they plead helplessness in discovering who bombed the home of a new Negro resident in a "white" neighborhood.

The struggle for equal rights, like the struggle of the unions, is essentially a defensive struggle. In both, the problem is to hold on to gains already made, and to fight for their extension in order to counteract the efforts of the ruling class to restrict all progress that threatens its power and privileges. As long as these struggles are conducted within the limited perspective of isolated reforms — a legal decision here, a temporary wage increase there — the gains are superficial and transitory.

To repeat an old but time-tested analogy: some of the most painful or ugly symptoms of a disease may be temporarily soothed by surface medication, drugs or minor operations; but until the basic cause of the illness is found and cured, the infection will recur or break out in other forms.

That is why labor's gains in wages and working conditions will not secure the workers' standard of living until the whole wage system, and the organization of production for profit on which it is based, is attacked fundamentally and replaced with a rational socialist system of production in keeping with mankind's present stage of material and technical progress.

And that is why racial segregation will be eliminated, not by court decisions, but only when its role in relation to our American capitalist system of production and all the institutions developed to maintain and support it, is recognized and similarly attacked fundamentally.

The Supreme Court ruling on school segregation can have historic significance if it is utilized by the united working people as a wedge in the revolutionary struggle to demolish the old superstructure of capitalism and build a new society for mankind on modern foundations.

OF THE myths of today, probably the one least questioned is that the capitalist rulers are indispensable to the continued existence and functioning of society. The truth is just the opposite. There is only one class that is indispensable for human survival, and that is the working class, the class of labor.

Labor of modern times grew out of primitive labor, and primitive labor grew out of primeval labor. Capitalism is less than 500 years old and already dying, whereas labor is as ancient as humanity itself — probably a million or more years old — and is today the mightiest power the world has ever seen.

Far from being necessary to society, capitalism in this atomic epoch has created a social jungle that threatens to destroy all the great achievements of labor over the milleniums. It is therefore up to labor to remove this threat to itself and its social achievements.

This is, of course, a colossal task. But it is not the first time labor has been called upon to perform tasks of colossal magnitude. An even greater conquest was made in the ancient past — the conquest of the first labor collective over nature's jungle. The story of that conquest, which represents the birth of humanity itself, should serve as a guide and inspiration to modern labor.

* * *

In my article, "The Myth of Women's Inferiority," in the previous issue of this magazine, I stated that prim-

itive society was organized and led by the women and had therefore begun as a *matriarchy*. In support of that proposition, I showed the decisive role played by women's labor in the building and the social organization of primitive society.

But the existence of the matriarchy is perhaps the most sharply disputed issue in the whole field of anthropology. Those who uphold the capitalist system and claim that class society is a permanent fixture, demand that they be given incontrovertible proof that the matriarchy preceded the patriarchy in the evolution of human society. At the same time they present little or no evidence for their own questionable claim that the patriarchal system goes all the way back to the animal kingdom.

What are the outstanding characteristics of patriarchal society? Men play the dominant role in the labor process. Private property and class differentiations exist. The sex partners live together as man and wife under one roof, and are by law united in marriage. Fathers stand at the head of the family. The family is composed of father, mother (or mothers) and their children, and is the basic unit of society, through which property is inherited and passed on. These characteristics of the patriarchy are all features of *class society*.

In the matriarchy, on the other hand, women, not men, predominated in the labor process. There was no private ownership of community wealth. The sex partners did not live together under one roof — in fact, they did not even live in the same

camp or compound. Marriage did not exist. Fathers did not stand at the head of the family because fathers, as fathers, were unknown. The elementary social group was composed exclusively of mothers and children — and for this reason has aptly been termed the “uterine family.” Finally, the basic unit of society was not this uterine family of mothers and offspring, but the whole group, clan or tribe. These characteristics of the matriarchy are all features of *primitive society*, which is sometimes described as “primitive communism” and is generally conceded to have preceded

class society in the historical development of mankind.

The overwhelming weight of the evidence available indicates that the original form of human social organization was matriarchal. But the term “matriarchy” expresses only a part of the essential character of the first society, founded as it was upon the economic and social cooperation of *both* sexes. Out of matriarchal beginnings there arose that monumental achievement of humanity: the first communal labor collective — the Matriarchal-Brotherhood. This article will tell the story of its birth.

1. From Jungle Law to the Labor Collective

Survival of species revolves around the fulfilment of two basic needs: food and sex. Through food the individual organism maintains itself; through procreation the species is reproduced. The urge to satisfy these two basic needs — that is, the struggle to survive — is the primary driving force of all animal organisms.

In this struggle, as Darwin pointed out, only the “fittest” survive. These are not necessarily the strongest, but those which can best adapt themselves to their environment and best compete with other organisms for the means of subsistence. For in the animal world the fecundity of nature is extremely uneven, and there is not enough of the means of life to sustain all the organisms that are produced. Since many must perish, those which survive do so only through the most intense and unremitting competition.

Each animal is on its own in the drive to satisfy its basic needs. And this competitive struggle sets every animal apart from and against every other animal. Even among the herding and gregarious species, separatism, not collectivism, prevails. This law of survival through the savage competition of each against all has been aptly called “jungle law.”

For humankind to emerge from this competitive animal world, it was necessary to overturn nature’s mode of struggle for survival and to institute a new and human mode of struggle

for survival, founded upon mutual support, collaboration and cooperation. But this was a gigantic task; for human collectivity was in contradiction to, and collided with, the most fundamental driving forces of nature. It required the curbing and taming of uncontrolled animal impulses. It required the creation of disciplined social bonds. It required, in other words, the transformation of animal relationships into human social relationships.

And how was this great task achieved? It was achieved through labor.

Indeed, it was in the very act of laboring and in the process of labor that the animal became transformed into the human. Human beings became the “fittest” of all organisms in the world — for they were now the product not only of nature, but, more decisively, of their own labor. They placed their stamp upon other animals, taming and domesticating them for their uses, just as they placed their stamp upon nature, “taming” and “domesticating” plants (cultivation or agriculture). Thus labor, as Engels has emphasized,

“... is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labor created man himself.” (**The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man.**)

The natural or biological bridge to labor, however, was through the ma-

ternal functions of the females. This has been convincingly demonstrated by Robert Briffault in *The Mothers* (1927), which sets forth the case for the matriarchal theory of social origins. In this work, which marks a milestone in anthropology, Briffault summarized a mass of evidence to prove that it was maternal care and responsibility for the young which provided the natural bridge to humanity.

The only exception to the general rule of separatism and competitive struggle in the mammalian world lies in the relationship between mothers and young, where the mothers provide for, nourish and protect the young, without requiring assistance from the males. As Briffault writes:

“Paternity does not exist. The family among animals is not . . . the result of the association of male and female, but is the product of the maternal functions. The mother is the sole center and bond of it. There is no division of labor between the sexes in procuring the means of subsistence. The protective functions are exercised by the female, not by the male. The abode, movements, and conduct of the group are determined by the female alone. The animal family is a group produced not by the sexual, but by the maternal impulses, not by the father, but by the mother.” (**The Mothers.**)

The Ape “Patriarchy”?

Briffault’s evidence, however, is repugnant to all those anthropologists who want to believe, and therefore contend, that the “father” has always stood at the head of the family and dominated it, even in the animal world.

As evidence, they point out that among the apes, for example, there is usually only a single adult male present in a horde composed of females and young. Having jealously driven away all other male rivals, including his own “sons,” this adult male — as represented by these anthropologists — is the “ape patriarch,” monopolizing his “harem” of wives and their children.

This absurd picture simply seeks to reproduce in the animal world the family relationships and marriage system of modern class society.

The presence of only a single adult male in an ape horde of females and young is indeed a fact. But this does not prove that ape males are patriarchs. All it proves is that in the animal world males are antagonistic and hostile to other males, that they fight each other for access to females, and that sex competition and rivalry prevail in the animal world.

Indeed, sex competition is in some respects even fiercer than the competition for food. The breeding season takes place only periodically and upon its outcome depends the survival of the species. Moreover, in the food quest, animals can avoid one another—but not in the quest for sex, where they are inescapably thrown together. Sex-fighting among the males is one of the prominent features of the animal kingdom, and among the carnivora, extremely savage.

Because of its violent character, sex competition disrupts and dismembers herd and horde formations in the animal world. If an ape horde of females and young is to band together and remain together, only a single

adult male can be tolerated in the group.

Sex competition was therefore a colossal roadblock in the path of the formation of the first *human* hordes required to build the labor collective. Indeed, until separatism and sex struggles were eradicated, a human collective of men cooperating with other men as well as with women, could not be built. As Engels writes:

“Mutual tolerance among the adult males, freedom from jealousy, was . . . the first condition for the building of those large and enduring groups in the midst of which alone the transition from animal to man could be achieved.” (Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.)

Thus it was that in the course of this struggle to create the labor collective, there arose in the human world a category of males which does not exist in the animal world—the *social brothers*. Social brotherhood is not a natural, but an artificial creation. And this creation of the social brotherhood represents the crowning achievement of the *social motherhood* that inaugurated the human labor collective.

upon the individual family as the basic unit, primitive society was founded upon the gens or clan, that is, the whole community. A federation of gens or clans, in turn, composed the tribe. Society was composed of *communal*, not *family* cells, the individual “uterine families” being subsumed within the clan.

Social Mothers

Blood relationship, which occupies such an important place in modern social organization, had no significance whatever in primitive society. Primitive peoples knew nothing about the blood relationship between children and unknown fathers; they knew and cared just as little about the blood relationship between children and their known mothers. On this score, Hans Kelsen writes:

“Physical motherhood . . . is nothing to these people. The Australians, for instance, have no term to express the [blood] relationship between mother and child. This is because the fact is of no significance, and not because of the meagerness of the language.” (Society and Nature.)

The mother was regarded not as the mother of a family—but as the mother of society. As Sir James Frazer emphasizes:

“We confuse our word ‘mother’ with the corresponding but by no means equivalent term in the language of savages. We mean by ‘mother’ a woman who has given birth to a child. The Australian savages mean by ‘mother’ a woman who stands in a certain social relation to a group of men and women, whether she has given birth to any of them or not. She is ‘mother’ to that group even when she is an infant in arms. . .

“The true relationship between mother and child may always have been remembered, but it was an accident which did not in any way affect the mother’s place in the classificatory system; for she was classed with a group of mothers just as much before as after her child was born.” (Totemism and Exogamy, vol. 1.)

A good illustration of this social motherhood—which is so distinctive from our own puny individual family form, based upon private property and personal possession—is

2. The Social Motherhood and Brotherhood

The term “matriarchy” came into common use after the publication of *Das Mutterrecht* by J. J. Bachofen in 1861. In this book, the title of which means “mother-right,” Bachofen produced evidence that women had occupied a very high social status in primitive society.

The first theory advanced to explain this phenomenon of women’s high social position (in such striking contrast to their inferior status in modern society) was based upon conceptions of family descent and inheritance of property. Fathers were unknown; therefore—so went the theory—the descent of the children could be traced only through the mothers; therefore, property could be passed on only from mothers to children—and it was this that gave women their “mother-right” and their dominant social status.

The flaw in this theory was, of course, the fact that it derived from

modern and not primitive social relations and concepts. The fact is that all the social property and wealth of primitive society were communally owned and shared. Thus there was no need to trace the descent of the children in order to know who was to inherit private property. Furthermore, it was not the family, but the whole group or clan, that was the basic unit of primitive society.

The great discovery that the gens or clan was the unit of primitive society was made by Lewis Morgan and set forth in his book *Ancient Society*, published in 1877. Marx and Engels considered Morgan’s contribution so important that they ranked it with the discovery of the cell in biology. Indeed, Morgan’s 40-year research among the North American Indians constitutes the cornerstone of the modern science of anthropology.

In contrast to the social organization of modern times, which rests

contained in a report by Melville J. and Frances S. Herskovits:

Angita [a boy child] was first pointed out to us by Tita. . . "Look," she said. . . "This is Angita. He dances well. He is my son."

. . . The following day Angita came to our camp, bringing with him Kutai, a woman of about Tita's age. . . "Have you seen Angita's carvings?" she asked us. "He is one of the best young carvers at Gankwe. . . I am his mother. . ."

About the fifth day . . . we came to a village where Angita stopped to supplement his food for the journey. . . Behind him came a young girl with a bottle of palm oil, and some rice in an open calabash. . . A woman of middle age, whom both the young girl and Angita resembled, took the rice from the girl and . . . gave it to us. "This is rice for you. I am Angita's mother. . ."

Later that day . . . we lost no time in questioning him. "Angita," we called, "is the woman who gave us the rice your mother?"

He nodded.

"But what of Tita, who said she was your mother, too?"

He was a quick-witted lad, and he saw at once what we had in mind. He said with a laugh, "You are asking about my true, true mother, the one who made me? It is not this one, and it is not Tita, who made me. It is Kutai."

"But who are the other two?"

"They are her sisters."

("The Bush Negro Family," from *Primitive Heritage*, edited by Margaret Mead and Nicolas Calas.)

Does this mean that Angita's three "mothers" were blood sisters? Not any more than that they were all blood mothers to the boy. They were *social* sisters to one another, just as they were social mothers to this boy and to all other children.

In primitive society blood ties and "family connections" meant nothing. *All* the women in the clan were "mothers" to *all* the children, and, at the same time, "sisters" to each other. *Social* ties were everything.

The matriarchy was a maternal collective in the same way that it was a labor collective. In this communal form of social organization, the social status of every female, whether she was one week or 60 years old, was that of producer and procreator for society. And primitive society was founded upon this fusion of collective maternity and collective labor. As E. S. Hartland writes:

"The word mother in most, if not all languages, means producer-procreatix." (*Primitive Paternity*.)

The children produced by these social mothers were, of course, social children. The individual child of each individual mother was as merged in the total community of children as the individual products made by each woman were merged in the total wealth of the community. And since all the children were children of all the mothers, they were all equally nourished, cared for and protected. The matriarchy represented the heroic epoch of women; for a woman was far more and far greater than the mother of an individual child: she was one of a collective of maternal creators of human society.

The term "matriarchy" is, therefore, a designation of communal and not family relationships. Evidence to corroborate the existence of the matriarchy and its social meaning can be found in the language of surviving primitive tribes. These peoples, who have doubtless never heard the word "matriarchy," nevertheless call themselves by terms which are essentially equivalents — such as "The Mothers," or "The Motherfolk," or "The Mother People." And these language survivals exist in every stage of primitive development, from the lowest to the highest.

Language Survivals

The Seri Indians of Lower California, for example, who are classified on the lowest level because they lacked knowledge of agriculture and had only the crudest technology, call themselves *Km-kaak* or *Kun-kaak*. This term, according to W. J. McGee means: "Woman or Elderly Woman; or, more descriptively and inclusively, Our Living Ancient Strongkind Elderwoman Now Here; or, Our Great Motherfolk Now Here." And, as is usually the case in these backward regions, there is no word in the language for father, nor any knowledge of paternity. (*The Seri Indians*.)

On a higher level are the Melaneseans, who, according to W. H. R. Rivers, call themselves *Veve* — which means "Motherhood" or "Mother-

folk." Not only is the large collective (or tribe) called *Veve*, but all the sub-divisions (or daughter-clans) are also *Veves*. These daughter-clan "Motherhoods" are then distinguished from each other through secondary — and obviously totemic — names, such as Shark, Owl, Banyan Tree, Sacred Creeper and so on. (*The History of Melanesian Society*.)

On the highest level of surviving primitive peoples, as among the hill tribes in Assam, India, we find the same feature. The Kacharis of this region, Frazer writes, call themselves *Machong* — which again means, literally, "Motherhood." Similarly, the 13 daughter-clans are also called *Machongs*, and are distinguished from each other by secondary, totemic names. (*Op. cit.*)

Social Brothers

But primitive society was composed of men as well as women. And it was men and women together who formed the basis of the kinship system. Although almost everything else about primitive society is disputed, this fact is undisputed: that primitive society was organized into groups of kinfolk, or kinsmen and kinswomen.

The essence, however, of the primitive kinship system — which is often overlooked or misunderstood — is this: kinship meant, not blood relationship (which it means to us today), but *social* kinship. As A. R. Radcliffe Brown writes:

"The term 'consanguinity' [blood-relationship] is sometimes used as the equivalent of 'kinship' . . . but the word has certain dangerous implications which must be avoided. Consanguinity refers properly to a physical relationship, but in kinship we have to deal with a specifically *social relationship*. A social relationship is not the same thing as physical relationship, and may or may not coincide with it." (*Social Structure*.)

Thus the same group or clan that called itself the "Motherhood" from the female side of the compound, also called itself the "Brotherhood" from the male side. And the fact that the term "brother" did not signify a family connection but was rather a social designation is pointed out by K.

L. Little, in describing the West Africans of Sierra Leone:

"The nearest equivalent of the term 'family' is *Ndehun*, literally 'brotherhood,' which implies the closest possible relationship of persons." (*The Mende of Sierra Leone*.)

We today can understand this readily enough through our own use of the terms "brothers" and "sisters" in the union movement. While some of these workers may be blood brothers and sisters and may belong to the same family, this fact is irrelevant and immaterial. Union bonds of fraternity are forged through social, not blood or family connections.

Social Bonds

Thus the terms "kinship group," "clan," "tribe," are simply anthropological designations for what can be more precisely defined as the labor collective. For the social bonds between women and men in primitive society were founded upon their collective labor — and that is why they were social kin.

The first division of labor between the sexes was not between fathers and mothers, as is commonly supposed, but between mothers and brothers (or sisters and brothers.) The male hunters who went out together on the organized hunt brought back the products of their chase to their sisters and the children of these sisters. And conversely, these same sisters in their collective households provided for the needs of these brothers as well as of the whole community.

The same women and men who were classified as sisters and brothers in relationship to each other were classified as "elder sisters" (the equivalent of mother) and "elder brothers" in relationship to the young generation. And these, in turn, were classified socially as "younger sisters" and "younger brothers," who were taught and disciplined by their elders.

Thus the same adult men who were social brothers to the adult women, were likewise elder brothers — or "mothers' brothers" or social "uncles," as some anthropologists call them — to the children. In many

languages there is a special term for these mothers' brothers, a term which is close to or identical with the word for Elder, Elder Man or Chief. Regarding the role of these social uncles, Briffault writes:

"Those functions which in the patriarchal family are discharged by the husband and father, and which constitute

him the provider and protector of his family, are, in the maternal group, fulfilled by the woman's brothers." (*Op. cit.*)

It was these social mothers and brothers who formed the basis and axis of the kinship group, the first labor collective, which we call the Matriarchal-Brotherhood.

3. Totem and Taboo

Now we must ask: If all men and women were brothers and sisters to each other in the labor collective, who were the sex-mates, or the "husbands and wives"? And what was their social role? These questions lead us directly to the basic feature of primitive society: Totemism, or the system of totem and taboo.

Totem and taboo are generally considered and analyzed together. And correctly so — for in reality they are two sides of the same social coin by which primitive humanity defined its communal relationships. On the one hand, the totem was the means whereby every man, woman and child was identified as a member of the kinship group (clan). On the other hand, the taboo regulated sexual relationships by banning all mating within the totemic group.

Under this totemic (or kinship) system, humanity was divided into two categories: kindred and strangers. All who were members of one totemic group were kin; all others were strangers. As Briffault writes:

"The tribe is with most people equivalent to mankind, and its members call themselves simply 'men,' ignoring the rest of the human race. . ."

"The solidarity of the primitive group . . . is applicable to the clan-brotherhood only; beyond the group it has no meaning. . ."

"To primitive man, members of his group are his people, all others are strangers, foes, individuals whom he looks upon with distrust, with actual hostility. . ." (*Op. cit.*)

But although the totem drew the sharpest line between kindred and strangers, nevertheless a relationship between the two existed: a *sexual* relationship. The taboo, as we have said,

forebade mating between clan brothers and sisters; this was its internal aspect. But the obverse of the taboo — or its external aspect — was what is known as the "rule of exogamy" — that is, the rule directing brothers and sisters to find their sex-mates *outside* the totemic group. What this meant was that they were obliged to find their sex partners among the strangers.

As Briffault points out, however, the Stranger was virtually identical with the Enemy. Thus we find that the very strangers who were sex-mates of the women were at the same time enemies to the brothers of these women. That is, the brothers of Group A fought the sex-mates of their sisters in Group B.

War and Sex

War and sex were the only relationships between the two groups: war between the men, sex union between the men and women. In the relics of some primitive languages the words for "sex" and "fighting" are identical. Mating in the early period encountered formidable difficulties indeed. Briffault writes:

"By virtue of the Rule of Exogamy, sex association between members of the same group is almost everywhere strictly prohibited. A man or a woman must obtain his or her sexual partners from another group. But that is by no means an easy matter in primitive conditions. . ."

"The members of one's own group are, in primitive society, 'our people.' All other individuals are 'strangers,' which is synonymous with 'enemies. . .'. The *Bakyiga*, a warlike people . . . are divided into a number of clans by whom the Rule of Exogamy is strictly observed. A man must procure a wife from one of the other clans. As all clans are in a state of perpetual war with one

another, it is quite impossible for a man to visit or hold any intercourse with another clan without running almost certain risk of being murdered. . . .” (Op. cit.)

For security reasons, mating could take place only in secret and in a “no-man’s land” outside the limits of the compounds. Under these conditions, the relationship between sex-mates was confined exclusively to sexual union. Socially, they were strangers to each other.

These “husbands and wives” — as the anthropologists generally call them! — did not live under one roof; they did not live in even the same compound or area; they did not provide for each other; they had no social contact of any kind. Between them was a deep social gulf.

Split Between Sex and Society

Thus we find a peculiar two-fold cleavage in primitive society. Under the totemic system, a sexual gulf separated those who, as kinfolk, lived and worked together in the same totemic group, or labor collective. Conversely, a social gulf separated those who, as strangers, were united sexually. In effect, there was a split between sex and society.

What was the meaning of this cleavage between sexual and social relations? What was the social purpose of the system of totem and taboo?

When the taboo in primitive society was first discovered, it seemed to the investigators to be understandable enough. Since in modern society sexual intercourse between close blood relatives is prohibited as “incest” and regarded as a crime, the taboo (prohibiting sexual intercourse between the totemic brothers and sisters) and the rule of exogamy (directing these brothers and sisters to mate outside the group) seemed altogether “natural.”

But as investigators began to probe the matter, they found that modern conceptions did not at all explain or fit the needs and conceptions of primitive peoples. Moreover, taboo penetrated into every nook and cranny of primitive life — in the same way that money has penetrated ours. The sub-

ject could not be dodged or ignored, because it clearly occupied a central place in the social system. Every aspect of primitive society, every avenue of investigation, ultimately led every investigator back to this central feature: Taboo.

Why the Taboo?

What had appeared at first to have such a simple, “natural” explanation, turned out to be the major roadblock in the path of scientific understanding of primitive social evolution. Great scholars spent years studying kinship categories, totemic distinctions, sexual customs and sexual taboos. They worked out, for instance, enormous and complicated charts identifying the different degrees of kinship and the different areas of taboo under the “classificatory” system. But in the end they proved no more than what they had already known: that kindred could not mate with kindred: for between them stood the taboo. Though many words were written and many theories advanced, the basic question remained unanswered: *Why* the taboo?

The early argument — that the taboo was designed to prevent “incest” between relatives — came to be recognized by some scientists as misleading and even absurd. Savage peoples, they realized, knew nothing about the most elementary biological facts of life, including the facts of blood relationship. Moreover, as the data accumulated, it became clear that numerous totemic brothers and sisters were not blood relatives at all.

But on one point, at least, there has been general agreement among the anthropologists — that is, on the *power* of the taboo. Hutton Webster gives a vivid description of how tremendous was this power and authority:

“Fear is systematized in taboo. . . It runs the whole gamut from ‘awful’ to ‘awesome.’ The authority of the taboo is unmatched by that of any other prohibition. There is no reflection on it, no reasoning about it, no discussion of it. . . It is an imperative THOU SHALT NOT! in the presence of danger apprehended. . .

“Death, certain, sudden and in terrible form is not seldom the fate which is an-

nounced to the taboo breaker. . . As a matter of fact, the taboo breaker does often die, so acute is the fear aroused by even an involuntary transgression.” (Taboo: A Sociological Study.)

Whence, then, this power and authority? To what end? How explain such a fearsome prohibition against the mating of men and women within the clan?

The answer to this mystery of the taboo lies within the context of our entire explanation of how, in the process of labor, the first human collective was forged out of the animal world. It is necessary to remember two things: first, that the imperative task of emergent humankind was to build the labor collective; and second, that sex competition, as it exists in the animal world, stood in the way of this task and therefore had to be eliminated.

On the latter point Dr. Ralph Piddington writes:

“Sex. . . lets loose the most disruptive of human passions. Nowhere is this so true as in domestic and economic co-operation. Filial respect cannot be maintained if . . . brothers were always quarreling for access to the women. By calling all the female members of his clan ‘sisters’ a man establishes a relationship of fictional kinship with them which precludes marriage or sexual intercourse.” (Introduction to Social Anthropology.)

The taboo, it becomes clear, was not directed against sex as such. It was not directed against “incestuous” sex relationships. It was directed against the sex competition, rivalry and warfare of the animal world. Above all, it was directed against sex as sex impeded or threatened the building and consolidation of the labor collective. By outlawing sex struggles from the totemic group, the taboo created the arena for building the cells of the matriarchal-brotherhood. Brothers were taught to collaborate with brothers in the organized hunt, and in assuring the welfare and protection of the whole group. Thus at the beginning of human time, *social unification* was achieved through *sexual separation*. In this way humanity could move to higher levels of production and culture.

Only in this context and for these reasons can the extraordinary power of the taboo and its central place in primitive society be understood. What was involved was nothing less than the life-and-death question of the survival and development of the human species. It was this which gave the taboo its fearful and awesome power.

And if the women of those prime-

val days could have understood what they were driven to do in the new and human mode of struggle for survival, they would indeed have said: "THOU SHALT NOT undermine or destroy the labor collective, for to do so is to destroy humanity." Thus did the first labor collective take the fate of humanity into its own hands and conquer nature's jungle.

Conclusion: The Great Labor Collective

The conquest of the matriarchal-brotherhood over jungle law was so total that, as Briffault writes, "the nature and extent of that solidarity are almost inconceivable and unintelligible" to us in modern society:

"A savage . . . will say . . . that his son or his brother is 'himself.' . . . He does not think in terms of his ego and its interests, but in terms of group-feelings and group-interests. . .

"The feeling with which the savage regards his clan goes almost to the length of obliterating his sense of individuality. He experiences an injury suffered by any other member as if he were himself the victim of that injury, and any benefit accruing to the clan is felt as a piece of personal good luck, even though he himself derives no advantage from it. . ." (Op. cit.)

Briffault cites innumerable examples of this social solidarity among primitive tribes in every part of the world, as reported by missionaries, traders and travelers:

"Every man is interested in his neighbor's property and cares for it because it is part of the wealth of the family collectively. . . Every one of the clan feels interest in that which is used by his neighbor, because he has a share in it. . . His personal feelings are sunk for the common good."

"What is extremely surprising . . . is to see them treat one another with a gentleness and consideration which one does not find among common people in the most civilized nations. . . This, doubtless, arises in part from the fact that the words 'mine' and 'thine' . . . are unknown to these savages."

"I have seen them divide game, venison, bear's meat, fish, etc., among themselves, when they sometimes had many shares to make; and cannot recollect a single instance of their falling into a dispute or finding fault with the distribution as being unequal. . . They would

rather lie down themselves on an empty stomach than have it laid to their charge that they neglected to satisfy the needy; only dogs and beasts, they say, fight amongst themselves." (Quoted by Briffault, op. cit. My emphasis.)

But history moves forward one step at a time. The matriarchal-brotherhood, once it had achieved its mission, gave way to a new social system which released new forces and relations of production. In this new *class* society which came into existence there arose a new kind of competitive struggle — the struggle for private ownership of wealth and property.

And now, in recent centuries, as civilized explorers and traders began to penetrate all the remote regions of the globe in the lust for wealth, two kinds of human beings came face to face for a short time in history. Men who were building the modern social jungle met the men and women who had conquered nature's jungle. And of course they did not speak the same language, nor understand each other's modes and mores.

Most anthropologists write about how these "backward savages" appear to us. But a few tell us how we look to them. W. H. R. Rivers, for example, reports a personal experience with a Polynesian group, with whom he went on a fishing trip. He began by asking them about their social organization:

"At the end of the sitting they said they would like to examine me about my customs, and using my own concrete methods, one of the first questions directed was to discover what I should do with a sovereign if I earned one. In response to my somewhat lame answers, they asked me pointblank whether I

should share it with my parents and brothers and sisters. When I replied that I would not usually, and certainly not necessarily so, that it was not our general custom, they found my reply so amusing that it was long before they left off laughing. Their attitude toward my individualism was of exactly the same order which we adopt toward their primitive communistic sentiments." (Social Organization.)

And Briffault tells us of a trader who was asked what made his "chiefs" superior to other men — for in primitive society "chiefs are nothing more than the most respected among their equals in rank." When the trader explained that this was due to the greater wealth of the "chiefs," he became so dismayed at the reaction that he wrote back home:

"The more I said in their praise, the more contempt I brought upon myself, and if I regretted anything in my life, it was to have said so much." (Op. cit.)

The contrast between "their morals and ours" — to use Trotsky's phrase — is set forth in the following observation, also quoted by Briffault:

"It is only those who are Christians and dwell at the gates of our towns who make use of money. The others will not touch it. They call it the 'Snake of the French.' They say that amongst us, folks will rob, slander, betray, sell one another for money; that husbands sell their wives, and mothers their daughters for this metal. They think it strange that someone should have more goods than others, and that those who have more should be more esteemed than those who have less." (Ibid.)

* * *

Behind these and similar pictures of primitive society in recent centuries, we can perhaps catch a few glimpses of the great working men and women who built the first labor collective. Their colossal achievement belongs to, and is in fact the beginning of, the history of the labor movement of today. For if the past is any guide to the future, as it always is, then we must say that the labor fraternity that conquered nature's jungle will once again take the fate of humanity into its own hands, and conquer the modern social jungle.

Early Years Of the American Communist Movement

by James P. Cannon

March 2, 1954

Dear Sir:

I received your letter stating that you are working on a history of the American communist movement. I am interested in your project and am willing to give you all the help I can.

Your task will not be easy, for you will be traveling in an undiscovered country where most of the visible road signs are painted upside down and point in the wrong directions. All the reports that I have come across, both from the renegades and from the official apologists, are slanted and falsified. The objective historian will have to keep up a double guard in searching for the truth among all the conflicting reports.

The Stalinists are not only the most systematic and dedicated liars that history has yet produced; they have also won the flattering compliment of imitation from the professional anti-Stalinists. The history of American communism is one subject on which different liars, for different reasons in each case, have had a field day.

However, most of the essential facts are matters of record. The trouble begins with the interpretation; and I doubt very much whether an historian, even with the best will in the world, could render a true report and make the facts understandable without a correct explanation of what happened and why.

As you already know, I have touched on the pioneer days of American

communism in my book, *The History of American Trotskyism*. During the past year I have made other references to this period in connection with the current discussion in our movement. The party resolution on "American Stalinism and Our Attitude Toward It," which appeared in the May-June, 1953, issue of *Fourth International*, was written by me.

I speak there also of the early period of the Communist Party, and have made other references in other articles and letters published in the course of our discussion. All this material can be made available to you. I intend to return to the subject again at greater length later on, for I am of the definite opinion that an understanding of the pioneer days of American communism is essential to the education of the new generation of American revolutionists.

My writings on the early history of American communism are mainly designed to illustrate my basic thesis, which as far as I know, has not been expounded by anyone else. This thesis can be briefly stated as follows:

The Communist Party originally was a revolutionary organization. All the original leaders of the early Communist Party, who later split into three permanent factions within the party, began as American revolutionists with a perspective of revolution in this country. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been in the movement in the first place and wouldn't have split with the reformist socialists to organize the Communist Party.

Even if it is maintained that some of these leaders were careerists — a contention their later evolution tends to support — it still remains to be explained why they sought careers in the Communist movement and not in the business or professional worlds, or in bourgeois politics, or in the trade union officialdom. Opportunities in these fields were open to at least some of them, and were deliberately cast aside at the time.

In my opinion, the course of the leaders of American communism in its pioneer days, a course which entailed deprivations, hazards and penalties, can be explained only by the assumption that they were revolutionists to begin with; and that even the careerists among them believed in the future of the workers' revolution in America and wished to ally themselves with this future.

It is needless to add that the rank and file of the party, who had no personal interests to serve, were animated by revolutionary convictions. By that I mean, they were believers in the perspective of revolution in this country, for I do not know any other kind of revolutionists.

The American Communist Party did not begin with Stalinism. The Stalinization of the party was rather the end result of a process of degeneration which began during the long boom of the Twenties. The protracted prosperity of that period, which came to be taken for permanence by the great mass of American people of all classes, did not fail to affect the Communist Party itself. It softened up the leading cadres of that party, and undermined their original confidence in the perspectives of a revolution in this country. This prepared them, eventually, for an easy acceptance of the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country."

For those who accepted this theory, Russia, as the "one country" of the victorious revolution, became a substitute for the American revolution. Thereafter, the Communist Party in this country adopted as its primary

task the "defense of the Soviet Union" by pressure methods of one kind or another on American foreign policy, without any perspective of a revolution of their own. All the subsequent twists and turns of Communist policy in the United States, which appears so irrational to others, had this central motivation — the subordination of the struggle for a revolution in the United States to the "defense" of a revolution in another country.

That explains the frenzied radicalism of the party in the first years of the economic crisis of the Thirties, when American foreign policy was hostile to the Soviet diplomacy; the reconciliation with Roosevelt after he recognized the Soviet Union and oriented toward a diplomatic rapprochement with the Kremlin; the split with Roosevelt during the Stalin-Hitler pact, and the later fervent reconciliation and the unrestrained jingoism of the American Stalinists when Washington allied itself with the Kremlin in the war.

The present policy of the Communist Party, its subordination of the class struggle to a pacifistic "peace" campaign, and its decision to ally itself at all costs with the Democratic Party, has the same consistent motivation as all the previous turns of policy.

The degeneration of the Communist Party began when it abandoned the perspective of revolution in this country, and converted itself into a pressure group and cheering squad for the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia — which it mistakenly took to be the custodian of a revolution "in another country."

I shouldn't neglect to add the final point of my thesis: The degeneration of the Communist Party is not to be explained by the summary conclusion that the leaders were a pack of scoundrels to begin with; although a considerable percentage of them — those who became Stalinists as well as those who became renégades — turned out eventually to be scoundrels of championship caliber; but by the circumstance that they fell victim to a false theory and a false perspective.

What happened to the Communist Party would happen without fail to any other party, including our own, if it should abandon its struggle for a social revolution in this country, as the realistic perspective of our epoch, and degrade itself to the role of sympathizer of revolutions in other countries.

I firmly believe that American revolutionists should indeed sympathize with revolutions in other lands, and try to help them in every way they can. But the best way to do that is to build a party with a confident

perspective of a revolution in this country.

Without that perspective, a Communist or Socialist party belies its name. It ceases to be a help and becomes a hindrance to the revolutionary workers' cause in its own country. And its sympathy for other revolutions isn't worth much either.

That, in my opinion, is the true and correct explanation of the Rise and Fall of the American Communist Party .

Yours truly,

James P. Cannon

Birth of the Communist Party

April 21, 1954

Dear Sir:

I am very sorry that I delayed so long in answering your letter of March 5. This has not been due to lack of interest in your project or unwillingness to help you in any way I can. The trouble is that I am working on a rather full schedule which I have not been able to interrupt long enough to answer your questions adequately. I take them far too seriously to give offhand answers. Some of the questions require considerable time for thought and recollection of matters which have been long buried in memory.

I will undertake to answer all your questions as fully as I can, although I will not be able to do this all at once. Here I will make a beginning and will undertake to send you other comments later.

I attended the National Conference of the Socialist Party Left Wing in New York in May 1919 as a delegate from Kansas City. I did not attend the Party Convention in September of that year, which resulted in the split and the formation of the two Communist Parties. The reasons which motivated my non-attendance at this Convention were soon flooded out by events, but they seemed important to me at the time and still do. Perhaps they are worth stating.

The Left Wing Conference was my first introduction to the New York atmosphere and my first view of the dominating role of the foreign-language groups. I was in agreement

with the Left Wing program, but I was appalled by the tactical unrealism of the language-federation leaders, represented there in the first place by Hourwich. Their manifest determination to speed up the split of the Socialist Party convinced me that they weren't really living in this country and didn't know or care about the state of mind of the Socialist Party membership outside New York at that time.

I was afraid that a premature split would run far ahead of the readiness of the rank and file in many sections of the country. For that reason, I was strongly opposed to any procedure which might precipitate it. Reed, Gitlow, etc., whom I first met at this Conference, impressed me as far more realistic. They were also more informed and concerned about the industrial labor movement, which was my major interest. I identified myself with their group, which later emerged as the Communist Labor Party.

My failure to be a delegate to the Chicago Convention in September followed from my opposition to a premature split and, because of that, my insistence on respecting party legality in the factional struggle. The party constitution at that time, as I recall, required that delegates to a National Convention be party members for a certain number of years. I did not strictly qualify under this provision, and did not wish to appear at the Convention as a contested delegate. My previous activity had

been in the IWW; I only joined the Socialist Party in 1918, after the Russian Revolution and the rise of the left wing. For that reason, I declined the nomination as delegate and the election went to another comrade who was legally qualified under the party constitution.

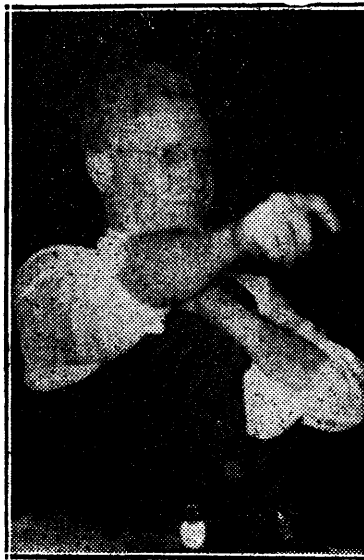
In the light of later events this exaggerated "legalism" may appear as a quixotic reason for failing to attend the historic Convention. But that's the way it was, and I still think I was right. The precipitate split cut the left wing off from thousands of radical socialists who were revolutionary in their sentiments but not yet ready to follow the left wing in a split. They didn't stay with the right wing either. They just dropped out in discouragement over the split, and nearly all of them were lost to the movement.

Of course, the right wing leaders were bent on a split too, and it probably could not have been prevented in any case. But it might have been delayed if the left wing leadership had followed a more careful tactic, had shown more respect for party legalism and more patience and respect for those thousands of party members who were sympathetic to the Russian Revolution but had yet to be convinced of the necessity for a new party. The Communist Party was born in Chicago as a result of an unnecessary, or at any rate a premature, Caesarian operation, which weakened and nearly killed the child at birth. There is an important lesson in this experience which I have not seen mentioned elsewhere. Splits are sometimes unavoidable, but unprepared splits can do more harm than good.

Faced with the accomplished fact of the split, indeed of the double split, which brought two Communist Parties into existence — despite our wishes to the contrary — the Kansas City Local of the Socialist Party followed political lines and promptly aligned itself with the Communist Labor Party. This was the direct continuation of the informal alliance I had made with the Reed-Gitlow group at the National Left Wing Con-

ference in New York four months previously.

I attended the underground Convention in Bridgeman, Michigan, in the spring of 1920, where the Communist Labor Party united with the Ruthenberg faction of the Communist Party



JAMES P. CANNON

to form the United Communist Party. At that Convention I was elected to the Central Committee, and was assigned as organizer of the St. Louis-Southern Illinois district of the party. After a number of months in this post, working mainly among the coal miners of Southern Illinois, I was appointed editor of the *Toiler* and moved to Cleveland to take up the new post. A few months later I was called to New York and remained there as a resident member of the Central Committee.

I soon became convinced that the party could not survive in a completely underground existence where we were cut off from the labor movement and the real life of the country in general. But there were still two Communist Parties in existence and they were exhausting themselves in the underground factional struggle. The final unification of forces at a unity convention in the spring of 1921 brought a new leadership to the fore. Ruthenberg and Gitlow were in prison at that time, and several other previous members of the Central Committee failed of re-election.

Lovestone and Weinstone were elected to the Central Committee at this Convention, and Bittleman was co-opted soon after.

We began a determined struggle for a step-by-step legalization of the movement. I was perhaps more determined than the others on the eventual complete legalization of the party; but this had to wait for some experimental tests.

We took a series of steps to test out legal possibilities. The first of these was the formation of a number of legal branches under the name of the American Labor Alliance. These groups sponsored the first election campaign of the Communist movement by nominating Gitlow for mayor of New York in that year. We also began to conduct forums and lectures under the name of the Workers Alliance.

Meantime, a belated left wing of the Socialist Party, headed by Salutsky (Hardman), Engdahl, Olgin, etc., had seceded from the Socialist Party and formed the Workers Council. I was one of the Communist Party representatives on the committee named to negotiate with this group for the joint formation of a legal party, which finally came into existence in late December 1921.

It is not true and could not be true, as Melech Epstein says, in his "Jewish Labor in the U.S.A.," that a promise was made to disband the underground party and that this promise was broken. We were absolutely without authority to make such an agreement at that time. We were supported by a majority of the Communist Party in our proposal to unite with the Workers Council group in the formation of a legal party, with the distinct understanding that the underground party would be maintained. In fact, as I recall, the paper of the Communist Party published at that time contained articles explaining how we conceived the functioning of both a legal and an illegal party and the relations between them.

The Workers Council group knew all about that. It is true that they wanted a single legal party without any underground organization. But

they knew very well that we were in no position at that time to promise that. It is quite possible and even probable that they counted, as I did, on the logic of developments to assure the predominance of the legal party and the eventual liquidation of the underground organization as unnecessary in the political circumstances of the time. This proved to be correct, but another year's experience, plus the friendly help of the Communist International, were necessary to bring this about.

We had several meetings with the Workers Council people in the Joint Negotiating Committee. I do not recall any great difficulties, since both sides were eager for the unification. The Workers Council delegates were most concerned about being swallowed up and steam-rolled by the Communist Party majority. This difficulty was overcome by many organizational concessions which we made. They were accorded representation in the Convention and on the new National Committee far beyond their numerical strength. These concessions were easily made on our part, since we wanted to create the impression of a big unification to attract unaffiliated radicals, and the Workers Council group had a number of prominent and capable people whom the new party could use most advantageously.

The Convention which launched the Workers Party was quite successful and harmonious, and it gave a big impulse to the development of the movement. Max Eastman wrote a sympathetic and perspicacious account of the Convention in the *Liberator* of January or February 1923, which you may check for references. As you note, I was the keynote speaker at the Convention and was elected Chairman of the National Committee by agreement of both sides. Perhaps some special considerations accounted for this agreement. I was a sort of symbol of the "Western-American" orientation which it was deemed necessary to emphasize. Besides that, I have no doubt that the Workers Council people considered me to be more of a "liquidator" than some of

the other Communist Party leaders — an impression which was not entirely unfounded.

In answer to your question, I would say that the political cooperation between me and Lovestone was the main driving force in all these party developments of the year 1921. Bittelman and Weinstone were also very effective in the collaboration. In fact, we worked quite effectively as a team in that period, considering the fact that we all came into the leadership cold, without much previous experience to go by. The over-riding political consideration — the imperative need to legalize party activity — proved stronger in this case than dif-

ferences of background and temperament which played a part in later friction and conflict.

We did not succeed in forming the Workers Party without another split with die-hard undergrounders in the Communist Party. The two members of the Central Committee whom I remember as leaders of the secession were Dirba and Ballam. Wicks belonged to the Proletarian Party. He joined the seceding faction of the Communist Party — which became known as the United Toilers — only after the split, and was appointed editor of their paper.

Yours truly,

James P. Cannon

The Early Leadership

May 5, 1954

Dear Sir:

Your questions have aroused fresh recollections of events and incidents of the early days which have long been sleeping soundly in the bottom of my mind. I will go to work in earnest now and will answer all your questions, and any others you may wish to add, as fully and completely as possible.

Some of your questions made me painfully aware that you have been far more deeply immersed in this subject than I have been for many years. You probably know a great many things that I don't know, or can't remember at the moment. Nevertheless, my recollections and my slant on things may help you to get a more rounded picture.

In your questions regarding the period from 1922 on, I see no mention of John Pepper. This is a very big omission indeed. Is it possible that you have not run across any information about the extraordinary role played by this extraordinary figure?

The break up of the old factions and the assemblage of new ones destined to become "permanent"; the whole adventure of the "Federated Farmer-Labor Party" and the fantastic politics associated with it; and many other things in 1922-24 — all these revolved mainly around Pepper.

I was his antagonist from first to

last, but if his surviving friends of that time have not contributed any information about the decisive role he played in party affairs for quite a while, I would feel bound, in the interests of historical accuracy, to fill up this surprising gap in your information. If you will let me know what, if anything, you have learned about Pepper's activity, and how you have provisionally evaluated it, I will be in a better position to fill out the picture from my point of view.

In your letter of April 26 you ask two questions supplementary to your question about the leadership at the time of the formation of the Workers Party. You and I have to come to this early period by different paths. You are obviously far more familiar with the documentary record, such as it is, while I have to rely entirely on memory, my personal knowledge of the people and the events of that time, and the lasting impression they made on me.

The primitive character of our movement in that time is strikingly reflected in its inadequate documentation of the factional struggles. Far more was done and decided in action and personal conversation, committee meetings and unreported speeches, than was ever recorded and motivated in documents. That's not the best way, but that's the way it was done. I might say in our extenuation, however, that we were called to leader-

ship and compelled to act before we had served a full apprenticeship and acquired the necessary schooling.

I am afraid that the documentary record of the entire first ten years of American communism — up to the formation of the Trotskyist faction and our expulsion in 1928 — contains so many gaps that it can easily confront the historian with a puzzle or lead him astray if he relies on the documentation alone. I think you are wise to seek the personal recollections of various participants to supplement your reading, even though you will then probably run up against the additional problem of conflicting testimony.

The participants of the time, even those who want to tell the truth as they remember it, probably differ so much in their interpretations, and their recollections may be colored so much by their later evolution, that you will find few points of agreement in their reports. I can only promise, for my part, to adhere strictly to the truth in my report of any facts which I remember, without concealing my own conception of the real meaning of the first decade of American communism, and of how the various developments fit into and serve this larger theme. But then, I suppose you will recognize that the considered interpretations of the various participants, of events recollected in tranquillity long afterward, can also throw light on the period from different sides.

* * *

My statement that the Unity Convention in the spring of 1921 “brought a new leadership (Lovestone-Cannon, plus Weinstone and Bittleman) to the fore” requires a certain qualification. It certainly was “new,” since not a single one of the decisive four had played a central part before; but it should also be described as an *interim* leadership.

It was decisive for that particular time, and it proved to be roughly adequate for the exigent historical task imposed upon it at the time — the task of breaking the fetish of underground organization and launch-

ing the Workers Party as the legal medium for the development of communist political activity.

In my opinion, this accomplishment can hardly be over-estimated, for it, along with the adoption of a realistic trade union program, which this leadership also sponsored and supported, marked the turning point, the beginning of the Americanization of American communism. The “Lovestone-Cannon combination” didn’t last long, but while it lasted the results were positive in the highest degree.

This collaboration was a triumph of political necessity and political agreement over personal antagonisms. It would be hard to find two people with greater differences in background, character and temperament than Lovestone and me. In our relationship there was not a trace of personal congeniality, nor — on my part, at least — of personal regard, confidence and respect. Nevertheless, when confronted with an over-riding political necessity, and a reasonable agreement on what had to be done about it, we worked together in an effective combination.

If one asks what part personal antagonisms and rivalries played in all the factional struggles of the first decade of American communism, it would have to be admitted that they played a big part. More than that, I would have to say, on the basis of more than 40 years of observation and experience, that such considerations seem to play a part in every factional struggle. But in this case, in the period of the struggle to break American communism out of its underground isolation and begin the Americanization of the movement, political considerations and political necessities proved to be stronger than personal antagonisms — to the benefit of the party.

As previously noted, Ruthenberg and Gitlow were in prison at that time; Foster, who only joined the party in the fall of 1921, on his return from Moscow, had not yet begun to play a significant role; and Pepper, who was later to play a big part, had not yet arrived or been

heard from. With Ruthenberg’s release from prison in the spring of 1922, and the entrance into party activity of Foster and Pepper, those three people began to assume the most prominent positions. The interim leadership, which had carried through the fight for the Workers Party, was thereafter assimilated into the larger leading staff, but they never again worked together as a unit.

There were others, of course, who played a part in the struggle of 1921. Bedacht was one of them, and there were a number of others; but it was my impression — then as now — that they played important supporting, rather than decisive, parts.

It is true that Lovestone had been rather prominent in the New York Local before that time; but among other things, he had been under a cloud which barred his participation in the central leadership until after the Unity Convention in the spring of 1921. I suppose you know the story of his testimony for the state in the Winitsky trial. If one is going to bear down very heavily, in a historical account, on the personalities involved, the Lovestone story, including the Winitsky trial episode and its aftermath, is certainly worth a chapter.

Bittleman previously had been prominent in the New York movement, and in the Jewish section of the party in particular, but his co-optation into the Central Committee in 1921 properly marked the beginning of his functioning in the national leadership. I personally didn’t know him and had never heard of him until I came to New York in late 1920.

My designation of the 1921-22 leadership as “new” is certainly correct if one is speaking of the central and decisive core of the national leadership at that particular time. I got my first view of the original national leadership of the left wing at the National Left Wing Conference in New York in the spring of 1919. I was seeing them all with fresh eyes for the first time. I recognized four distinct groupings of leaders there, each representing substantial forces, with apparently very little coopera-

tion between them. The conference impressed me, a delegate from the provinces, as a struggle of tendencies mixed up, as is so often the case, with personal rivalries.

First, there was the foreign-language federation group, dominated by Hourwich. They were demanding an immediate split with the Socialist Party and the constitution of the Communist Party right then and there. They were not living in this country, and I was dead set against the idea that they could lead the American movement.

Second, there were such personalities as Fraina, the outstanding "theoretician" and political figure at that time; and Ruthenberg, who represented the strong Cleveland organization and had already achieved national prominence and influence. They were opposed to the immediate split. Fraina was undoubtedly the most effective original popularizer of communist ideas, and I greatly appreciated the work he had done. I respected Ruthenberg for his fight against the war, and for his manifest ability, but his personality had no attraction for me, then or ever.

Third, there was the Michigan group headed by Batt and Keracher, who later formed the Proletarian Party. They seemed to me to be engaged in a hair-splitting debate with Fraina over his draft of the program, insisting that the phrase "mass action" be replaced by "action of the masses." I couldn't make head or tail of this argument and was not very sympathetic to these scholastics.

Fourth, there were Reed, Larkin, Gitlow, Wagenknecht, Katterfeld and others, who seemed to me to stand for a more American orientation. They were outspokenly opposed to the Hourwich foreign-language group domination and more interested in trade union questions. I became associated with Reed, Larkin and Gitlow in the trade union commission of the Conference, and felt them to be more my kind of people. I found myself in sympathy with this group which later became the leading nucleus of the Communist Labor Party.

* * *

The above is roughly a picture of what the national leadership of the left wing looked like to me in the spring of 1919 four months before the formal constitution of the two Communist Parties. Of course there were many other people who were active and prominent. Some of them I didn't know and others I have forgotten — but the people I have mentioned were in the center of the stage in those early formative days. The impression they made on me, as a comparative new-comer to "politics" and a provincial stranger in New York for the first time, was definite and lasting.

Two years later, when the struggle for the legalization of the party's activity was put on the agenda, every single one of the most prominent original leaders was on the sidelines. Ruthenberg, Gitlow and Larkin were in prison. Batt and Keracher had a separate organization of their own, called the Proletarian Party. Reed was in Moscow. Wagenknecht and several others had failed of re-election at the 1921 election. Katterfeld had gone to Moscow.

In this situation, the main responsibility of leadership fell to, or was taken over by, the four people whom I have mentioned: Lovestone-Cannon, plus Weinstone and Bittleman. This team of four carried the party through the struggle for the fusion with the Workers Council group and the constitution of the Workers Party. The decisive role of this quartet lasted for about one year. It was never overthrown, but the individual members were integrated into larger groupings, as previously explained.

It would be difficult to prove that this new combination actually commanded the support of the majority of the party for any length of time. A number of those who had been eliminated from the Central Committee at the Unity Convention, such as Wagenknecht, Ampter, Lindgren, etc., retained a strong influence in the party ranks. They soon began to put together an opposition faction, which later became known as the "Goose Caucus." Katterfeld joined them, and became probably the most influential

leader. Gitlow, on his release from prison, also joined the "Goose Caucus." Minor was another member.

They gave a grudging support to the proposal to form the Workers Party; and, to that extent, they supported us against the die-hard leftists who split away on this issue. But they conceived of the new party as a mere shadow organization and were not willing to assign to it the broad political functions which we had in mind for it. Their hearts were in the underground. Thus two new factions came into being — the undergrounders - in - principle ("Goose Caucus"), and the faction driving for the complete legalization of the movement (the "liquidators"). Ruthenberg, on his release from prison in the spring of 1921, identified himself with the liquidators' faction. So did Foster, Browder, Dunne and the rest of the trade union group who were only then beginning to become active in party affairs for the first time.

* * *

I left for Moscow in May 1922, as an advance delegate of the liquidators' faction, to seek the support of the Comintern for our policy. I remained in Moscow till January of the following year. What happened in the party at home in the meantime, I know only by hearsay. The factional struggle for control of the underground party raged furiously throughout that period, culminating at the famous Bridgeman Convention in the fall of 1922, which was raided by the police. I was not present at this Convention and never could get a clear account of just what happened there.

It is my impression that the forces were quite evenly divided, with the Goose Caucus having a slight advantage. But their prospects of gaining control of the leadership, and imposing their sterile policy on the party, were frustrated by two new factors in the situation. These turned out to be considerable factors indeed — namely, the decision of the Communist International and the personality of John Pepper.

Yours truly,

James P. Cannon

Lessons of the Chinese Revolution

by Vincent Grey

IF WE may regard the Chinese revolution as the deformed child of the 1917 Russian revolution, then we may also regard Pabloism, in the field of theory, as an even more deformed offshoot of the Chinese revolution. The fact that Pabloism can thus trace its lineage back to the great Russian revolution is not very important here, because Pabloism's main proposition is that its classical grandparent has been *superseded*. By what? Pabloism itself does not clearly and distinctly say; but it senses with a somewhat legitimate filial instinct, and half-mumbles with a tongue-tied persistency, that the Chinese revolution—or at least *its concept* of the Chinese revolution—is to be the matrix and fountainhead of the future.

The task of answering this false theory is the more difficult because the Pabloites have not made a logical and consistent exposition of it. The reader will quickly see, however, that we are not imputing any ideas to the Pabloites that they do not possess. We are merely tracing the *source* of some of their newly discovered historical laws, and attempting to pose and, to some extent, answer certain questions raised by the Chinese revolution, questions which we would have to answer quite independently of Pabloism.

Consciously or not, Pabloism is superimposing the Chinese experience—and only half understood at that—on the whole world. With no special analysis of the history and development of China in the last few decades, either from a Marxist or a

revisionist point of view, Pabloism has blithely concluded that there is a "new world reality." Their "new world reality," however, is to be found not nearly so much in the mighty dynamics of the Chinese revolution itself as in the policies of the Chinese Stalinists, and thence, by a kind of transubstantiation, in world Stalinism.

While it is true that Pablo himself (like Clarke) first began to discover the "new world reality" in the Titoist party of Yugoslavia, he did not announce it in its present more comprehensive revisionist form until some time later. Actually it was not Yugoslavia, but China, which had the greatest impact upon the Pabloites. Regardless of the date of Pablo's own conversion, Pabloism itself could only gain a certain growth by virtue of the greater revolution in China which had more of a world effect.

Unlike the Russian revolution, which raised the theoretical level along with the fighting class-consciousness of the workers of nearly all countries of the world, the Chinese revolution has left its mark in a twisted, peculiar way. The Chinese was a truly great revolution. It really shook the world—but unfortunately it shook the Marxism out of some Marxists as well. It is the fate of all great revolutions to reveal the weak spots, the accumulated rust in theory, and consequently to increase the weaknesses of some of the theorists. But the Chinese revolution has had an effect more contradictory than usual in this respect.

As the Pabloists have so often informed us, they are *not sectarians*. By no means! They have been extremely sensitive to the developments in the real world, including the development of the Chinese revolution. But the trouble is that their sensitivity, like a harp that anyone can play upon, also responds sympathetically to *false ideas*. The brain, a most sensitive instrument, is often, by the same token, a weak instrument. How hard it is for a revolutionist constantly to oppose the ruling ideas of the ruling class—no matter how banal or illogical these ideas are! How hard it is to resist the ideas of the ruling caste in the Soviet Union as well, especially at a time when Stalinism seems to have a new historic validity, when it is the ideology of the leadership of several large states, when it is the current ideological banner of millions of fighting class-conscious workers!

Naturally Pabloism is not a duplication of Stalinism. But it rationalizes the apparent validity of Stalinism, and projects a progressive historic evolution for it. How can such an inferior idea take possession of a superior mind, trained in Trotskyism? We have to look outside the realm of ideas to answer this question. Trotskyism has the same validity today as it did formerly. Its logic is just as sound. Its critique of Stalinism is just as correct. But it is more isolated. It *seems less important*. History seems to threaten to pass it by! This can be very frightening to a revolutionist.

To stand up directly against the reaction, to fight capitalism and overthrow it, to make the revolution without complications, just the good against the bad—that is a very natural and understandable desire. But then to see a great revolution put into power those whom one did not expect to take power at all—that is hard, even on a mind trained in Marxism. But the mind is "resourceful." It covers up its shaken confi-

dence and resolution with new rationalizations and new "theory." Thus a great revolution can have some reactionary results! And thus Pablo could find fertile ground for Pabloism.

New Role for Stalinism?

Now the leading party, which assumed state power in revolutionary China, was the *Stalinist party*. The question of the real dynamics of the revolution and the class nature of the new state did not trouble the Pabloites nearly so much as another intriguing, and in fact very important question: "Cannot the Stalinists then take power on a world-wide basis, lead the world revolution, be the 'wave of the future,' and eliminate the necessity for ourselves, the Trotskyists?" This is the way the Pabloite leaders, who were oh-so-objective in regard to their own revolutionary role, began to pose the question—at first to their most private looking-glasses, and later on to the party, in their mumbling ruminations and qualifications, sandwiched in the guise of confusion between points of their resolutions.

Had the leading Pabloites raised this question frankly and honestly from the beginning (as revisionists seldom do), it would have been much easier to answer them, and to answer on a thoroughly theoretical basis. They contented themselves, however, with half-raising the question of the historic role of the Trotskyist parties—as parties—while they reaffirmed their belief in the historic role of *Trotskyism*. This meant that the Stalinist parties (or Social Democratic parties, as the case might be) could eventually adopt the Trotskyist program without necessarily becoming Trotskyist parties—by a process of political osmosis, as it were, without sharp splits, fights, clashes between Stalinists and Trotskyists that would result in new Trotskyist parties combatting all other tendencies and contending for leadership of the workers of the world. Posing the question this way, without reviewing the relationship of Stalinism and Trotskyism

to the world revolution, it appeared to the Pablo followers that it was a choice between trying to lead the revolution with a small "sectarian" party or with the much larger and "almost" revolutionary Stalinist party.

Considering the latter-day "objectivity" of those who have lost faith in their own program, and considering the necessity for a theoretical answer generally, we really ought to take up Pablo's theory of Trotskyism without the Trotskyist party. This theory should not be considered by itself, "subjectively" (for we are surely too blinded by our own desire to lead the revolution to do this adequately!). It should be considered in the framework of the role and relationship of the party to the mass in general, of "spontaneity" in general, of revisionism in general, and of the Chinese revolution in particular.

What does the Chinese revolution, viewed through the lens of Marxism instead of the impressionist mirror of Pabloism, have to tell us about these things? Consider, for example, the newly discovered historical law that the proletarian masses "choose" their own instrument (party) and accomplish their revolution with it, more or less regardless of the content of the party's program, even re-fashioning the program in the process and imposing a "revolutionary orientation" on the leading party. Is not China the source of this utterly false and fatally deceptive idea? It is not China, but its half-baked interpreters we have to blame! Actually, as we shall later demonstrate, the Stalinist program in China was not especially different in 1949 from what it was in 1929. The Chinese Revolution *swept over* its leadership and *swept up* its leadership far more than it shaped the leadership.

But this is only one of the subordinate parts of the revisionism the Pabloites have sucked out of their thumbs while staring at China. The question can be posed in a much more basic way. China, the Pabloites have finally concluded, however pragmatically, is a workers' state. Now *in the opinion of the present author*, this is true. But if it is true, what then?

Why then, the Chinese masses' quarter-century of struggle erupted into a workers' state without the benefit of Trotskyist leadership! And if that is so, what then? "Why then," formal logic triumphantly replies to the prostrate Pabloite, "either this is a pattern for world revolution or it is not. And since we are not Chinese exceptionalists, it *is* a pattern. This is the new world reality!"

True, the Pabloites do not put the matter so bluntly or so clearly as this. They only make the *conclusions* which flow from this.

Like Joseph with the forgetful Pharaoh's dream, we are compelled to articulate their idea in clear daylight, as well as to show its meaning—and answer it. Such ruthless logic can't be answered, of course, if we concern ourselves only with the rigid, formal premises of this kind of logic. The living logic of the revolution, however, has little trouble replying to such copybook sentences.

Must View in Context

To understand the Chinese revolution we not only have to acquaint ourselves thoroughly with the mighty upheaval of the Chinese millions, but we must view this upheaval in the context of the world revolution and the international situation, outside of which it is meaningless and, in fact, could not have taken place. More than that, the "workers' state" is a more provisional, more transitional thing, in a smaller world, than it was in the 1917 period. In other words, China *is*, in my opinion, a workers' state. But in the world of today, even such a great state as China cannot be regarded in as definitive a sense as the Soviet Union of 1917—and of course not remotely as definitive as was the early American bourgeois republic among the world's distant, almost unreachable feudal monarchies.

A workers' state is a transitional regime—even a transitional society, if you will—between capitalism and socialism, a bridge from one to the other. (Needless to say, this regime is definitive enough for revolutionaries all over the world no defend intrans-

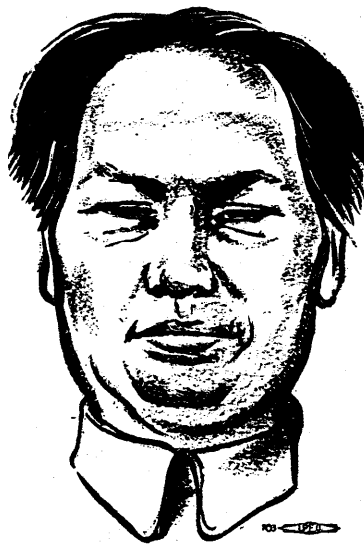
sightly.) But this transitional edifice, unlike a bridge between two solid shores, is a constantly changing, supremely sensitive, living thing, rooted in the past and only *pointing* to the future, subject to overthrow, degeneration and downfall, as well as to the fulfilment of its rational function. It is a provisional thing, even on the basis of its own national aims. On a world basis, this provisionalism is magnified and multiplied. The weight, the stability, the static importance, of any *national* revolution have *decreased* simultaneously with, and because of, the tremendously *increased* dynamism of the *world* revolution.

It is the world-wide class war, which Pablo thought he understood but will be compelled to reconsider if he continues to whitewash Moscow—it is this war which dictates that the inner Chinese struggle *must* become transformed and merged into the *outer* international struggle, and that state power can only be validated on a *world* basis. This cannot be done by simple “repetitions” of China, even if such repetitions were possible. The Pabloites generally say that the Kremlin’s world-wide dilemma forces it to keep encouraging the Stalinists to take power in each colonial revolution (and possibly the European too) in order to defend the Soviet Union—and itself—against imperialism. Pablo himself does not dare to say that this compulsion would finally drive Moscow into giving consistent leadership for world revolution itself. But since this is a logical outcome of his proposition, as well as a widely held belief of the bourgeoisie, we should take a good look at the proposition itself. It is necessary, among other things, to take a look at what the Stalinists are actually *doing*.

The Stalinists, as well as we, have noticed the imminence of the Third World War. And they justify their shameless betrayal in Iran, for example, which is admittedly a tinderbox, by the threat of the same world war whose logic is supposed to drive them to victory, not only in Iran, but in such countries as . . . France! Moscow and Peking are even now maneuvering Indo-China into a peace

which, despite its immediate practical advantages, is a *class* peace, a restoration of some “stability” to the Far East, and to that extent to the world. This is an attempt to restore the status quo, an attempt which will not, of course, prevent the bigger war, but only prepare its outbreak under conditions more unfavorable for the workers. And in Italy and France, where the Stalinist policy alone prevents the drive to power and refuses to make even the most elementary military preparations, the threat of American intervention and atomic explosion is the chief rationalization the Stalinists give to themselves and their followers for their treacherous policies.

The Stalinists could not hold back the revolutionary tide in China. But



MAO TSE-TUNG

they have proved again and again, and *since* China, that they are more than adequate in other places to turn victory into defeat. Pablo has failed to notice that—given the character of the Stalinists and the desperation of the Kremlin—the imminence of the war, class war though it is, also acts as a *brake* upon the revolution. Thus each succeeding “repetition” of China (if there are to be any at all) will not increase the contradictions of the *ideology* of Stalinism, as Pablo theorizes, but on the contrary will confront the various national Stalinist leaderships, each time the question of power is raised, with tasks which become

more and more impossible without *breaking* with Stalinism—not obliquely or by implication, but openly and consciously breaking with the *Kremlin* (whose material assistance is fully as important to them as the bourgeoisie say it is). This is not possible without ideological battles in the course of explaining the role of the Kremlin, even *while* the Kremlin is helping a given struggle; without splits, and the formation of Trotskyist parties. To any serious revolutionary, this means that there must be a fighting organization of Trotskyism (the independent party).

The Real Question

Are we predicting that Indo-China, Burma, India or even, for that matter, France and Italy, could not possibly have revolutions under the leadership of the Stalinists? Some of the most important pre-conditions for the Stalinist success in China are missing in these countries, of course. But it is not necessary to deal in absolute predictions of this sort. (If the *possibility* exists, it still does not relieve us from the duty of building a revolutionary party in those countries.) It is mere speculation whether the experience of China can somewhere, sometime, be “repeated.” *The real question is: can it solve the world problem? Is the Chinese method sufficient for the success of the world revolution?*

That is the way practical, professional revolutionaries who are serious about the world revolution must pose the question. “Revolutionary” pipe-dreamers and sideline “Marxist” commentators will not pose this question at all. They will accept the affirmative answer to the above question, partly because they don’t clearly formulate the question, partly because they are afraid to ask it, and partly because, after all, wouldn’t it be nice if it were true? But as long as this question is not clearly formulated, as long as wish-thinking and impressionism substitute for *thinking* on this question, then all their schoolboy-revolutionist talk about strategy and tactics with the Stalinists is only a dis-

cussion of the tempo of their own liquidation.

As we have already remarked, Pabloism was extremely impressed by China. But what impressed it most was the *leadership*. Pablo himself correctly claims the "credit" for having made *new contributions* on the nature of Stalinism. It is a common fault to be more impressed by the leadership than by the essence of historical movements. Pablo, with a tradition of Marxism, fairly well conceals this fault. But he has it. And he did not first display it in the recent struggle.

A few years ago, under the influence of the *right* turn of the Stalinists, a leading Pabloite wrote that it was false to say that the defense of the USSR was "dictated chiefly by its sociological and political characteristics: 'workers' state,' 'outpost of the revolution' and the like." He finished his article with the words: "The Fourth International — already firm on many planks of its program — must bring up to date its position on the question of the USSR . . ." (*Fourth International*, May 1945, pp. 136, 138.)

Had the Stalinists not made their left turn in 1947, it is hard to say where this Pabloite would have wound up, with his quotation-marked "workers' state" and his insistence on unity with the Shachtmanites at that time.

The point is this: With all his "contributions" on the bureaucracy and Stalinism in general, what Pablo fails to concern himself with is the *working class*, the *revolution*, the *revolutionary state*. He cannot see this essence directly, dynamically, dialectically, but sees only a sort of romantic disfiguration through the gaudy prism of the actions of the leadership. And now he graduates from a more or less unnoticed failing to a theoretical elaboration of this fault. First, the state is nearly cursed because of its leadership (Soviet Union). Next, the leadership is glorified because of the revolution (China). And now, the revolutionary will of the masses becomes frozen into a revolutionary pattern in the brain-cells of the leaders.

This is not an isolated mistake, but a new world-theory. Now Bolshevism

is no longer necessary! The independent party is *passé*. Pablo has made no guarantees, of course, that the leadership will keep this transmuted revolutionary program in their heads in the event that the masses go through a difficult period when conservatism and even reaction possess them. (However, he has somewhat provided for this by explaining that the "revolutionary wave is irreversible" . . . Can we then conclude that Stalinism's regeneration is irreversible?)

Defense of China and USSR

We are the real defenders of China, as of the Soviet Union. And we do not base ourselves on the actions of the leadership, but on the actions of the masses and the nature of their social conquests. Mao's murder of Trotskyists, for example, in no way determines our attitude on the historic importance of the *mass* struggle which Mao happened to lead. It is instructive to note that the impressionistic Pablo *suppressed* information about these murders, thus proving not only that he *apologizes* for Chinese Stalinism, but also that an impressionist may become so fond of *one* impression that he can inoculate himself against a contrary one!

Pablo's trouble is not merely a small theoretical mistake in analyzing the nature of the Chinese state, not merely that he skipped a page or two while reading "State and Revolution," not merely his incorrect understanding of the role of leadership *in general*. His trouble stems from the stubborn fact that, regardless of the chain of events which caused it, the Stalinists did find themselves at the head of the revolution, and finally in the administration of the state. Bemused and bedazzled by this fact, Pablo reminded himself that Trotskyism had not provided a place for the victory of the Stalinists in China, and proceeded — somewhat carefully for one bedazzled — to project the theory of a revolutionary orientation for Stalinism.

Now it would be terribly wrong to gloss over the events in China, or to rationalize the revolution out of

existence, merely in order to prove the inadequacies of Stalinism. But it would be even worse, it would be a disarming of the world vanguard to say, as Pablo says in effect, that the Chinese revolution cuts out a new pattern for the world revolution, with the implication that the Stalinists, with a few lectures from us, can guide the world revolution to victory.

We must agree with Pablo, of course, that it has proved possible for a party to take state power against the logic of its own program. But that was also proved by the Paris Commune in 1870. And trade union bureaucrats lead strikes every day in spite of their program of class collaboration. This encourages pragmatists to sneer at the validity of theory and the necessity for program. But does it prove them correct? Are the Marxist theory and program sideline commentaries on the class struggle, or are they the indispensable instrument in the hands of living people (a party) to the socialist conclusion of that struggle? Can a working-class party take power in the United States by the Chinese Stalinist method — that is, without a thorough understanding of the nature of the state, the nature of the liberal capitalist politicians, the nature of fascism, etc., etc., even with the most heroic cadre and the best will in the world?

Leadership and Program

The Pabloites slur over this question, partly because they half-believe that the blind revolution in China *does* set a new world pattern, partly because they half-believe that the world revolution is already won, or will be won by the addition of one or two more states to the workers' bloc: A pernicious and fatal delusion! That is, it would be fatal if Pablo were to play any real strategic role in guiding the destinies of the world working class. This is excluded, however, by the very nature of his political position. He does not really even regard himself as a leader of the Fourth International, but only as a sort of armchair Clausewitz writing admonitions for the generals of the

Third. These gentlemen would manage to lose and/or betray the world revolution with or without the sideline comments of Pablo.

According to Trotsky, the question of leadership and program is the most important in our epoch. According to Pablo, this is no longer true (were not the Stalinists the leadership in China?). Now the masses "choose" a party to be their instrument to power, reshaping the instrument during the actual course of the revolution, somewhat as constant usage reshapes a handle better to the hand. With a peculiar logic, Pablo theorizes that it is the increased revolutionary drive of the masses that makes this possible and changes Trotsky's thesis. But it is precisely the epic forces now going into battle that need, more urgently than ever before, a conscious, revolutionary Marxist leadership.

Basing ourselves always on the revolution itself in China, on the actions of the millions, let us reverse the method of Pablo and look briefly at the Chinese Communist Party's history in the framework of the revolution. How did this party get catapulted to power without "projecting any revolutionary orientation" beyond their general orientation in 1931 or even earlier?

Is there anything in the past history of the Chinese CP, even previous to the taking of power and even previous to the "new world reality," which might indicate a different future for it than for most other CPs of the world? And if there were such differences, what were they, how deep were they, and what caused them? Above all, what differences were there in the general Chinese situation?

To begin with, there was a revolutionary situation in China from 1925 to 1927. If there is anything to the proposition that the revolutionary drive of the masses becomes a revolutionary program in the heads of inadequate leaders, this was the time for it to be demonstrated. But the revolutionary masses at that time could not succeed in imposing the correct position and the drive for power on the minds of the CP leaders. (The few leaders who did finally un-

derstand the correct position got it from Trotsky, who was not in the Chinese mass movement at all.)

But Chiang's success in 1927, his doublecross and defeat of the Chinese CP, proved to be incomplete; and the surviving cadres had a more correct line *imposed* upon them, insofar as Chiang's intransigence prevented collaboration, and insofar as the general revolutionary situation in the countryside continued. It was precisely the subordination of the CP to Chiang and to the bourgeois Kuo-mintang that was the basic Stalinist error of 1925-27. The growth of independent class armies under the leadership of the Stalinists was in itself an objective correction of this error.

The great difference between the Chinese CP and other CPs of the world, even at this early time, lay in the fact that it was an independent armed body leading a civil war, as an aftermath of a revolution.

Furthermore, a larger and larger section of the oppressed peasant population armed itself under their banner. Still further, actual sections of territory came under the Stalinists' armed rule. They had, so to speak, achieved power on a territorial basis long ago. The objective requirements and responsibilities of power were always a great factor, if not always the deciding factor, in their decisions. Finally, both their promises and their performances among the peasantry, in the whole long period of the civil wars and colonial war, were such as had to be transferred to the national field as soon as they achieved power; and these promises and performances, their program and actions, were of the character of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Torrential Movement

In 1949 they fought for the same bourgeois-democratic demands they fought for in 1925-27. But this time they had to fight *against* the bourgeoisie instead of subordinating themselves to it. Chiang Kai-shek took care of that. But over and above everything was the torrential movement of hundreds of millions of hu-

man beings breaking through the rotting dams of feudalism, pouring out of the reaches of the ancient past, raging without let or hindrance into the present, still trying to cut a channel to the future.

It was not only the cataclysmic pressure of the revolutionary peasant masses in the concrete, who catapulted the Stalinists to power in China in a physical, mechanical sense; it was also the general bourgeois-democratic revolution in the abstract, that had to hurl a workers party into the breach since no bourgeois party would carry out the democratic tasks. (This explains why large sections of the left bourgeoisie could share power with the Stalinists, and, regardless of the mutual illusions of both parties, fail to put their class stamp on the state.) As Owen Lattimore commented several years before the revolution, if Chiang Kai-shek did not lead the democratic revolution, the Stalinists *would have* to do so. Lattimore correctly sensed the irrepressible nature of the Chinese revolution, and correctly called the turn on the Stalinist assumption of power, even if he did not understand the class nature of this power. But then, neither did the Stalinists.

Pablo might agree with this proposition. But this is not the same as saying that mass pressure converts itself into a revolutionary theory, or makes Stalinists become non-Stalinists. Nor does it permit us to *generalize* on the experience of China, since few places in the world duplicate the long history of armed struggle and the shifting boundaries of territorial civil war in China. (Nor is it now possible for the Stalinists to take state power in any other colonial country without being fully aware of what they have on their hands!)

It is worth noting also that Trotsky, in the 13 years he lived subsequent to the 1927 defeat, keenly observing the world situation, did not consider this unquestionably different situation of the Chinese CP so different as to raise any question as to whether it was really Stalinist or not. The fact is that the Chinese CP, through all the ups and downs of the

long civil war, through the colonial war against Japan, through all the heroic and even epochal struggles, and through certain oblique differences with Moscow, followed the general turns of Kremlin policy.

It is true, however, and very important, that its flips and flops were somewhat less extreme than in other countries. But this was not for lack of trying. It was because of the basically different situation of the Chinese CP, and because of the specific history of the Chinese revolution. A man walks differently in water than on dry land!

Consider the famous Sian incident of 1937. The left-bourgeois "Young Marshall" Chang had kidnapped Chiang Kai-shek and called upon the Stalinists to join him in giving Chiang the mass trial before the people that they, the Stalinists, had so long been calling for. But the Stalinists double-crossed the "Young Marshall," helped Chiang send him to prison, agreed to end land expropriations, gave up the civil war itself—all for a joint pact with Chiang to fight Japan. Subjectively, this was as much of a flip-flop as you could ask for; but objectively, it amounted to a "united front" with the colonial bourgeoisie (rather than a "popular front") against imperialism, which as Trotsky said at the time was essentially a principled thing.

It was a "united front," a joint action of worker-peasant armies and colonial nationalist armies against imperialism. The same Moscow-directed flip-flops in Europe at this period were "popular fronts"; that is, a subordination of the interest and ranks of the workers to the liberal bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries. If the Chinese CP is qualitatively different from the other CPs, it was certainly different at that time as well. But was it?

Trotskyists, in the same situation, would also have made a united front agreement with Chiang in 1937, on the basis of the colonial struggle against imperialism, and on the basis of their program and understanding of the permanent revolution. Did the Stalinists proceed from such a pro-

grammatic basis? No. The Soviet Union was being ground between the twin jaws of German and Japanese imperialism, and the Kremlin was conducting a cold war of maneuver between them and the so-called "democracies." The Kremlin wanted to unite any and all forces it could, regardless of class, against Germany in the west and Japan in the east. The Kremlin ordered the Stalinists in France, England, etc., to unite with the liberal bourgeoisie against fascism (which meant Germany, as far as the Kremlin was concerned). And with exactly the same intent, they wanted the CP in China to unite with the Chinese colonial bourgeoisie against Japan. Due to objective circumstances (which also included the independent class armies under the Stalinists), what they wanted in the second case had a far different effect, and far-reaching results.

And long before this, the Chinese Stalinists were conducting the most intense, hard-fought civil war, against monumental odds, even setting up soviets in the countryside. During these epic struggles from 1929 to 1937 had they ceased to be Stalinist? Did they entertain the notion of taking back the Trotskyist Oppositionists whom they had expelled, fingered, and harassed? No, they followed the Kremlin's line most faithfully on this crucial question, and they committed themselves deeply. This was not a



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mere ritual on their part, for then, as well as now, they were extremely intolerant of any leftist criticism of their line, Trotskyist or otherwise.

But they had done one thing, more or less independently of strictly Stalinist considerations, which affected them inexorably for 25 years. They themselves had unwittingly raised the question of power by forming *independent* class armies after the defeat of 1927. (The whole essence of the tragedy of 1927 was the failure to have an *independent party*. Now, with the party taking the shape of an army, it was independent with a vengeance.) But it was not the mass pressure as such which forced the CP to break with Chiang. It was Chiang's break with *them* and his drive to exterminate them. Their armies could only exist on the basis of revolutionary support from still other civilian armies of the poor. They had committed themselves to a civil war, which dictated by its own dynamics that they would have to end in utter annihilation or by taking power altogether.

Even at that, they might have actually ended in utter annihilation but for three other important considerations: (1) the logic of the permanent revolution, which prevented Chiang Kai-shek from carrying out his bourgeois-democratic program, and which enmeshed the Stalinists in its drive precisely because they *were armed* and subject to the above pressures; (2) the fact that Moscow's politics, translated into Chinese conditions after 1927, could not have, as we have shown, the same effects they had in Germany, Spain, France, etc.; (3) the pre-condition of everything — that after 25 years of revolution, counter-revolution, famine, war and pestilence, the great masses still pushed forward, carrying the Stalinists upon their shoulders.

Having taken state power on the unprecedented wave of peasant revolt, the Stalinists were compelled to call upon the working class, whom they at first hamstrung, in order to carry out the demands of their revolutionary peasant base. Or to put it theoretically: The democratic dictatorship of the peasantry could only exist as the dic-

tatorship of the proletariat, no matter how deformed. The Stalinists, by their inevitable and predictable response to the revolutionary demands of their peasant base (once they had the full field and full responsibility, i.e., state power), made clearer to the world, if not to themselves, the real historical class basis of their dictatorship.

Why Program Is Needed

So much for the revolution without a program. But can anyone seriously believe that this blind struggle can repeat its "success" on a world basis? True, the Chinese leadership arms Korea and Indo-China. But this flows from even the most conservative concepts of national defense. Do they, however, call upon the workers and peasants of India, for example—to say nothing of the United States—to prepare the socialist revolution? Do they, above all, explain to the workers and peasants of *China* that it is not possible to build socialism there without the aid of the *world* revolution? Certainly the Pabloites must know the answers to these questions. Certainly they must understand it is not "merely" the murder of the Trotskyists that prevents the Chinese Stalinist leaders from being genuine revolutionaries—that is, the kind of revolutionaries that history now requires.

It is not only Stalinist theory, such as it is, and Stalinist tradition that pull ideally upon the minds of the Chinese party. It is the material pull of 450 million hungry mouths which, under present conditions, the Chinese revolution alone cannot feed, which imperialist intervention makes still harder to feed, and which summons to the world revolution and its consequently still greater sacrifices may make quite impossible to feed. Even the fortuitous conjunction of all the conditions for "success" of the Chinese revolution of 1949 could not remotely solve these problems or provide leadership for the coming titanic struggle.

For this, a program of world revolution is needed, and before that, a *fight* for this program. Why a fight? Because there is already a new bureaucracy, which has an interest in main-

taining the status quo. If all the ties with Moscow were to be cut off tomorrow, the Chinese CP would still retain its own conservative incubus on top. Not only the Stalinist tradition in the abstract, but the concrete hold of the leadership on the rank and file must be fought, as it would have to be fought even in the *least* bureaucratized party we were trying to influence.

And when we consider that the demands of the world revolution not only conflict with the material interests of the bureaucracy, but require still greater sacrifices from the already bleeding Chinese workers and peasants themselves; when we consider this, in addition to all the rest, we must conclude that it is impossible for the Chinese leadership to fall accidentally into either the theory or the practice of world revolution; and we must conclude that it is fantastic even to dream of "fructifying" Mao's party, just as it was to have any illusions about Tito. Revolutionary work in the Chinese CP must be the secret, underground work of Trotskyists who are determined to build *their own party* out of the indubitably excellent material in the rank and file of the CP. The leisurely "propaganda group" approach of Pabloism to the CP is not only inadequate but fatuous and suicidal—that is, if a hypothetical Chinese Pabloism would have any Trotskyist criticism of Mao at all.

The Chinese revolution itself raises the alternatives point-blank. Either we live in the age of separate distinct national socialist revolutions, step-by-step conquests of power, each conquest conservatively defending itself without regard to the needs of the rest of the world proletariat; or we live in the age of interconnected and interdependent revolutions and revolutionary movements. Either the Russian degeneration and the non-Bolshevik leadership in China are patterns of the future development over a long historical period; or the one is "a horrible relapse," and the other a temporary conjuncture. Either there will be "centuries of degenerated workers' states," or there will be a new birth of mankind on the basis of revolution

in the advanced countries, particularly the United States. Pablo sees this in a way, but in a wishy-washy way. He fails to see that each of these alternatives *excludes* the other.

The colonial revolutions, including the great Chinese revolution, though indecisive on a world basis (and that is the only real basis today), are not any less important because of these considerations. The genuine socialization of China, or India and China combined, for that matter, cannot be accomplished apart from the socialization of the United States. But on the other hand, the impact of the colonial revolutions on the struggle in the "advanced" countries is incalculable.

Sharpen The Crisis

The colonial revolutions, in depriving modern imperialism of its indispensable supports at the very time of crisis, still further sharpen the crisis and bring on still bigger explosions. The *subjective aims* of the colonial struggle, however — peaceful enjoyment of the land and the free development of industry — are impossible without the destruction of world imperialism, that is, without the world revolution. And the parties of the colonial revolution must be educated in this spirit of world revolution or they will sink inevitably into narrow Stalinist nationalism or some variety of it. It is not by making a "mystique" of the coming world war, or by viewing it as a magic talisman, that the laws and strategy of the world revolution are to be learned. Anyone who, like Pablo, underestimates the initial power of the U.S. counter-revolution or fails to understand the absolute necessity of the American socialist revolution to the world revolution, is only playing at revolution, is unfit to speak of world strategy, and is falsely, even demagogically, invoking the name of internationalism to win our comrades in the colonial countries.

Pablo's false theory of the colonial revolution, and his false appeal to it, go hand-in-hand with his false theory of the long-drawn-out nature of the revolutionary epoch. The long-drawn-

The Djilas Case And the Tito Regime

by John G. Wright

out transition from feudalism to capitalism, which began in the fifteenth century, and in most countries is not even now complete, cannot be repeated in modern times by a similarly lengthy change-over from capitalism to socialism. The imposition of enforced Wall Street unity upon the world, the effects of uneven development and combined development, the proletarianization of even the most backward people and the penetration of modern material needs and aspirations among them, have all invested the modern revolution — that is, the socialist revolution — with a historic simultaneity that it had only partially achieved in the post-1917 world.

The world now resembles one great factory, whose different departments, making different parts of the common product, are manned by people of different nationalities — some of the departments being of a super-exploited, subterranean nature and for that reason all the more explosive, all the more likely to push the “upper,” more “advanced” sections into action. But it is the objective, absolute *interconnection* of all the departments, their common role of producers and consumers of the same product, which in the approaching crisis make the international strike-call ever more insistent, ever more appealing, even while it dictates that success depends upon the integration of the whole.

A romantic or impressionist understanding of this fact, this interrelationship, this imminence of world revolution, can lead to self-effacement, to illusions about Stalinism — in a word, to Pabloism. But a serious, professional, revolutionary understanding can lead only to the conviction that a world leadership, that is, a Trotskyist leadership, is the indispensable need of the working class.

The Chinese revolution, far from disproving this need, far from relieving us of the necessity of fighting for the hegemony of the Fourth International, has imposed upon us, in our forging of the world leadership, the additional, irrevocable duty of vindicating the heroic struggles of the Chinese masses, which otherwise would have been in vain.

THE CASE of Milovan Djilas, Tito's personal friend, formerly one of the top figures in Belgrade and once the acknowledged leading theoretician of the Yugoslav party, has attracted worldwide attention and comment. In a series of articles written from Oct. 11, 1953, to Jan. 7, 1954, for *Borba*, central newspaper of the Yugoslav party, and for the January issue of the magazine *New Thought* (*Nova Misao*), Djilas raised a whole number of theoretical and political issues. However, these pale into the background when compared with the theoretical and political issues posed by Tito himself at the emergency plenary sessions of the Yugoslav party's Central Committee which was convened on Jan. 16-17, 1954, to take up solely the Djilas case.

Djilas' views have received considerable notice. But Tito's views in this same connection merit by far the greater attention; and, moreover, they place Djilas' conceptions in correct focus. For this reason we think it fitting to discuss the Djilas case by starting with the official position as laid down by Tito.

At the January plenum of the Central Committee Tito presented two main—and mutually exclusive—propositions in the Djilas affair. In the first place, he said, it was simply a case of a single individual. Djilas' actions and opinions, said Tito, were Djilas' “own product—they represent his own opinions.” Secondly, the ac-

tions and opinions of this single individual, unless counteracted, would have the most disastrous consequences; they would lead to nothing less than the liquidation of the Yugoslav regime, within a single year, and without any internal struggle.

Tito was quite emphatic on this point. Here is how strongly he put it:

“For if we were to permit this [that is, the propagation of Djilas' views], within one year our socialist reality would not exist — it would not exist, I tell you, — and this, without even a bloody struggle.”

The official resolution adopted by the plenum of the Yugoslav Central Committee treated the same theme. It charged Djilas with having

“confused public opinion and seriously harmed not only the League of Communists but also the interests of the country.”

The resolution further stated that by his activities Djilas

“provided a political basis for the splitting up of the ideological and organizational unity of the League of Communists, and for its liquidation.”

These formulations are obviously much milder than Tito's own words, but the implications are identical.

New “Socialist Reality”?

Before dealing with Djilas' views, however important they may be, it is obviously in place to take up this

far more important question, raised by Tito and the emergency plenum—the question of how the views of a single individual, shared allegedly by no other prominent Yugoslav leader, could possibly lead to such far-reaching historical results as the speedy and bloodless overthrow of the Yugoslav “socialist reality.”

From the Marxist standpoint such a proposition is an absurdity. Even the shakiest of social regimes cannot be overthrown by the “opinions” and “conceptions” of isolated individuals, let alone those of a single person. Such overturns require the intervention of social forces, of classes. Tito and his colleagues, including Djilas, have for years maintained that a new “socialist reality” exists in Yugoslavia. If this has any meaning at all, it means that new social institutions, resting upon new productive relations, have come into existence in Yugoslavia — and not at all a mere new selection of individuals on the basis of commonly held opinions or conceptions. Such new institutions and productive relations cannot be destroyed otherwise than by force; “conceptions” alone are here quite powerless. This is what Marxism has always taught. Belgrade now affirms the opposite.

The resolution of the emergency plenum makes only a perfunctory attempt to explain the source from which Djilas’ views derive their miraculous destructive powers. This explanation consists of a brief reference to “comrade Djilas’ functions in the League of Communists.” The Kremlin theoreticians have always distinguished themselves by their individualistic fetishism with regard to leadership. It is from the leaders, above all the Leader-in-Chief, that all successes and blessings flow — that is the credo and cult of Stalinism. It was left for the Tитоites to go the Stalinists one better, locating miraculous powers not merely in “leaders” but, if you please, in the “functions” of given offices! This is not Marxism, but a caricature of a caricature.

Tito personally made a more serious attempt at an explanation. He ascribed the vast injurious power of

Djilas’ conceptions to the following three factors: (1) the prevailing moods in the country; (2) the instability of a certain section of the Yugoslav party; (3) the general conditions which prevail “during the phase of the peaceful revolutionary evolution.”

Tito affirmed that “there still are incredibly large remnants of all possible conceptions” in Yugoslavia. Now “remnants,” even “incredibly large” ones, in the minds of people cannot represent a serious danger to an existing “socialist reality.” These “remnants” may fume and rage all they please, but they are powerless to do anything. Psychologic moods—and even more so, “remnants” of these moods—weigh but as a feather against the power of social institutions and productive relations.

“Socialist reality” has advanced so far in Yugoslavia that it is possible to discuss not only the “withering away of the state” but also the withering away of the party as a long-range process, according to Tito—who added, by the way, that he was “the first to



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speak about the withering away of the party” in this long-range sense.

If “remnants” of psychologic moods are dangerous, it can only be because alien class forces are raising their heads in Yugoslavia. But this can only mean that Yugoslav “socialist reality” is not a reality at all, but a

delusion, if not a deliberate deception. Elsewhere in his speech Tito describes the process as a sequence of

“incredibly harmful consequences [that] started to unfold like a ball of melting snow rolling down the roof.”

In other words, Tito uses the term “remnants” as a euphemistic expression for something that is just the opposite of “remnant”—namely, the new surge of boldness and confidence among the counter-revolutionary forces, still powerful inside the country. He admitted as much when he said that

“within a very short lapse of time . . . reaction and all the wavering and unhealthy elements at home started to raise their head, to say nothing of reaction in the West. . . .”

Counter-revolution at home, aided and abetted by imperialism abroad—that is the real danger. But Tito preferred to skirt around it, to minimize it.

Situation in the Party

So much for the real situation in Yugoslavia as disclosed by the Djilas case. Let us now pass to the situation inside the Yugoslav party. Tito expressed complete confidence in the “enormous majority” of the party membership, but simultaneously warned sharply, not about a tiny minority, but about

“thousands upon thousands who would strengthen the ranks of the waverers and of various kinds of adventurers, and who could do immense harm.”

This is an astonishing admission. It is far more ominous than anything charged by Djilas. According to Tito, in the ranks of the victorious and ruling party there today exist “thousands upon thousands” of potential, if not actual, recruits for the counter-revolution. As of March of this year, the total party membership was officially given as 700,030. (Vice President Rankovich gives the number of party members dropped or expelled by the end of 1953 as 70,604, or roughly one tenth of the total membership.)

This admission is far graver than any of the charges levelled against

Djilas. It is indeed a dangerous situation. If anybody bears responsibility for such a danger, it is the Yugoslav leadership. Yet neither Tito nor the rest of the plenum proposed to do anything about it.

Worse yet, Tito tried to explain it away as a normal state of affairs consequent upon any and every victorious workers' revolution. Here we come to Tito's "general" and "objective" explanation of the situation. The gist of his explanation is this:

"During the phase of the peaceful revolutionary evolution, that is to say . . . when the situation becomes very difficult, and especially when things do not go along easily and as fast as some have reasoned and imagined they can go, then the weaklings slowly begin to raise hands, to throw the spear in the bush, or to seek to go faster, without asking whether it is possible to go faster at all. They look for all sorts of excuses, for all sorts of petty theories and philosophies, to condemn the slow development of the social regeneration. This is, concretely, the case of comrade Djilas."

The foregoing, on the face it, is nothing else than a description of moods prevailing among a certain section of the Yugoslav party. These moods have extended directly into the top leadership. But as Tito himself previously acknowledged, what is involved is by no means merely the isolated case of a Djilas. The description is true not alone of Djilas but of "thousands upon thousands" of other party members. It is also true of important layers of the Yugoslav population, including perhaps even layers of workers. Djilas' articles could not and did not create this situation. Djilas and his articles were simply a by-product of the critical domestic situation. The Titoite treatment of the Djilas case was intended to muffle this crisis rather than deal with it directly.

At the March 1954 session of the Yugoslav Central Committee, Vice President Rankovich, formerly head of the secret police, repeatedly attacked Djilas for causing "enormous harm to our country." But at the same time Rankovich disclosed that long before the articles of Djilas there had occurred "serious appearances of political disorientation in some of the

organizations of the Communist League."

Ironically enough Rankovich did not blame Djilas for this "political disorientation." He said that it had come as a result of "confusion" stemming from the policies adopted at the Sixth Congress of the Yugoslav CP in November 1952.

It was at this Congress that the Yugoslav party was converted into a "League" and fused with the so-called "Socialist Alliance." It was at this Congress that the theory of the withering away of the state and of the ultimate withering away of the party was promulgated. This brings us to the heart of Djilas' conceptions.

"Withering Away" Of State and Party

There is nothing complicated about them. They are the current ideas of the Tito regime drawn to their logical conclusion. The starting point of Djilas, as of Titoist thought generally, is the "socialist reality" now allegedly existing in Yugoslavia. This reality is unceasingly, even if slowly, evolving and changing, creating entirely new conditions, throwing up entirely new social forces, en route to the "withering away of the state."

All these absurdities and mockeries of Marxism flow not from anything in Yugoslav reality but from the blind Titoite adherence to Stalin's infamous theory of "building socialism in one country." One can read in *Pravda* this same sort of tripe about the Soviet "socialist reality" creating entirely new conditions, throwing up entirely new social forces (a "new" Soviet "intelligentsia," etc.)—plus the constant admonitions of the danger of "remnants" of bourgeois moods. All this is allegedly taking place en route to . . . communism. But there is one difference. The Stalinists place stress on the "strengthening" of the state, because of the "capitalist encirclement." The Titoites emphasize the alleged "withering away" of their state, because of their alleged successes in building "new democratic socialist relations" in Yugoslavia. Both proceed on the basis of the same

falsification of reality (that "socialism exists"—whether in the USSR or in Yugoslavia). The Titoites simply put a minus sign over the state where the Stalinists put a heavy plus sign.

Djilas simply dotted all the "i's" and crossed all the "t's" in Tito's version of Stalin's theory of socialism in one country. Djilas announced that since the withering away of the state was an immediate requirement, it therefore followed that the party must likewise immediately "wither away." Otherwise the party could only degenerate into a bureaucracy of the Stalinist type. Lenin's type of party was needed only for the revolution; after that, it must degenerate into Stalinism. In other words, this profound thinker locates the source of Stalinist degeneration in the most progressive feature of Bolshevism, its creation of the democratic-centralist party. This discovery has been made by every renegade from Marxism—and long before Djilas.

In his verbose, muddled articles, Djilas stated his central thesis with relative clarity as follows:

"We must learn to respect the opinions of others though they may appear to be foolish and conservative. We must also accustom ourselves to be in a minority even if we are right, without thinking that because of that socialism and the revolutionary achievements are doomed.

"The question arises whether the interests of a party, or a group or leaders, must always be identical with the people, with society — and when do they enter in conflict? During the revolution [in Russia and in Yugoslavia — J.G.W.] these interests in the main coincided. This is not so today. Today no party or group, not even the class itself, can be the exclusive expression of the objective needs of the whole society; it cannot assume the exclusive right to 'manage' the movement of the productive forces without stiffening and enslaving them, including the most important part in them, the men. . . .

"The demand of the time, particularly under socialism, is to weaken the monopoly of political movements on the life of society. There is no road but the road of more democracy, freer discussions, freer elections, more adherence to the law." (Djilas, "General and Particular." *Borba*, Dec. 20, 1953.)

It is noteworthy that Djilas, the latter-day champion of "democracy" as

a force that rises above history and above the classes, preaches it only "in general." Nowhere does he demand "more democracy," "freer discussions" or the "struggle of ideas" inside the Yugoslav party, which is run not on the Leninist principle of freest discussion and greatest democracy but along the Stalinist lines of "monolithism." Djilas demands "democracy" and the "struggle of ideas" only "in general." Never for the workers, never for the party. So far as the party is particularly concerned, his chief demand is not for its Leninist democratization, but for its liquidation, as an "outdated" instrument. His adversaries, from Tito down, have likewise remained silent on this score.

As we already know, it is Tito's claim that Djilas' views were Djilas' "own product—they represent his own opinions." From the foregoing this is clearly incorrect. In the same speech Tito admitted as much. Djilas, it turns out, did consult Tito. As Tito recalled:

"On one occasion during the autumn, he (Djilas asked me: 'How do you, Stari (Old Man), look upon my writings and what do you think of my articles?' I replied: 'To tell you the truth, there are certain things with which I do not agree, but mainly there are things which are good, and I believe that, as regards these other aspects, there is no reason why you should not write, so go on writing.' I told him this because the articles also contained views which we ourselves express in our own speeches and writings.' (Our emphasis.)

Djilas' Views No Secret

There is no mistaking the meaning of these words. Djilas' views coincided in the main with Tito's "own speeches and writings." In fact, toward the end of December, when most of Djilas' articles had already been written, he was elected President of the new Yugoslav Federal Assembly, only to be removed a few days later from this post as well as from all other high party and government posts held by him.

Moreover, Djilas' views, which apparently go beyond even what he has put down in writing, were never a secret to the inner ruling circles. As Tito himself said:

"Comrade Djilas has always had every opportunity to say whatever he wanted within our circle, and to say even more than he has written. We all knew him and we all discussed things together with him. And we were also making jokes, and one can say all kinds of things when one is joking." (Our emphasis.)

The meaning of these words is likewise plain enough. Djilas' political views, which led to his downfall, could not possibly have come as a surprise to Tito and the rest of the ruling tops, of whom Djilas has been a part for the last 17 years, and among whom he evidently has said "whatever he wanted" and "even more than he has written." In the course of these uninhibited inner-circle discussions, was Djilas ever called to order, or was he on the contrary encouraged? Tito does not say. He tries instead to wave the whole matter aside as if nothing more than intimacy and joking were involved.

Things came to a head when Djilas started to spell out in public his conviction that a Stalinist-type bureaucracy was in process of formation in Yugoslavia. He stated this quite openly in his 10,000-word article, "Anatomy of Morals," which appeared in the January issue of the magazine *New Thought*.

Tito himself did not decide until some time late in December that "comrade Djilas has gone too far." He then "asked that the articles be stopped immediately." Apparently Djilas went over Tito's head. He had his last article published "hurriedly" in the magazine. (This incidentally, he could not have done without the agreement of Veljko Vlahovich, editor of both *Borba* and *New Thought*, who since Dec. 20, 1953, published 13 of Djilas' articles in the course of 17 days and paid him 220,000 dinars—about \$7,500. After recanting publicly, Vlahovich was permitted to get off scot-free, and was later elected Chairman of the Committee on Education in the new Federal Council.)

Djilas' political position is a shameless capitulation to reformism. It is nothing more than a rehash of the views of Bernstein and Co. These renegades from Marxism applied their

revisionism to what they called the "democratic reality" of imperialism; Djilas has applied it to the alleged "socialist reality" of Yugoslavia. The Tito regime did not have the courage to denounce Djilas' revisionism as such, because they are cuddled too close to the Social Democrats and do not wish to offend them; and also, because such a characterization would strike too closely home, inasmuch as Djilas' line is precisely the line of the Yugoslav Sixth Congress drawn to its ultimate conclusion. So the official resolution of the Central Committee contented itself with declaring Djilas' line to be "basically contrary to the political line adopted at the Sixth Congress."

In April of this year, Djilas formally dropped his membership in the Yugoslav CP. But this does not constitute the termination of the Djilas case, which is basically a phase of the entire unfolding crisis of the Tito regime and party.

In June 1953, celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Yugoslav-Cominform split, Edward Kardelj, Djilas' rival as party theoretician and first Vice President of Yugoslavia, boasted that the Titoite cadre

"remained united all that time, and have succeeded in the midst of cruelest struggle to build new democratic socialist relations."

By the end of 1953 this boasted "unity" was proved an illusion. The Djilas case represents only the first breach, for the Titoite ranks are corroded by revisionism. In the unfolding crisis of the Tito regime, its adaptation to imperialism, most crassly expressed in Yugoslav foreign policy, is a central factor. But it is not the only factor. Highly important is the refusal of the Titoite leadership to break with the ideology of Stalinism, in particular with the Stalinist lie of building socialism in one country and with the Stalinist conception of the party.

All this will act to aggravate the crisis of the Tito regime and party, which has been so clearly revealed in the Djilas case. And that is the real meaning of this celebrated affair.

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