

political affairs

MAY 1959 • 35 CENTS

PHILIP HANCOCK

[27] The "Thirties" in American Culture

HERBERT APFELBERG

[41] The United States and Germany (Pt. II)

THEODORE DRAPER

[58] Communists and Their History

WILEY C. JOHNSON

[62] Draper and His History: A Rejoinder

THE STRUGGLE FOR A MASS LABOR PARTY IN THE U.S.

by William Z. Foster

[1-16]

THE PARTY AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

by Milton Rosen

[17-26]

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A Theoretical and Political Magazine of Scientific Socialism

Editor: HERBERT APTHEKER

The Struggle for a Mass Labor Party in the U.S.

By William Z. Foster

The American working class is notoriously weak politically. It has no mass political party, and its conservative leaders, many of them wealthy, are open advocates of the capitalist system. The trade unions are potentially very strong, however, counting all told some 18 million members. Traditionally, the unions have acted, and still do, as a sort of skeleton political organization of the workers. Consequently, there is very little real working-class political activity, and the workers have extremely few representatives in the national, state, and local governmental bodies. There are five radical parties in the country—Socialist Labor Party (dogmatic sectarian); the Socialist Party; the Trotskyites; the Independent-Socialist Party (a new attempt at a general socialist party); and the Communist Party. But they are all numerically weak; jointly, at most, they hardly reach 15,000 members. Thus, the Socialist Party, which attains a mass size in many countries, is only a tiny sect of not over 1200 members in the United

States. The Communist Party, which for many years was larger, several times over, than all the other Left parties put together, has lately been through a very severe crisis, with intense persecution from the government and a malignant development of revisionism; and yet it still has more than double the members of all the other Left parties combined. There are no doubt thousands of additional persons who consider themselves as Socialists or Communists, but do not have organizational ties at the present time. It is also true that the membership figures are not an accurate yardstick of the influence of the socialists and communists today—or in the past.

Monopoly capital rules the United States politically through the so-called two-party system. This system is made up of the Republican and Democratic parties, typical capitalist parties, both of which, although in somewhat different ways, are controlled by big capital. Their policies are very much alike. Historically, they have largely alternated in head-

ing the government. At present, the Republicans have been in office since 1952; and before that, for 20 years, the Democrat Roosevelt-Truman administrations were in power. The Republican Party is the favorite of the big bourgeoisie, but they also support and control the Democratic Party. The Democrats, for example, led the government during the two world wars, and also during the Korean War, and they have been generally depended upon to advance the imperialist program of big business. These parties pretend to represent the whole people and to stand above the class struggle.

In the November, 1958 national elections the Democrats won a striking victory. Their total membership in the Senate and the House jumped up from 284 to 347. The working class, as usual, voted almost exclusively for the two capitalist parties, principally the Democratic. The Democrats polled the votes of some 25 million workers, Negroes, small farmers, and other normally people's-front elements; whereas, the combined vote of the four Left-independent parties did not exceed 100,000 votes—the Communist Party, under government ban, was not on the ballot. The election vote was enormously one-sided with regard to the two-party system, and it graphically illustrates how serious a problem that system presents. It is the purpose of this article to indicate how the capitalist two-party system has grown, the struggle that has

been waged by the masses against it, and what ought to be done to it now in order to win the long fight for a mass independent workers' political party.

THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

The Republican Party was formed in 1854. Abraham Lincoln, its leader in the Civil War, heading a popular coalition, abolished Negro chattel slavery, broke the power of the Southern plantation owners, and carried through the second bourgeois revolution. Shortly after the war, however, the popular coalition feature largely disappeared, the workers especially going to the Democratic Party, and the militant capitalists taking full charge of the Republican Party with control of the entire United States.

At the present time, the Republican Party, a typical party of monopoly capital, is built upon, and primarily draws its financial, voting, and other strength, from the following forces: the chief owners and management of industry, the banks, public utilities, and the vast railroad systems; the richer farmers; the numerous upper middle class; the bulk of the leading strata of the huge army, navy and air force; the upper sections of the Protestant clergy; almost all the leading forces in the newspaper, radio, motion picture, television, and general publishing business; the top cadres of the universities and other higher insti-

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tutions of learning; also affiliated with the Republican Party is a sizeable minority of the more conservative trade-union leaders, and a large body of the more backward workers. The Party has a relatively weak following in the South, which is strongly Democratic. The Democratic Party was formed in 1800, by Thomas Jefferson. Originally mostly a party of small farmers, backwoodsmen, and workers, it fell under the control, through the years, of the Southern slave-holding interests. It was their party during the Civil War. It survived this terrific defeat, however, and eventually came to play a decisive national role again. Nevertheless, it was not until 25 years after the Civil War began that it was again able to elect a President of the United States.

Today, of the two major parties, the Democratic Party has much the fewer of the large capitalists. Its strength, first, is in the South, where ever since the Civil War period, it has tightly controlled a dozen states, the Solid South—the most reactionary part of the United States; this party also has the support (generally unofficial) of the large bulk of the labor movement, both leaders and rank-and-file; the great majority of the Negro people, most of whose voters are in the North; it has the (unofficial) support of the Catholic Church; a heavy backing generally of such large immigrant groups as the Irish, Poles, Italians, and Spanish-speaking peoples —

Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, etc.; it also controls the bulk of the Jewish population, which is mostly situated in the strongly strategic State of New York; it has always had a strong following among the poorer farmers; it controls the bulk of the big cities and heavy industrial centers—New York, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Boston, San Francisco, etc. Both parties have strong support among women, but it is questionable which is the greater. In recent years, generally, the Democratic Party has a considerably larger membership on the state voter registration rolls than the Republican, so the latter has to depend upon its strong control of the press and other means of communications to swing the masses in the elections. The Republican Party is the minority party in the two-party system, but it has much the larger financial support.

Then there are the "independent voters," who number many millions. They alternate between the parties, being swayed by the various issues and candidates. These voters decide most elections. American elections are chiefly struggles between the two parties to win these strategic votes. Great numbers of voters, dissuaded by the similarity of the two parties, do not vote at all—in the presidential election of 1952, for example, only 51% of the available votes were cast.

The two parties are animated with the spirit and interest of American

imperialism; and both, when they are in power, carry out its policies. This is strikingly manifest since the World War II period. Especially in foreign policy, the difference between the two parties is negligible. The Democrats, Truman and Acheson, carried out at least as reactionary a cold-war policy as the Republicans, Eisenhower and Dulles are now doing. The leadership of the many groups making up the Democratic Party is so generally in favor of the world-conquest line of big business, that it has historically made but little difference to big capital which of the parties is in power. For example, many leaders of the AFL-CIO, who have great influence in the Democratic Party, are notorious imperialistic saber-rattlers, and are not a whit behind the biggest capitalists in demanding larger armaments and more war-like policies by the government. Indeed, during the recent visit to the United States of Vice-Premier Mikoyan of the Soviet Union, the big labor leaders boycotted the visitor, with insults, whereas the capitalists generally met freely with him. Dulles heartily congratulated the labor men for their reactionary spirit. Notwithstanding the similarity in policy of the two parties, the class composition of the Democratic Party is much more proletarian, progressive, and peace-loving than the Republican Party. The autocratic leaders of both parties do not reflect the interests or ideas of the American masses.

Although on foreign policy the attitudes of the two parties are almost identical (their quibbles on the question being mostly around the matter of which party could carry out the imperialistic policies the better or cheaper), there are, however, some differences between their lines on domestic policies. As a rule, the Democratic Party takes a somewhat more liberal, or more pro-labor, position on various questions. This is particularly the case since the time of the Roosevelt Administration, 1933-1945. It will be recalled that President Roosevelt, a Democrat, pressed by the masses, liberalized many aspects of American life and policy. A typical example of the relatively more liberal attitude of the Democratic Party was to be seen during the recent national elections. At this time, the Republicans strongly advocated the so-called "right-to-work" laws (which are really right-to-scab laws), whereas the Democratic Party (under heavy labor pressure) took a sharply negative attitude towards these laws. The voters agreed with the Democrats. This issue was one of the main reasons why the Republicans were so badly defeated. This liberal-labor shade of the Democrats is to be found in various domestic questions. During the past generation the Democrats have written the vast bulk of such liberal and labor laws as were adopted in the United States. These laws were grossly inadequate, however, and in no way met the real

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needs of the workers. In times of crisis, when the employers, compelled to do so by the workers, have had to make some concessions, they have almost always done this through the Democratic Party.

The comparatively more liberal-labor attitude of the Democratic party, which is, however, thin, is the basic reason why the workers, over the years, have tended to support that party. They consider its policies more liberal and more beneficial to their general class interests than are those of the Republican Party. This is the real basis of the two-party system among the masses. On the other hand, often the parties take very similar positions even on labor matters; for example, when the infamous Taft-Hartley bill was passed a decade ago, severely affecting labor, large numbers of Democrats as well as Republicans in Congress voted for it, even though President Truman vetoed it. In the present Congress, there are two bills being considered that vitally affect the inner life of the trade unions, one presented by the Eisenhower administration, and the other by Senator Kennedy, a Democrat. Organized labor (but not the Left wing) is supporting the Kennedy Bill; nevertheless, so similar are the two bills, that about the only criticism the "progressive" union leader, Walter Reuther, had to make of the Republican bill was that it was slovenly written.

Although advocates of a third

party often denounce the two major parties as "tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum" and point to many common points in their programs, yet such an easy characterization does not accurately describe the record or the composition of the two parties. Masses of workers do not accept such an easy formula. Since the Roosevelt administration especially, they consider the Democratic Party as their party. Spokesmen for both parties speak of their respective parties as being coalition parties. On many issues the differences within each party are as wide as between the two parties. The American proletariat, however, which has no socialist ideology, has tended to accept the small concessions won through the Democratic Party as a reason for participating in the two-party system; that is one of the big penalties it pays for endorsing the capitalist system.

The Republican Party habitually makes strenuous efforts to appear, in its propaganda at least, as the defender of the interests of the working class, poor farmers, Negroes, etc.; but without much success, these masses generally giving their support to the Democrats. Both parties, however, have strong "Left" wings, which seek to lend a liberal-labor coloration, of the weak American variety, to the general election agitations. In making their participation in the old parties more effective, the trade unions and their allies build up elaborate educational and

general working organizations. In this respect, the AFL-CIO has had, for many years past, COPE and PAC, which are to be found in nearly all the major centers.

Particularly since the end of World War II, an important factor in the working of the two-party system is the strong pressure of the international socialist and democratic forces against various outrageous employer features of the American class struggle. The employers must take cognizance of this pressure because American imperialism, striving to win world domination, must make strong democratic pretenses in all countries, and consequently it must pay attention to the protests of peoples abroad against certain barbarous policies of American imperialism at home. This pressure has become very sharp, and it has had many good effects in the United States. Thus, for example, when in the early 1950's the United States was deeply plagued with "McCarthyism," and it appeared about to go fascist, criticism and protests poured in from all over the world, not only from the socialist countries but also from liberal and labor forces in the capitalist countries, allies or potential allies of the United States. This pressure was decisively important, helping in the defeat that was eventually administered to the McCarthyites. Similar restrictive effects have been exercised upon the Ku Klux Klan and like organizations.

But the most outstanding effects of the foreign democratic pressure has been in combatting the terrible abuses of the Negro people under the Jim-Crow system. If barbarous mob lynching of Negroes has not lately been practiced as often as before in the United States, the principal reason therefore has been the protests of civilized people throughout the world. American capitalism could not make any democratic pretenses in the world while openly perpetrating these barbarities. The same has been true of many other gross discriminations of the Jim-Crow system—in jobs, on trains, in schools, in dwellings, in buses, etc. The United States rulers do not want to abolish these profitable outrages outright, but they simply cannot face the indignation of the peoples of the world unless they find some way to take off their rough edges, and make them not so obvious. This is a basic reason why the Supreme Court has declared that the public schools must be open to Negroes as well as to whites. The foreign influence argument is constantly made both by Republicans and Democrats.

HISTORICAL EFFORTS TO BREAK AWAY FROM THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

Throughout the past two generations, or more, the advanced section of the workers and their political allies (Negroes, farmers, low-

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er middle class, etc.) have made very many efforts to free themselves from the imperialist shackles of the two-party system. They have condemned it ceaselessly and waged endless war against it. They have generally recognized the supreme disadvantage for workers of trying to function politically under the domination of the monopolists in the two-party system. This has meant that the amount of their political achievements has been telescoped, their ideology distorted, and their organization (economic as well as political) stunted. These "third-party" movements were fought for under slogans of sweeping economic reforms, of broad programs of nationalization of industry, of monetary reform, of world peace, and of socialism. From its inception as a practical force, about 75 years ago, the American Left has always realized, as one of its first requirements, the necessity for independent working-class political action, free from bourgeois control, and it has waged innumerable battles to this general end. The Left, however, usually underestimated the strong hold of the two-party system upon the masses. The fight against the two-party system has been one of the major aspects of the people's fight against monopoly domination.

The employers, mostly the monopolists, have fought stubbornly, and on the whole successfully, to preserve their two-party system. If the most conscious workers saw its

disadvantages, the employers, by the same token, recognized its advantages for themselves. They used many weapons in its defense; they placed legal obstacles against establishing third parties; they cut down the political representatives of such bodies; their gangsters failed to count third-party votes; they kept up an enormous propaganda against such parties in the press; and such political concessions as they had to make (usually won by the militancy of the Left) they passed out by way of the old parties, which tended to strengthen their hold on the workers. This latter fact cannot be ignored, when it is realized that during the course of its long historic struggle the workers have cut their weekly working hours from about 60 to some 40; built the trade unions from 50,000 members to about 18 millions; established the social security system, however inadequate; adopted many reforms of the terrible conditions of the Negro people under the Jim-Crow system; etc. Although won by the toiling masses, the credit for these reforms, in a legislative sense, went primarily to the old parties, especially the Democratic. Above all, the monopolists prize the two-party system as a major means for stifling the ever-recurring class conscious spirit of the workers.

The greatest aid to the monopolists, however, in maintaining the two-party system, has been the help of the conservative trade-union lead-

ers. Ever since the Gompers group formed the American Federation of Labor, in 1881, they have unswervingly followed essentially the political policy of "reward your friends and punish your enemies" in the two-party system. They have been the bitterest foes of every real attempt to establish independent working-class political action, down to this very day. Frank advocates of capitalism as the best system for the workers, they have ridden the wave of advancing American imperialism. The employers, in numerous ways, have always reciprocated for the loyal support of these leaders of the two-party system, and have fought with them against the Left to block working-class political action. For many years, having only a small labor movement, principally of skilled workers, these conservatives argued that organized labor, a minority, could never be elected with a party of its own. This untrue argument they have continued down to the present day, when, with the enormous growth and unification of the labor movement and the extension of its political allies, the situation is basically different than it was under Gompers. Today, the allied classes included under the slogan of the labor party represent a big majority of the American people.

During the long struggle against the two-party system, the workers built innumerable organizations, on a local scale, and national scale, to

work in the old parties. These ranged from general educational organizations to skeleton political parties. As we have seen earlier, they have generally failed to develop into parties. The big new-party efforts at independent political action have always taken place during periods of sharp class struggle, during or after economic crisis, or times of acute political struggle, when the two-party system failed the workers and it was imperative for them to embark upon vigorous mass action on their own.

From the earliest days, the organized workers tried to build a class political party; in 1828, 1866, and 1876, for example. But the first big attempt in this direction was the Populist movement of the 1880's-1890's. The People's Party was organized in 1892; it was composed principally of poor farmers of the Mid-West and South, including large numbers of Negroes. Many workers and some trade unionists participated, but the AFL leadership was against it. The party had an extensive program of monetary reform and government ownership, especially of the railroads and telegraph. It polled its biggest vote—1,523,979—in 1894, in the midst of a severe economic crisis; it elected many candidates, and passed various state agrarian reform laws. The People's Party died in the election of 1896, when it was steered back into the Democratic Party by William Jennings Bryan.

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The second great attempt to break from the two-party system was made by the Socialist Party, organized in 1900. It strived to build an independent party, separate from the old parties. It reached its height of development in the intense class struggle period of 1912-20. At this time, it had over 100,000 members, polled more than 900,000 votes for Debs, had two members in Congress, and held a large number of lesser positions. The Socialist Party was very strong in the trade unions, in 1912 polling one-third of the AFL convention delegates. It shrivelled to a sect after 1920, mostly because of its wrong policies in the war and towards the Russian Revolution. These errors, and others, caused it to lose its powerful Left-wing in a devastating split. In order to defeat the Socialist Party, as Lenin pointed out, a big diversion was organized in the Republican Party, which threatened to affect the two-party system from the Right. Theodore Roosevelt, who represented the United States Steel interests, organized the Progressive Party (Bull Moose), which polled 27 per cent of the total vote, carried several states, and caused the defeat of the Republican Party in the 1912 elections. The highly demagogic Progressive Party died, however, never putting up another national candidate after 1912. The 1912 election was won by the Democrat, Woodrow Wilson, with his system of reforms entitled "The New Free-

dom."

The greatest attack ever made upon the two-party system took place in the 1919-24 period. It was a political expression of the life and death struggle of the American labor movement after World War I. It took the form of the independent candidacy of Philip M. La Follette for President of the United States in 1924. The movement was endorsed generally by labor and farm organizations. For the first time in its history the AFL, under the heavy mass pressure, had to support an independent national ticket. The labor leaders made it clear, however, that by this action they were not implying that they favored a third party. The La Follette ticket polled 4,826,000 votes, some 17 per cent of the total cast. Undoubtedly, it was robbed of many votes by political chicanery. La Follette's program was largely defensive of the toilers' organizations and it had mostly a trade-union character. As soon as the election was over, the AFL leaders, in firm control, skillfully steered the whole movement back into the Democratic Party, where it was quickly dissolved. The Communist Party played a very important part in this great struggle, fighting resolutely for the establishment of a mass labor party.

In the latter 1930's, the workers also made a strong attempt to establish a mass independent party, as usual a labor party, made up of workers, Negroes, and farmers. This

was the Roosevelt period. President Roosevelt favored the formation of trade unions, but he gave no support to the building of a labor party, which would be a rival to the Democratic Party, of which he was the head. The AFL leaders, as usual, were like flint against it, and the heads of the newly formed Congress of Industrial Unions (CIO) were only half-hearted for it. The worker, who were extremely militant in these years, brought several million new members into the trade unions; they organized the trustified basic industries, and they formed the CIO. In a political sense, however, their principal achievements were limited to the foundation of an informal political educational organization with Labor's Non-Partisan League in the early years of CIO, which was continued by the United Mine Workers of America. Then the CIO established their Political Action Committee, which was similar to the Labor League for Political Education of the AFL; both of these were later combined, with the merger of the AFL-CIO, into the present Committee for Political Education (COPE) of the united AFL-CIO.

With effective leadership, the workers would readily have founded a great labor party. The only state where they actually succeeded in building a strong party was New York, where the American Labor Party was organized. This body lasted several years, and it polled

up to half a million votes. The Communist Party, fighting generally for a labor party, took a very active part in these developments, and was especially influential in the establishment of the Labor Party in New York State. Altogether, the Roosevelt period, with its many reforms, was one in which the two-party system made heavy inroads into the loyalties of the working class, capitalizing on the fighting spirit of the workers. An important split-off of the New York Labor Party is the Liberal Party. It is based principally upon the trade unions and liberals, and it also contains the main forces of the Socialist Party. The Liberal Party continues to get upwards of 250,000 votes, and puts up tickets on a statewide scale.

The latest mass attempt to set up an independent labor party was the formation of the Progressive Party in 1948. This party made peace its central platform, and it was an out-growth of the attempt of the American government to establish world domination by military aggression. The Communist Party actively supported its formation. The leaders of both the AFL and the CIO, however, were violently opposed to it. Consequently, it received but little organized trade-union support. It nominated Henry A. Wallace for President, and polled 1,158,000 votes. After that election, the Progressive Party declined, but carried through the 1952 election campaign, when Vincent Hallinan

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was the candidate in the presidential race. It soon after dissolved in most states, but continued in New York for a short while. President Truman, of the Democratic Party, adopting an extensive program of reform, successfully combatted the Progressive Party, as well as the States Rights Party (the Dixiecrat split in the South, which cost him five states); and he won the election. The Dixiecrats have since mainly returned to the Democratic Party.

The foregoing were the most important (but not the only) blows struck by the workers and their friends against the two-party system. Although these many independent movements were responsible for numerous reform laws being passed, they never succeeded in their objective of founding a mass party of labor and its allies. Most of the struggles in question were carried through essentially upon a people's front basis. For many years, the workers, farmers, and other democratic elements have tended to cooperate together politically—consequently, in 1935, the Communist International said that the labor party was the specific form of the people's front in the United States. Most of the above mass attempts at founding a great independent party, as we have seen, took place in periods of sharp class struggle, when the working class was on the march. We have indicated the general outlines of their program, their po-

litical results, and why they dissolved. The opening paragraphs of this article, describing the present political situation in the United States, give at least an indication of how strongly the two-party system is entrenched, and how weak, in actual existence, is the mass independent political organization of the working class.

THE TIDE BEGINS TO TURN

For many years, the monopolists have kept much of the political discontent and strength of the American working class locked within the two-party system. This condition is now evidently drawing to a close, although there are no prospects now for a third party in 1960. There is a gradual ripening of the workers for sharp political struggles, which could eventually break the two-party system. After many years of relatively full employment, there are now almost 5,000,000 unemployed, and the workers are in no mood to tolerate such conditions, which, under the influence of the economic crisis and automation, will grow worse. The workers are also alarmed and aroused at inflation, and are striving to fight against it. They are deeply stirred, too, at the growing attacks upon the trade unions. The Negro people, the most militant section of the American toiling masses, are enraged at the stubborn resistance of the reactionaries against the most

elementary reforms of the Jim-Crow system. The class collaboration, which the employers cultivated as part of their world conquest program—they had to have a docile working class—is now giving place to sharper anti-working class policies. The frustration of American imperialism and its world domination ambitions, is also tending to render more acute the general crisis of capitalism and the class struggle in the United States. World socialist pressure on American imperialism also affects this class struggle. All this is awakening a new militancy among the masses. This is why the Republicans were so heavily defeated in last fall's national elections; Eisenhower's prestige is tumbling, and it is generally expected that the 1960 presidential election will be a still sharper struggle. This growing militancy of the workers can well result in important steps forward towards the eventual formation of a labor party.

The deepening of the general crisis of the capitalist system, is presenting many problems to the workers, which they cannot possibly find answers for under the traditional two-party system. They will be compelled to move towards more militant forms of economic and political action. This will enable them to throw their real mass strength into the struggle, which they cannot do as long as they are tied politically under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. Besides the rising mili-

tancy of the workers, another factor of great importance is the increased interest and activity of the Left wing in doing political work inside of the two capitalist parties. From time immemorial, the bulk of the Left forces have demurred at working inside these parties. A reason for this is that under capitalist control the latter have furnished a fruitful route for labor betrayers to the capitalist fleshpots, at the expense of the working class.

Now, however, adopting protective measures against these deadly dangers, the workers are fast becoming convinced that they must put up a real fight in the old parties as the first step to more extensive independent political action. The Communist Party worked for many years, with a high degree of success, within the two-party system, together with the progressives in the labor movement as their allies. But due to splits in the labor movement, government persecution, and the inroads of revisionism, this work within the old parties has largely declined in recent years. The Communist Party, however, is now greatly widening its activities in this general direction, upon a much broader scale than ever. The Party must be prepared to work resolutely within the old parties, and to avoid needless and premature splits.

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bor in the Democratic (and Republican) Party. There must be a clear mass presentation of labor's demands to the American people, which is not now being done. There must be an intensification of labor's participation in the old parties, the Democratic Party especially. The workers must needs fight for labor and Negro representation on the election slates of the Democratic Party, notably in the primaries. Nowadays, with little opposition from the labor movement, the reactionaries monopolize the election slates. Organizing themselves far better than ever before, the workers need to mobilize their forces to support labor and progressive candidates, and defeat reactionaries. The workers must everywhere take a leading part in organizing this political work. This same principle applies to other labor party forces—Negroes, poor farmers, etc. The workers and their allies must, in short, build the skeleton of the labor party primarily within the ranks of the Democratic Party. Of course, something of all this has been done over the years by the conservative leadership of the trade unions. But in the usual manner of conservatives, they have achieved only a tiny fragment of the possible. Especially they did not want to disturb the leadership of the Democratic Party, and they did not do so. The general results we see, in the entrenched status of the two-party system today. It will be an altogether differ-

ent matter when labor, working everywhere with its progressive allies, takes up the work of actually laying foundations for the labor party inside the old parties.

The slogan for a labor party must be constantly brought forward in all work in the old parties and especially in the trade union and independent forms within the Democratic Party. This must not be done in such a manner as to create premature splits or to isolate progressives in the elections. This is so for a number of basic reasons. First: this slogan is the best and most familiar popularization of the Communist Party's main political line for a "people's anti-monopoly coalition," and it has been at the core of every fight of the workers for independent political action for generations past. Second: it is indispensable for the workers to look forward to the eventual formation of a labor party, as the most practical form of a party to fight for the immediate demands of themselves and their allies under American conditions. Third: the labor party slogan, energetically advocated, is a powerful means for combatting current illusions to the effect that the Democratic Party can or will serve for a labor party, or that the workers can "capture" this party and transform it, as such, into a labor party. Undoubtedly, the organized workers can win important influence in sections of the Democratic Party in the heavily industrial and certain agricultural states, as they

have done repeatedly, but it is idle to think that they can "capture" the party, as a whole, saturated as it is from one end to the other with reactionary forces.

The center of labor's political activities today should be around key issues, especially on the necessity of ousting the Dixiecrats from the Democratic Party, and of taking up the struggle for a real Civil Rights program for full and immediate integration of the Negro people into every phase of American life; for a mass campaign to register 5 million Negro voters before 1960 in the South, for their right to vote, to hold office and participate fully in the 1960 campaign. Other key issues at the center of our work are around the rights of labor, the economic questions, unemployment, civil liberties, and peace. Attention to political programs in the old parties, to platform and to candidates, is fundamental.

History teaches the elementary lesson that when the workers and the Negro people, eventually brought to a fighting mood by their urgent grievances, seek to enlist the Democratic Party in a serious struggle on behalf of their interests, they face a blank wall of resistance from the controllers of the party, both bourgeois and labor. This will compel them to launch their own party at an appropriate time. George Meany, President of the AFL-CIO, periodically threatens the employers in general, that if they don't concede

this or that demand, the workers may establish a labor party; but this vague threat is as far as he has ever gone with it up to now. Even now, the Southern Dixiecrats, in their efforts to defeat the Negro people's fight against segregation, are doing their utmost to paralyze the Democratic Party, by splitting it, by sabotaging it in the elections, and by stifling its program. One can easily imagine the desperate resistance of the capitalist reactionaries, who clutter up the party everywhere, once the workers and their allies in the Democratic Party, well organized and militant, set out to accomplish their ever more urgent demands. A failure to persist with the propaganda of the labor party in the Democratic Party would be a paralyzing error, one which would, in fact do, play into the hands of revisionists and other tools of the employers.

Now we come to the vital question of the independent role of the Communist Party in the class struggle, particularly with regard to the labor party. There are those who fear that to work earnestly in the old parties would injure the Communist Party, and sink it in opportunism. But this is an error. Properly carried out, this work should greatly strengthen the Party, both organizationally and ideologically. The main thing to prevent opportunism in the Party's electoral work is to keep the labor party slogan to the fore, and also not to

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forget an active propagation of socialism, although in its initial stages the labor party may not endorse socialism. The Communist Party has innumerable other class struggle issues besides the labor party, and it serves a vanguard role in each of them. Even though there were a labor party in existence, the Communist Party would still have an increasingly powerful electoral role to play with its own tickets, much as the British Communist Party has in relation to the Labor Party in that country. Our Party would especially have many important tasks to advance outside of the old capitalist parties. For example, it would have to propagate the labor party issue throughout the length and breadth of the trade-union movement, and this would be a world of work in itself. In its general labor party work, the Communist Party would seek to win the cooperation of other Left parties, in spite of their sectarianism and opportunism, for a joint fight to establish the labor party along the lines advocated herein. Generally, however, these parties do not agree to working in the old parties, but insist on isolating themselves from the broad masses of the workers by putting up separate general tickets indiscriminately, as in the case of the ISP during the recent election.

We must not forget the enormous role of the Communist Party, independently in building the labor party and helping it to function electorally.

The Party must put up independent candidates, jointly or alone, against those especially worthless elements on the Democratic or Republican tickets, and to bring forward its own program before the people. A fine example of Communist Party electoral work, which embodied many of the constructive points brought out above, was seen in the campaign led by Benjamin J. Davis in Harlem in last November's general elections. The Communist Party would seek to win the votes of radical workers who do not support the old parties, or workers who, in the course of the struggle, have broken off from them. Undoubtedly, in the building of the labor party in the United States, there will be many of such independent groups or parties developed. We must remember, however, that in this work we are not out to build another splinter party, which would only harm the movement; the labor party is aimed at winning a majority of the American people, and the working strategy must bear this fact in mind.

Our Party must especially unify the work outside with that on the inside of the old parties in the building of the labor party. Today, there is no unity whatever in this respect. The Left parties usually put up general tickets without regard to work or activities in the old parties. All independent tickets, however, whether of one party or more, must be placed in harmony with the strategy that is being followed by

labor in the Democratic Party elections. It must not be forgotten that the independent parties have waged almost a century of struggle for the establishment of a **mass party of labor**. Above all, it must also not be lost sight of that the building of the Communist Party is fundamental to the carrying out of every task in the class struggle, including the building of the labor party.

The long-continued two-party system has been a serious handicap to the development of the American labor movement. The **numerous** breakaway movements, described above, are eloquent proof that over

the years the workers have tried to free themselves of this pernicious system of employer control. It is conclusive proof that the **leaders of the unions and other labor party groupings**, who are such devotees of the two-party system, are very far from being faithful representatives of their rank and file. The creation of a strong labor party, which will eventually develop, will be of major importance, not only to the American working class, but to the labor movement of the world. Especially it will release new and powerful peace forces in the heartland of the war danger.

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The Party and the Labor Movement

A DISCUSSION ARTICLE

By Milton Rosen

In the past few years we have seen many areas of the world break away from world imperialism, and particularly U.S. imperialism. The colonial liberation movements are continuing at a fever pitch, as are various national liberation movements. To make matters worse for the American imperialists, West Germany, Japan, Great Britain, etc., are competing at an intense pitch with their American "friends." These factors, plus the increased Socialist exports to every corner of the world, have restricted U.S. economic development on a world scale.

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In order to maintain its rate of maximum profits—absolutely necessary in a developed capitalist system such as in the U.S.—the American ruling class is forced more and more to extract these profits from "their own" working class. The millions of unemployed, the millions of Negro people living under fearful conditions, the millions on the relief rolls, the millions on the short work-week, the millions of farmers being driven from their land, are the living proof that American capitalism has not solved its contradictions. Our armament budget is rising, and represents a tremendous factor in our economy.

And finally our continued support of fascism and reaction on a world scale is continued proof of the need of American imperialism to subjugate other countries in order to secure maximum profits.

The principal forms through which the U.S. ruling class is moving to secure maximum profits at home are automation, speed-up, and militarization. The ability of the American worker to produce is at a new high level. Man hours needed to produce a ton of steel in the first quarter of 1958 were 10.3 hours. In the third quarter of the same year only 9.1 hours were required. The October 1958 issue of *Fortune Magazine* stated: "The big news of the past quarter was not the recovery in output; that was assured. What was really sensational was the sudden spurt of productivity output per man hour." The October 1958 edition of *Economic Trends*, AFL-CIO economic committee publication, indicates a rise of 9 per cent in worker productivity from April through October of '58. *The Worker* (Oct. 19, 1958) presents a ten-year trend of increased worker productivity. Durable-goods increase from '48 to '58 was 38 per cent. In '48 it required 6,907,000 workers in '58 it required

6,531,000 to turn out these goods. Five per cent fewer workers produced 38 per cent more goods. The figures are endless. The results are always the same. New automatic equipment, fewer jobs. Fewer hours worked per week, but no 40-hour pay; stock market rising, profits tremendous.

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On the job itself the companies grow bolder. Secure with a friendly golf club in Washington; secure with millions of workers unemployed; secure with the knowledge that the labor leaders are philosophically in tune with saving the system, with increased war production, and anti-Communism; secure with a legislature grinding out unfavorable labor legislation, and with a McClellan committee on the march; secure with the knowledge that ten years of McCarthyism have driven great numbers of militants, Socialists, Communists, out of industry—the monopolies gnaw away at workers' rights on the job.

Speed-up comes in many forms: additional physical work, getting "overhead workers" such as maintenance men to do general work, dishing out penalties more easily, using threats; if you don't turn out more, we can't bid successfully on that new job;—if we don't get the order you'll be laid off; you must "cooperate" if you want to keep working; if we can't compete, we'll leave the area. The blackmail reservoir of the companies is limitless, their deceit end-

less. Moral considerations are nonexistent. The more difficult the worker's lot becomes, the more bestial become the practices of the monopolies. The more production the men turn out, the more the companies demand. In one large auto plant in the Buffalo area running at a breakneck pace, the accident rate is mounting. But the company calls in the bargaining committee and says: "Tell the men if they up their production so many more motors a day, we won't lay off."

More and more it becomes obvious to the workers that they are regarded as little more than animals, that they themselves are the ciphers and faceless men usually described as workers in Socialist states. The more the screw is tightened and workers made the scapegoats of the present depression, the more the workers seek for solutions. Their antagonism is mounting. What appears to be passivity is more often a feeling of no-place-to-go. Cynicism is often the cover up for frustration. Make no mistake about it: the class struggle in our country is growing sharper. American workers will not be patsies, will not roll over and play dead for their masters, and will not wait endlessly for leadership from their trade-union officials.

There is a tremendous vacuum developing in the trade-union movement today. The Rarick movement in steel brought this home. I do not think that we in the Party have fully realized the importance and scope of

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those elections in the steel union. The important thing is not so much what Rarick is or is not, or what he should or should not have done. Rather, what is important is the disgust the men felt in connection with their economic and job situation, and the contempt they had for the Union leadership. Thus, when the door was opened a crack they poured through it. Prior to the election we did not estimate a tremendous, certainly not a winning Rarick vote. The men seemed "quiet enough." There was no spectacular campaign, just the burning cynicism of the steel workers who want—what? A democratic Union and a decent job. The steel workers are not so different from other workers. The Rarick elections were one of the most important events in the labor movement since the war. Maybe even more important than the merger itself. A more comprehensive analysis of the Rarick Dues Protest Movement is still in order.

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Our Party has to begin to fill this vacuum in the trade-union movement. But it is not sufficient for us merely to echo the demands of the trade-union leaders, or just to fight for the positive proposals that emanate from the labor hierarchy. The best union in the U.S. today, free of all corruption and taint, filled only with an attitude of "what can we do to help our members," sincere and beautiful to the core, would not and could not develop a proper

outlook for the workers today and tomorrow. Our Party can and must do that. What we do, will uplift the entire trade-union movement.

Our program must deal with many questions in addition to the shorter work-week. Even on the question of the shorter work-week, we have to see that unless a militant struggle develops in the shops around speed-up, the ability to win the shorter work-week will be hamstrung. So long as the trade-union leadership subscribes to armaments as a cure for unemployment, the movement for a short work-week will be limited. For how can one argue that we must work to arm ourselves for the Cold War and at the same time fight militantly for a short work week? It was only a year ago that Walter Reuther in an administrative letter, said:

We believe that such a joint study committee can do the preliminary work necessary to the introduction of a shorter work-week when the situation in the world requires the diversion of less of our economic resources to defend freedom and to make peace secure. The Russian Sputniks have dramatized and brought about a clearer understanding of the new dimensions of the challenge that freedom faces. . . . We have lost ground not because the Russians are better but rather because we have not been trying, because we have not been fully mobilizing our economic and productive power.

On the eve of the April 8, AFL-CIO "Put America Back to Work"

conference in Washington, D. C. (where the 35-hour week was expected to be the main topic), Reuther had Senator Kennedy, one of labor's "friends," speak at a District 9 Educational Conference in New York City. Kennedy said: "I would prefer that we take other steps. We are in a production war with the Soviet Union, and we need all the production we can get." He also said flatly, "I'm not in favor of a shorter work-week at this time" as a solution to unemployment. Didn't Reuther know he was going to say this? Perhaps Reuther, in view of his present apparent support of the short work-week, felt he could not revert to his '58 Sputnik statements, and so brought Kennedy in? Obviously both men are mainly concerned about production—with 5,000,000 laid off! What hypocrisy! In spite of the attempt to stifle rank and file participation at the April 8 Conference by a system of limited credentials and tight controls, 2,500 more than the planned 5,000 turned out—many without any credentials, while many areas came entirely on their own initiative. And at this meeting, why did Reuther and Meany have Lyndon Johnson as the speaker? Why not Senator McNamara, author of the bill for a shorter work-week?

At the very same time UAW District 9 leader, Gerber, in the process of subduing a militant Buffalo local, said:

I intend to work hard and stabilizing affairs of the local, and to attract gov-

ernment contracts to Bell Aircraft. . . . This is one of the finest aircraft missile facilities in the entire country. It is criminal that, in this time of a missile race with Russia, the plant is idle. . . . This is the kind of waste our country can't afford. I will do my utmost to bring this problem to the attention of people who are responsible for allocating government contracts.

As long as the trade-union leadership views military spending as the main cure for unemployment, the struggle for the shorter work-week and the fight for peace will be seriously limited.

On the eve of steel-contract negotiations, President McDonald has become concerned about the low profits of the industry. He has all kinds of schemes for shortening the work-week except 35-40, 32-40 or other concrete proposals. He suddenly realizes that the Union's demands for a raise and benefits would amount to a whole \$1.00 per hour! He now begins to question the demands of his own union. The cold water brigade is on. Wriggling out of the situation is on the order of the day for him. He can always refer back to the auto settlement which got very little for the workers. He can say "Reuther didn't get anything more when he bargained, what do you expect of me?"

Further, to make sure that Reuther's luncheon with Mikoyan could not be interpreted as weakness, or God forbid, East-West trade as a method of reducing unemployment,

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the AFL-CIO reprinted from the *New Leader* a vicious anti-Soviet article, "U.S. Labor vs. Mikoyan," by John Herling and sent it along with its *Economic Notes* mailing.

Another great weakness in the fight for the shorter work-week is the abandonment of the three principles adopted at the AFL-CIO merger: organization of the South, independent political action, and 30-40 as the leading slogan.

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In addition to the failures of the leadership, the working class itself is today saddled with a series of concepts in regard to collective bargaining which limits its ability to win decisive changes. What is necessary now is a new concept: that the workers have the right to negotiate their own rate and amount of production. This concept will break down that omnipotent portion of the contract known as "management prerogatives." The companies today have the sole right to determine production schedules so long as these don't constitute a safety hazard, or kill you. Presently auto workers are tied to a theory that because they got a nickel raise, the company has the right to demand increased production. Steel workers are tied to a system of vicious incentives and tonnage production. Make more for the master, and there will be a few more crumbs in your envelope. The term "hungry" is a trademark in steel for the worker who is eager.

In many other industries the con-

cept of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay exists. Here the company can use all its initiative, constantly forcing production of the individual worker up and up. The devices are many. One typical way is put the job-killer on a job that a "slow" worker is doing. The job-killer will do as much as two or three times the work. The company puts the "slow" man back and says: "Job-killer put out so many pieces, so can you." If the "slow" worker resists and says, "I'm doing my best," the union is usually brought in. The company then pleads poverty, can't compete, it's not fair to the other workers, will not get new orders, etc. **The union then will take the "slow" worker aside, and say, "Give them a few more to quiet them down."** "Slow" worker sees the handwriting on the wall and ups production, not a little, but to the level of job-killer. The company then moves the job-killer to another operation manned by a "slow" worker. Foremen and personnel directors of modern big business are well trained and armed with devices for speeding-up workers.

The workers must demand the right to negotiate their rate of production: In auto, so many men at so many hours to make a certain number of motors; in steel, so many man-hours to make a ton of steel. This concept of workers' determining their own production rate is now on the order of the day. This slogan will help to raise the class consciousness

of the workers. It will open their eyes to the possibilities of economic planning. It will further expose the true class role of the bosses. It will sharpen the struggle between worker and boss. The concept of planning and fighting for the right to determine their own rate of production will bring the workers another step closer to Socialist consciousness. Under capitalism, determining your production rate takes on the aspect of self-protection. Under Socialism it takes on the aspect of self-improvement. For under Socialism when new equipment and techniques are introduced, it is not only to increase production, but also to lessen physical labor and provide more leisure for study, sports, family life, etc.

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On the whole question of speed-up, during these past ten years the trade-union leaders have simply capitulated. Although the *Industrial Union Digest*, *IUD Bulletin*, *Economic Trends*, etc., are full of pertinent information that speed-up is tremendous and deadly, no program can be found in the articles. In life, when wildcats take place they are usually around the question of speed-up. Thousands of grievances flowing from speed-up remain unsolved and unanswered, often dumped and buried by the union leaders. When a militant local or unit tries to move on these questions, often with some limited success, we see the Internationals move in and take over. Hundreds of strike sit-

uations are aborted and dissipated by the Internationals each year around these questions. As one local Union President said recently: "What can you do? The minute you step out of line they jump in and knock you down. Better to do as they say." Apathy often develops amongst the workers as a result. A typical expression is, "You can't fight the Union and the company too."

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Why is most of the Union leadership like this? I think we have to be clear that the overwhelming majority of the trade-union leadership has adopted the ideology of the American ruling class. Most of the trade-union leadership views the capitalist system as the best system, as that system which is best for their own individual interests. Therefore they become champions of the capitalist system. Very often we analyze and review the trends within the trade-union leadership. These trends and differences have to be viewed also as expressions of trends within the ruling class itself. But further we must see the differences within the trade-union leadership based upon their objective relations to the workers. A Reuther, of course, will react very differently to unemployment than a Hoffa. Hundreds of thousands of auto workers are unemployed; relatively little unemployment exists amongst teamsters. Reuther must react to the tremendous pressure from his rank and file, and make gestures, and even

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concessions. On the other hand a that particular arm of GM which Hoffa can dismiss the need for a directly victimizes the buyer with short work-week. exorbitant interest rates, etc.

We also must see the differences and contradictions between the class and its leadership. We have to view the trends and movements within the class as a whole, not just view the trends amongst the leaders. The fundamental role that most of the trade-union hierarchy plays today is to help preserve the capitalist system for the monopolists. The fundamental contradiction between the labor leadership and sections of the ruling class is how best to accomplish this. These contradictions flow from the different positions that each assumes toward the American workers. Can a McDonald, making \$50,000 a year, have a class outlook? Can a labor leader making \$25,000 a year have a class outlook? In the past ten years the trade unions have tended to become institutionalized—a sort of administrative apparatus, a service organization. Huge multimillion dollar treasuries have been built up, with these funds being invested in the capitalist system. Surely a union with thirty to forty millions invested in big business cannot maintain a class outlook. The UAW for example had \$51,958.18 invested in a health institute in 1957. In 1958, because of a decrease in income, this service was eliminated. But the union continued to hold \$1,972,361 in G.M.A.C. debenture bonds. G.M.A.C. is the collection and credit department of General Motors,

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The strike as a supreme method of class struggle has been greatly diluted by the labor leaders. In this past period the concept of the "script" has come into being. Now *U.S. News and World Report*, prior to any big contract negotiations can pretty well tell you what's going to happen, why, and even give you the dialogue. The way it works is something like this: Company and International Leaders get together. Company says, "This is what you're going to get." Union leader: "How can I sell that to the men? Let's fix it up this way or that way. You start lower and come up a bit," and so on. The six-week strike in steel is becoming a pattern. It's a good way to reduce inventory. Instead of laying off tens of thousands and paying unemployment benefits, not to mention creating doubts about the system—let the men be on strike, let the onus be on them and their Union. A. H. Raskin in the *N. Y. Times*, March 15, 1959, says:

In the steel mills a new sense of fatalism seems to animate both sides. The industry's capacity has become so great that it can produce all the steel the country is likely to use this year in nine or ten months. This feeling that men and machines were foredoomed to be idle part of the year, whether because of strikes or lack of orders, was a major factor in the old Lewis custom of

calling annual coal strikes. He maintained that the miners never could expect to work more than 200 days a year anyway.

That's more and more becoming the union's and the company's answer to unemployment. The crazy patchwork quilt of strikes that developed in auto last year around local contracts after the national negotiations enabled the industry to make a big dent in the 1,000,000 car inventories that had been built up prior to the contract negotiations. The local strikes were weakened to the point of no return by a national agreement that capitulated on most important questions. Even under these undesirable conditions, some Locals were able to win minor concessions on safety conditions, inequities in some cases, and speeding up negotiations on long standing grievances. The strikes proved one thing, however: the workers were ready to fight the companies then for a short work-week. If a worker would stay out for weeks on local grievances, it stands to reason he could have been fighting for all the marbles.

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Most of the trade union leadership has assumed the mantle of the best fighter against Communism. They deride the worker's conditions in the Soviet Union—he's a slave, he's poor, he's hungry, he's cold, he's speeded up, etc. Hundreds of Americans have come back from the Soviet

Union recently and told us things to the contrary. These "class" leaders won't even go, but they know all. But where are the workers who are hungry, cold, etc.? Right here. The Soviet Union has no 5,000,000 unemployed. The Soviet Union has no bread lines. The workers there are not subjected to the viciousness of an oppressor system. The workers there receive the best of what the system presently can put forward. With millions of people becoming destitute in America and more to follow, what has Reuther to say? At the Educational Conference in New York City on March 21, he uttered many platitudes about civil rights and the need for an end to poverty, hunger, etc., and concluded: "The free American labor movement has done more in one week to fight Communism where it counts than all the fat cats of the NAM have done in their entire lives." That's the thanks Dulles and Co. get from Walter.

Of course the UAW, Steel and many other Internationals, piously concerned with civil rights, do not have a Negro on their executive boards! The U.S. labor leaders' complete identity with the ideology of the ruling class makes it very difficult for the working class to move ahead and to develop perspectives. We have to give direction to the class, not the leaders. If the leaders will not do the bidding of their class, then they will be swept aside. There are convulsions taking place, not

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amongst the Soviet workers, but amongst American workers. If Reuther should have to run in a general referendum election such as the steel workers have, he would face the same type of opposition that McDonald faced in Rarick, and with the same results. The Hoffas and their ilk hold forth by crude strength, and cunningly use the obvious flaws of their competitors in the labor movement. Hoffa, with all his present success, has found time recently to state his opposition to the short work-week. Many workers respond to Hoffa's "frankness,"—well, they say, anyway, he isn't trying to fool anybody like Reuther, Meany, etc.

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We have to raise the whole concept of national planning that will come with Socialism and end unemployment forever. Meanwhile we should raise now the whole question of nationalization of basic industries. We must raise the concept of limiting profits. We must advance the slogan: "*Take the profits out of armaments.*" This may be a negative slogan, but it is one which can be used to expose the bosses. People will respond to the concept that if big business is so patriotic, why must it make huge profits on armaments? We must continually expose and denounce the false concept that armaments make jobs. The fact is that civilian production creates many more secondary jobs than do armaments. This is apart from the complete waste. We should develop

these more advanced questions into a legislative program as a counter-offensive to the legislative attacks being leveled against the working class.

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The absence of Socialist consciousness and of the concept of Socialism is one of the biggest weaknesses in the labor movement today. More and more we must bring the whole question of Socialism into the trade-union movement. This is going to be our most potent weapon in the coming years. This is one of our most decisive functions! We cannot present Socialism in the two line form that we often do presently. We cannot rest solely on the accomplishments of Socialism in other countries, important and vital as that may be. We must begin to describe what Socialism will mean to the workers here, how it will affect their life here, the benefits, the advantages, the magnificent life that it will create. We must develop the facts and figures that give life to this premise, just as we develop facts and figures to prove other points. American workers are realizing more and more that this system cannot lastingly do the job. They are willing to discuss Socialism based on need and merit. The labor leaders' claim: "Don't worry, everything will be OK," is obliterated by life itself. People are worried and need more than the outlook given to them by the unions. We have to win acceptance for our Party, not only on

our ability to advance every-day activities, but also to point out next steps and final solutions.

In order to help the workers move on to a more advanced stage, a Left must be built within the trade-union movement. We must develop now the forms and methods of how and under what conditions this Left is to be created—what is the role of the Left trade unions, of the rank and file caucuses? On what basis shall this Left be organized, around what issues, and in which unions should we begin? These questions, and the question of how we should work as Communists in industry should be dealt with in additional articles.

There are many advanced forces within the working class with whom we can unite in the struggle against monopoly—the more positive Rarick groups, the thousands of workers who in the past had ties with the Left, the thousands of new militants who are disgusted with the situation within the trade unions, the thousands of workers in Packinghouse and other more advanced unions, the Left trade unions, Mine-Mill, UE, Longshore, the Negro caucuses which represent the libera-

tion movement in the trade unions.

Let us view unity not as unity for the sake of unity, but for the sake of action. Let's not wake up one morning with a big movement raging in the labor movement, and from the outside have to evaluate, analyze and pinpoint. Let's help to organize it, and develop it around the fundamental questions that plague the workers today. Let's not give up our right to criticize. The ruling class and its organs feel free to raise questions concerning the labor movement. They do it from the point of view of destroying the movement. Our role should not be one of criticism for the sake of criticism, but always within the context of advancing a positive alternate program.

Our Party has too much to offer to fall into the trap of being just an echo or an attacker. Our Party will find its way back into the labor movement as a potent force based on a positive program. We will do it based on our relations with the American workers, not with the trade-union leaders. Our influence on the leaders will be determined by the extent to which we can develop our ties with the workers on the issues and on Socialism.

By Phill

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The "Thirties" in American Culture

By Phillip Bonosky

The Thirties have taken their place as one of those controversial, haunting periods in American history, like the Reconstruction era, for **example, whose living significance** cannot be exorcized by no matter what mountain of books are written, or prayers or anathemas pronounced over the ever-dead and yet ever-resurrected body.

There is every reason in the world why official reaction should want the Thirties to be forgotten as if they never existed. For that period remains a water-shed in the American democratic tradition. It is a period which will continue to serve both the present and the future as a reminder and as an example of how an aroused people, led and spurred on by the working-class, can change the entire complexion of the culture of a nation.

The effort at the physical isolation of the Party of Marxism is not enough. It is necessary to misrepresent, and burn out of the consciousness of the American people, and first of all the artists and intellectuals, the fact that the makings of a people's culture once did exist in the United States and was inspired, to a large degree, by the **working class**, often led, and largely influenced by the Communist Party. Literally hordes of "scholars," fi-

nanced by all sorts of Foundations subsidized by Big Business—not to mention the "regular" channels of information — were assigned the ignominious chore of casting into shadow or covering with slander a period certainly one of the finest in American cultural history.

It was all the more urgent to create a fraudulent version of what actually characterized the period. It was not only that people starved, or that farmers lost their land. This had happened in America before. Something different, and far more significant had been added this time.

For what was most frightening about this period, was that the American people accepted, all over this land—the ore-workers on the Mesabi range and share-croppers in the fields of Alabama—the leadership of those social pariahs, only yesterday pictured with beard and bomb, known as the Bolsheviks, godless and church-burning, about to institute universal rape in place of marriage, and other frightful and unspeakable violations of middle-class morality, down to and including the nationalization of tooth-brushes and baby carriages.

Much of the world has carried out the logic in its own way of the American Thirties. Vast areas of the rest of the world are seeking for

exits from imperialist imprisonment, with the U.S. imperialists as their main jailkeepers. And of all the things they are told, the one overriding lesson that they are read is that no working-class culture *can exist*, or should exist, or can truly express the national spirit. Never. Nowhere.

Least of all in the United States.

COMMUNIST ACTIVITY

This period saw ordinary workers take over the plants and factories of the land, and in that action, like a great foreshadowing, proclaim that the factories indeed belonged to those who worked in them. Farmers who bid a single penny to buy back a farm up on the auction block for non-payment of tax or mortgage, were saying, in that act, that the land belonged to those who worked it. This period saw the unemployed march into the capitols of more than one state and take over the chambers from which, as in Harrisburg, the legislators had precipitately fled only moments before; and in that taking-over proclaimed the fact that the government belonged to the people.

This period, for the first time in American history, saw the fundamental placing of the Negro and Jewish questions, which brought them out of the murky realm of private and personal ethics to their real roots in a class society. This period saw men and women chal-

lenge the accepted version of the relationship between the state and the people, and threatened to close the gap, and in closing it, to change the nature of that relationship. And this period saw a dramatic change in every aspect of culture—its most characteristic feature being the discovery of the organic relationship between the intellectual and the people—the workers, first of all—and the broadest acceptance of both the theory that explained and encouraged this and the Party that helped bring it about as a living truth.

In fact, it was the Communists, who, in effect, preserved the honor, the spiritual integrity, the self-respect of all, and the intellectuals not least of all, in that terrible period when mass suffering, mass confusion and despair swept over the land. By offering both a program and a vision, they raised a hope for eventual human emancipation at the same time that they led the way to practical victories which restored the American people's faith in itself.

Too much to claim? Latter-day revisionism does not make such a claim, but in fact maintains the opposite, seeing the period one-sidedly and needing to justify present-day desertions and lack of intellectual and revolutionary fibre by projecting into the past their contemporary cowardice and lackeyism. But the fact is that official re-

visionism is quite of another opinion. Judged by the standard of what

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could have been, or should have been, before one could truly speak of a full people's culture, the Thirties no doubt fell short. Judged, however, by the standards of today, of almost universal cultural corruption, and domination by bourgeois concepts, the Thirties continue to grow and grow in significance and vitality. Efforts to dispose of the period range all the way from utter silence to outright slander—this last closely following the version of history put out by the FBI.

ANOTHER VIEWPOINT

Between these extremes lies an area in which honest historians and critics, often, it is true, re-enacting the parable of the six blind men and the elephant, make sincere attempts nevertheless to probe into the meaning of the period and estimate it with as much objectivity as they can muster.

Walter E. Rideout's *The Radical Novel in the United States* (Harvard Univ. Press, \$6) is one such book. The author explains his reason for writing such a book by noting the vast discrepancy that exists in the estimations of this period—particularly of the novels, the "proletarian novels"—that were then produced. "The difference in estimated magnitude is so immense . . . that we well might wonder why the stargazers of the thirties miscalculated so fantastically—or could it be that those of our own time, for one reason or another, made

some slight error? Clearly here is a question that cannot be answered until, like good astronomers, we view the evidence. . . ."

Mr. Rideout does not come to bury the Marxists in the same way as do the others. He comes, in fact, to bury them with praise, with full honors—or at least to praise the proletarian novels they produced, and to regret, even to mourn, their passing—or, as he claims, their assassination by the Communist Party.

Mr. Rideout has a thesis whose main point is that the novel of the Thirties was a continuation of that native radical growth which went far back in American history, and should have flowered more abundantly except for the fact that a political party, namely the Communist Party, at the behest of and in the service of a foreign country, ordered its execution, thus proving that the Communist Party could no longer serve as the rallying center around which a new and necessary radical literature could develop; that membership of writers in the CP spelled their death, and that, in fact, Marxism's hope—and the rebirth of the radical novel—depended upon an absolute divorce of Marxism from the Communist Party!

Mr. Rideout says:

Wherever one turns, then, for an explanation of the decline in the proletarian novel, one is ultimately brought back face to face with the

political reversal contained in the People's Front. The maneuver, it should be emphasized, was an astute one from the standpoint of the Party. It brought Communism, if not Marxism (!), as closely to the mainstream of American development as Socialism had been brought in the years just before World War I; and liberals must acknowledge that the new Party line gave impetus to the movement for many much-needed reforms, even if at the moment more vulnerable to attack from the Right. In the course of that maneuver, however, the proletarian novel was dumped without ceremony by the roadside—though it refused quite to die in the ditch—and with it went very probably the last opportunity for a radical fiction of any size to grow in the United States out of Marxist doctrine.

As a result of this "maneuver"—this historic change in the tactics of the world Communist movement from "class-against-class" to united fronts wherever democracy was threatened by fascism, whose "mere" result was the defeat of mankind's worst enemy, German fascism—Rideout declares that writers were suddenly instructed that "Literature must not be declared a class weapon; but simply a weapon; and the weapon must be used, not against capitalism, the proletariat's oppressor, but against Fascism, the oppressor of the 'people.' In short, the *specific* Marxist viewpoint must largely disappear. . . ."

What was historically a most brilliant tactic of the international

working-class movement, which succeeded in keeping its enemies not only disunited but partially in alliance with itself, is here reduced by Mr. Rideout into a "maneuver" to kill off the American proletarian novel!

Passages stringing together objectively wholly inconsistent ideas are not rare in the official and unofficial reasoning of anti-Communism. Unfortunately, there are not a few of these in Mr. Rideout's book. For instance, the Communist Party did not "gleefully" consign anybody, including the Trotskyists, as Mr. Rideout maintains, to the tender mercies of the Smith Act. It *did* oppose the demand of the Trotskyists to refuse to fight fascism on the plea that the Second World War was an imperialist war. It is also strange logic indeed to allow such statements as that the jailing of the Communists under the Smith Act was "highly acceptable to a great majority of Americans" but nevertheless the law "made words punishable rather than deeds" go unrecconciled and unexplained. Is this to mean that Mr. Rideout and the "great majority" of Americans were ready to punish other Americans for the words they used and not for their deeds? There was little proof then and far less now, that this was so; in fact, what was characteristic of the period was that, behind a smokescreen of a fantastic war hysteria resulting among many other injustices, in the murder of the

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Rosenbergs, the Truman administration succeeded in smuggling through a thoroughly mendacious version of the role of the American Communists which resulted in their jailing. But who can claim that the *people* demanded this?

And yet, with writers who to any degree reflected Marxist thought in jail, on the run, or forced into silence, lo and behold, Mr. Rideout notices a slacking-off of proletarian literature, and mournfully predicts that the future of the radical novel "probably lies almost wholly with the independent radical . . ." who presumably will never write so radically as to be sent to jail, or have his books blacklisted anywhere.

SOME THEORETICAL ASPECTS

But is this then all there is to the book? No; it raises other questions, more serious, which by no means have been satisfactorily answered. These are the **key questions**: Can a political party, that is specifically, the Communist Party, in any country, have a creative relationship to art? Can writers and artists in general "freely" create, as members of that Party, or as non-members but accepting its leadership? Do the tactics of the Party on a political level hopelessly clash with the more "fundamental" concerns of the artist? Are Marxist writers required to reflect in their works each change in political tactics?

Are the Communist Party and "Marxism" so opposed that only as "Marxism" frees itself from the alien demands of the Party can it play a creative role in culture? Whatever was true of the past, has not the CP been reduced to a helpless sect, hopelessly compromised by its dogmatism? In any case, is it not a tool of a foreign power and therefore unable to master and express native forces?

Mr. Rideout, as do the modern-day revisionists, answers all these questions to suit his concept of freedom and to bolster his thesis that Socialism and Marxism are incompatible.

We have no hesitation in meeting these challenges full force, even though they are put at a moment when events, particularly in the U.S., have given them a certain plausibility. They are not new questions. But they have reappeared in a new setting, and are therefore in that sense "new" and must be answered.

It is useless for the enemies of Marxism to inveigh against Marxism as an invention of a group of malcontents, hopeless dreamers, utopians, or diabolical creatures who have mastered the power of hypnotism over huge masses of unwilling people, who then are sent like sleepwalkers to a fate which they do not want. Marxism is no arbitrary phenomenon, and if it were, it could not, and would not deserve to survive. Communist teaching on itself

is quite clear: Communism rises inevitably from the real forces within capitalism, because capitalism is caught in fatal contradictions from which it can not free itself positively, for the positive resolution is socialism. Socialism therefore must come, not automatically, but inevitably; not in a straight line, but in spiral movement. If this is not so, then Communism will die itself. But the imperishable quality of Marxism and its political party, the Communist Party, lies in this basic contradiction in capitalist society, and this produces an ideology to comprehend it and a force to rescue it from its agony.

For if the band of some 7,000 who were members of the Communist Party in 1929 had been equipped with the tongues of angels, their eloquence alone could not have made a major dent in the national consciousness. It was not the will of the Communists, here or abroad, that brought on the economic collapse; it was capitalism that brought it on. It was not soap-box orators that made the words of the Communists convincing to the people; it was the people's own experience. Millions of people sloughed off prejudices overnight. And others, who still held them formally, nevertheless found themselves swept into action, often under Communist leadership.

Intellectuals, already singed by the great disillusionment of the First World War for democracy that had

turned out to be, in Woodrow Wilson's candid confession, "a war of commercial rivalry," found that mocking the Babbitts of this country, or with Mencken assailing the Great American Boob of the Bible belt, or going on "a great spree," in Scott Fitzgerald's phrase, of bootleg gin and bobbed hair, was not enough. For hardly were the intellectuals of the Twenties getting reconciled to Ford and Freud than they were hit right in the middle of their new-found disillusionment with still another "disillusionment"—the Depression.

They had learned that war was a big lie, and only profited one class, and that some of our finest people were Merchants of Death; that there was more profit than glory in war. But they learned too that the class that boasted so arrogantly of its power could not even control its own laws and had to steer a madman's course between the Scylla of war and the Charybdis of starvation. Who could, in all conscience, utter a good word for such a system? Especially when Lincoln Steffens had demonstrated that the "bad men" who really ran and plundered the cities were much better, at least more honest, than the "good" who coined their profits behind the oily smile of public hypocrisy?

Instead of praising, they turned to the somewhat startled, certainly unprepared Communist Party of perhaps 7,000 militants, many of

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them foreign-born, who had been locked, up until that moment, in internecine battles over "private" questions—such as, for instance, whether the United States was indeed exempt from economic crises.

The middle-class disinherited saw the working class through a rosy haze and insisted on loving it to death. Alas, such love, in Schopenhauer's vinegarish observation, was actually self-love: for they saw only the projection of themselves in their beloved. A "marriage" of such disparate elements could not really endure without a profound transformation among the intellectuals, if for no other reason than the fact that "success" among intellectuals is a personal achievement, and elevates the individual; whereas success among the working-class is a social, a mass achievement, and elevates the individual with his group, his class. Daily life proved this. The psychology of personal success always becomes opportunism in the labor movement, and tends to pit itself against mass success. In the Marxist movement, of course, such aspirations for personal success are alien and fatal.

And yet while this "marriage" lasted, with its ups and downs and noisy quarrels, its bitter declarations of misunderstanding, of a love not wholly required, it must be said that the intellectuals got the better part of the bargain. For the time being, in any case, they were rescued from sterility, despair and

hopelessness; they learned something about economics, something about the real forces that control the world and explain history; they acquired a world-view—or at least were offered one—and to those prone to soul-sickness, a *weltanschauung*; but in any case nobody left empty-handed. It must be admitted, as a generality, they showed precious little gratitude. If, in the Thirties, they wrote perfervid books, poems and confessional pieces showing where "they went in," by the Forties and Fifties, now with jack-ass ears pinned on by themselves, they documented their desertions with books, poems and articles telling the world where "they came out."

It seems that what they did when they were Party members they did only under duress, not of their own free will, and only under the pressure of the Communist Party in the person of sinister Party functionaries who played Svengali to their brainless Trilby's. They universally stigmatize the Party today as autocratic, alien to a free culture, and deadly to their free spirits and souls.

WHAT IS THE PARTY?

At this point it is necessary to go, however briefly, once again into the nature of the Communist Party.

The "difficulty" lies in the character of the Party itself; that is, in the various functions of the Party, in its historic role, but most impor-

tantly, in its basic character, so often misunderstood, which is its power and strength: the unity of its thought with action.

The Communist Party is an expression of a single class, in the beginning *in posse*, but, at some historic stage, in actual fact. It is also an instrument of that class, to bring that class to power; and then to help raise it to full consciousness so that it can set about building socialism and then communism. The Party is historically conditioned and is a transitional force. It is monolithic in form and democratic in content: that is, it assumes the visible shape of the law of its being, democratic-centralism, which in itself is an expression of the operation of the basic law of all phenomena: a materialism which moves in a certain way, combining and transcending opposites into ever-ascending syntheses. It is democratic in thought, that is, in discussion and debate, in reaching a decision; it is monolithic in will. Minority must subject itself to the majority. Action must give rise to self-critical thought, and corrected thought should then be newly tested in action in an endless process of application, correction, renewal and application again.

The Party's strength lay in this unity of action and thought. It differed from bourgeois parties precisely because it united action and thought in the same body—deed, and responsibility for deed. It could

"afford" to do so, in fact, *had* to do so, because it represented (in fact or in theory) a majority single class; its aim and strategy was not to outwit and frustrate the majority though being a small fraction itself, but to fully express it.

Its methods, the processes by which it worked, were open, public. And this was not from a pious wish to be so, but a necessity. The Party could succeed only to the degree that its leadership, *i.e.*, its *ideas*, were accepted and implemented by the masses, that is, corresponded to their will. There is no question of conspiracy possible in a policy which includes the masses, which expresses their interests. That is why the Party tries to reach the masses, and why the opposition tries to keep it shut off from them.

The nature of the Party as both thinker and doer became the **prime** target of the criticism and opposition of intellectuals, both in the Thirties and more virulently today. Intellectuals were trained to see "independence" as lying precisely in that pitiful state of servitude toward a class whose philosophical level was often far lower than their own intellectual level and toward whose political representatives they often felt contempt. They found "independence" in being separated from social responsibility for their thought; and this separation of thought and deed reached its logical, most deadly conclusion in the fate

of the scientists who split the atom but who have no power to control the use to which their discoveries are put by the real powers that control them. Surely Faust must weep with despair to think that his urge to know everything should culminate in a Truman sending bombs that burned to dust thousands of children, women, artists and scientists, plants and animals, the just and the unjust, when even God allowed mankind an ark, a dove and a branch!

Today's scientists are harrassed and insulted by various McCarthy-types, with the backing of an Eisenhower or a Truman (and behind them a Morgan, Rockefeller, Dupont, etc.); they are kept literally penned away from social contact, under constant FBI surveillance; and when they make motions of protest, their phones are henceforth tapped, their mail opened, and their immortal souls prepared for sudden death. And to give this pitiful condition of servitude its final ironic note, it needs the myth-makers to describe it as freedom and to raise it upon a banner!

In socialist countries the opposite exists: scientists not only think but also exercise control over their thought, because their thought and the aims of their thought are in harmony with the aims of their society and of all mankind.

Intellectuals of all sorts, artists chiefly, who would spurn with contempt any attempt by the Repub-

lican or Democratic parties *as such* to "tell them" what to write, paint, sing, dance, etc., accept, without real complaint, the dictation of the Rockefellers, Guggenheims, Fords, etc., as they exercise their power through various Foundations, Awards, Endowments, through radios, movies, newspapers, etc., through publishing houses and all the other various ways in which class power actually expresses itself, both "gently" and "harshly." For them the condition of "feeling free" consists in that a hoax be solemnly played on them.

Of course, in the last analysis "independence" and "freedom" lies not in separation from the people, in freedom from responsibility—but in harmony with the people and in being responsible for one's acts and thoughts. However, it is true that writers and artists in a bourgeois society often sincerely "feel free" in that they feel no force applied directly on their will. Further, those who, in fact, willingly accept the ideology and the social demands of the class they are part of, or ally themselves with, in that same subjective sense are also "free," that is in harmony. But freedom is an objective, a class, matter. From the point of view of history such "freedom" and "harmony" are illusions, momentary and precarious. But as long as the class struggle does not intrude directly into their private lives the objective contradictions of the class they serve can be

"ignored"; but of course on this there is a time-limit. For no matter how vividly one may imagine an abstract freedom, divorced from any constraint, nor how cunningly one works out a *modus vivendi*, with a neither-nor but somewhere-in-between-the-cracks, whether it be existentialism or the tarnished glory of the beat generation, escaping into drugs and visions of angels, the *fact* is that, in the one instance, a DeGaulle is imposed on France and in the other, the air from the Yucca flats in Arizona is as heavy with Strontium 90 on intellectual Skid Row as it is anywhere else.

ROLE OF THE PARTY IN ART

The Communist Party conceived of itself, not only as a political party *per se*, but also as the spearhead and organizer of a new society, a new civilization, and therefore among its prime responsibilities was the duty of organizing a new consciousness, a new morality, a new ethic, a new esthetic, which would be in harmony with the new society. The Party did not just reflect the force it represented; it proposed to change the relationship of forces. And there was the rub! For this principle applied to art made the demand that art serve as an instrument for change, and so become a "weapon." It was this approach to art which came under the severest attack and criticism from artists who held that the role and

the purpose of art was not to help change what it described or found in society but merely to describe it and reflect it—whatever "it" was—and let those who would or could go about changing it. There was, they claimed, a difference here. Art was not an instrument for social change, and it was a debasement of art to demand that it assume such a role. Mr. Rideout puts their case succinctly:

To demand, [he says] that literature identify itself with, let us say, religion or with politics, is ultimately to rob it of its special function that has long been a high one—to inquire relentlessly and unceasingly and on its own terms into the human condition.

It is true that the concept "art is a weapon"—that is, a weapon in the struggle for socialism—was vulgarized often so that the concept might have read, "Art is a bludgeon." But this was always alien to Marxism; it negated Marxism and became its caricature the moment it "forgot" to embrace the universal scope of art and elevated to a principle one aspect of its role and function, at the expense of the others. Content stressed at the expense of form succeeded in producing dull and unpersuasive works. Form stressed at the expense of content became self-adoring, frivolous and—more exactly of course—truly decadent. A literature which did not embrace and find its source

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in the great forward sweep of mankind—specifically socialism—doomed itself to impotence and insignificance. Criticism, which in itself is often an art, brilliantly justified itself in the Thirties, and only later did it lose its sure touch and clear vision. But the fundamentals of Marxist criticism remained valid, and its basic view of art as a profound commitment to the struggle of mankind, led by the workers, to free itself of capitalist exploitation and all its evils, is as creative as it ever was—even, under today's conditions, more so.

But putting aside for the moment the obvious historical inaccuracy in Mr. Rideout's concept that great writers did not identify their work with religion or politics—often religion *was* politics—(did Milton? did Wordsworth? Defoe? Swift? Whitman? Mark Twain?), what is one to say if the "human condition" (in which magic phrase all class lines disappear, and both exploiter and exploited are mutually unhappy) turns out in fact to be the struggle for socialism, and indeed the condition for the survival of the "human condition?"

And there is the whole point. That is where history indeed calls the writer, where a "relentless" inquiry would indeed turn us if we dared truly inquire relentlessly! But it seems that what Mr. Rideout really means is that a writer should eschew only the politics of the working class, which somehow is alien to

him. But the politics of anti-Communism is "natural"; for who thinks of questioning the right of a Malraux to be DeGaulle's mouthpiece, T. S. Eliot to be a Tory, Silone to slander Italian Communism from the standpoint of Saragat Social-Democracy, or James T. Farrell to be a supporter of the Liberal Party? So what is presented as a universal dictum for writers to preserve their moral purity turns out actually to be a bit of parochial class-dictated advice after all.

"MARXISM" VS. COMMUNISM

The argument that one can be for "Marxism" but against the political form of Marxism, the Communist Party, voiced here by Mr. Rideout, is the crux of the entire revisionist position, put forward by many others, Howard Fast among them, both here and all over the world.

An example of where this slogan led in actual practice was dramatically provided for the whole world to witness in the Hungarian events. There, students and writers, subjectively "loyal" to the principles of socialism, and in fact holding a portion of the truth, found themselves side by side with Arrow Cross Hungarian fascists marching into the arms of Mindzenty before they had gone ten blocks into the center of Budapest! Starting from the valid position that Hungarian socialism needed purifying, they ended as counter-revolutionists caught in the horrible position of aiding the ene-

mies of all mankind to destroy their country and precipitate a new world war!

How could this happen? The fact was that the truth (that socialism needed correcting) when struggled for outside and against the Communist Party turned into a monstrous lie (that socialism is bankrupt and must be replaced by capitalism through war). History has amply driven home the bitter lesson that the working-class cannot move toward socialism outside and against the Communist Party. Nor does the "fact" that certain segments of the working-class may be temporarily disoriented by betrayals and demagoguery alter the basic truth. Lenin himself found it necessary to crush the "workers'" revolt at Kronstadt, even though their slogan remained "for" the Soviets, but "only" without the Communists!

Another one of the arguments often advanced against the Party and in fact one that has already stiffened into myth is that the Party, as a matter of principle, belittles and vulgarizes the role of culture. And yet the truth is that no political party in the entire history of the United States has paid so much attention to art; its concern with culture actually marked a historic break with the anti-cultural philistinism in the American labor movement.

The Party opened up audiences for and popularized the works of writers, artists, musicians and all others when they found in those

works elements of democratic thought or feeling. It "raised" numerous artists from its own ranks. It was largely the struggle of the Communist Party members which helped bring about the art projects subsidized by the government in the Thirties. Who can forget the epic battle waged by Marxists to win for artists the right to work *as artists* on WPA, when reaction wanted to replace their brushes and palettes with a shovel? This was a huge step forward in winning full citizenship for the artist, and its historic importance has been chronically neglected. Through the WPA art projects art was brought, for the first time in America, under the spur of turning private art into public art, closer to the people. Mural painting in post offices and other public buildings was widely introduced; and the artist shifted his patron from individual wealthy backers to the people. Developments since the war are a step *backward*, not forward.

Writers did pioneer work in uncovering the sources of people's culture, and one might say that America was truly "discovered" through the various WPA guide books, interviews with ordinary people, and the uncovering of folk legends and tales.

Musicians performed a tremendous service to American culture in tracing the sources of folk music in America, and in beginning to understand the organic relationship of Negro music to American culture. Thousands of people heard sym-

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phonic music for the first time—free. Jazz grew up, and reached an artistic level which promised a great future—which, like everything else cultural, was ruthlessly choked off. Even the dance groped toward the people.

It was the Communist Party that struggled so heroically to save the art projects and with them of course the theory that art was responsible to the people of which those projects were the living embodiment. For the first time in American history artists and writers walked picket lines in the name of and in the defense of the right of artists to *be* artists. A people's opera form began to develop (*Cradle Will Rock*, *Pins and Needles*, etc.); a people's theatre began to take shape (*Living Newspaper*, *One-Third of the Nation*, *Waiting for Lefty*, *It Can't Happen Here*); and journalism was raised to a height it had never reached before, nor since, and included the great stories exposing Coughlin, the Black Legion, the KKK, the Merchants of Death, the various anti-labor spy agencies, the many hate groups, the Liberty League, the Veterans marches and encampments, with the killings at Anacostia, the German-American bund, the great sitdown strikes, the truth about Ford, and the unequalled reporting of the Spanish Civil War. The film too was strongly influenced, and gave to the world in that period some of the best pictures Hollywood ever made. The documentary film

rose to the level of poetry and art (*The Plow that Broke the Plains*, *Native Land*.) Great strides were made in literary criticism. The short story reached a level never again equalled.

In all this the Communists were a part, though of course they did not "make" the times which were the decisive element in the cultural upsurge. But those who charge the Communist Party with being shot through with cultural philistinism either have totally forgotten what actually took place, or have succumbed to reaction's stereotyping of the negative features also present in the period, but not dominant.

The relationship of the intellectuals to the Communist Party has always been "difficult." The "difficulty" lies in the discrepancy between the fact that the ideology of the artist was most usually formed and rewarded under the influence of one class, while the culture of the working-class remained unformed, more to be realized in the future than the present, and its struggle for power tending to subordinate all other forms to the urgently political. There is no way "out" of this historic dilemma between what-must-be and what one would *like* things to be! The full freedom of communism cannot be anticipated in an era of desperate struggle, except in the dialectical sense that one participates in the "freedom" of the future by accepting and *being* part of the pres-

ent struggle! Peace is where the tempest blows!

Revolutionary health lies in seeing the main problem of one's times and freely accepting the responsibility for solving it. Sighing after other periods and problems, like Minniver Cheevies who yearned for "iron clothing,"—anything but their own life—is open or tacit admission of surrender to the actual dominant forces that exist.

Is it too much to hope that intellectuals, by a supreme effort of their intellects alone, in the absence of a militant movement of the working class, can penetrate through the fog of illusion and distortion and propaganda sent out by American imperialism to cover over the epic achievements of socialism and to surround the American Communist Party with a veil of lies? Admittedly, under the circumstances, this is all the more difficult since the struggle is a two-front struggle—and the struggle within is by far the most difficult.

But in periods of retreat, when physical forces are dispersed, one turns in another direction to continue

the struggle—in an ideological direction. What Marxism is to America (in a world setting) is a crucial question for theoreticians to attack today. To search out the path and mark it clearly—if American Marxists can do this in the next period—will in itself be a highly creative and triumphant achievement. Every period has both its disadvantages and opportunities—and the opportunity to place the American Communist Party upon a firm, deep ideological footing is the opportunity of our period. It should challenge and inspire all honest forces who have the interests of the American people most closely at heart. And to artists it should represent their critical moment from which they will emerge either as supernumeraries in the field of art, if they do not measure up, or the great natural legislators of human behavior. For when the cash nexus between human beings is removed, art will take its place. The natural gesture of man to man is art. But that is communism, and for us the struggle to achieve it is the essence of our times and the meaning of our lives.

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IDEAS IN OUR TIME

BY HERBERT APTHEKER

THE UNITED STATES AND GERMANY (Pt. II)*

In the preceding section of this article it was shown that the United States Government takes the position today that Allied objectives in World War II consisted of defeating Germany and then co-operatively rebuilding a devastated Europe; that these objectives, contrary to the assertions of the Soviet Government, did not include the elimination of nazism and the assurance that German militarism would never again appear. Evidence was mustered demonstrating that the present claims of the U.S. Government concerning this are exactly the opposite of the truth, and that the anti-nazi and anti-militarist commitments were solemnly entered into by the United States, in common with her Allies, as the basic aims, publicly avowed, for fighting World War II.

It was maintained further, in the first part, and, I hope, demonstrated, that the U.S. Government has falsified the record as to the stated purposes and commitments in World War II because in the years since that war she has conducted a policy which has resulted in developments violating those purposes and commitments. Specifically, the U.S. Government has furthered renazification, not denazification in West Germany; she has blocked democratization there; anti-Semitism has flourished and is again virulent in West Germany; recartelization has appeared, rather than decartelization; and remilitarization, rather than demilitarization, has been insisted upon. Today, it was shown, West Germany is more highly monopolistic and as thoroughly militarized as ever Germany was under Hitler.

Why Was Potsdam Repudiated?

This explains why the record concerning publicly avowed war aims was falsified. But why is it that these aims were betrayed; why has the U.S. Government followed practices the opposite of those required if the aims were to be fulfilled? It is because those aims were avowed when the kind of war which the dominant elements in the U.S. ruling class wanted had not materialized. Those dominant elements—in Great Britain and France, as well as here—wanted a war between the Berlin-Tokyo-Rome Axis and the Soviet Union, in which the contestants would inflict fearful damages upon each other, and as a result of which the movements for Socialism and national liberation, as symbolized by the USSR, would be dealt shattering blows, and the hegemony of the world would fall to Anglo-American imperialism, with the English suffered to be junior partners in The American Century, as Henry Luce put it.

This was the point of the Munich policy, but that policy was shattered

*The first half of this article appeared in the April issue.

by the Axis' hesitancy and then final refusal to serve as "fall guy"; by the strength of the Left throughout the world, which exposed the nature of the policy and organized millions in opposition to it; by the divisions among the rulers of Western capitalism; and by the strength of the Soviet Union which, in both diplomacy and war, emerged triumphant from the ultimate ordeal.

The reality about that Munich policy cannot be reiterated too often, especially in view of the fact that President Eisenhower has taken it upon himself to remind the Premier of the Soviet Union of its alleged "lessons." And Adlai Stevenson, in a speech delivered March 5, 1959, also invoked Munich and "pleaded with the Russian leaders to remember their own terrible experience with appeasement of Hitler"; and the *N. Y. Herald Tribune* (April 5, 1959) editorializing on "The Lesson of Munich" held that:

What Munich taught was that to surrender a key point under threat of war, in the hope that thereby the foe will be "appeased," is dangerous folly.

This bipartisan interpretation of Munich is false. At Munich the Prime Ministers of England and France were not yielding to a foe; they were rewarding a friend. Chamberlain and Daladier were not grudgingly giving up the living body of Czechoslovakia in the hope that the beast would thus be satiated; they gladly gave him Czechoslovakia with its magnificent fortifications and its enormous armaments-producing capacity and its strategic geographical location in order further to beguile him into attacking the Soviet Union, and to assure him that now—with Czechoslovakia—he had the means for doing this successfully, and he had the assurance of no Second Front, if he stuck to the bargain.

The Czechs, as a contemporaneous observer noted,* "were not only deserted [by England and France] but ordered to conform to the German wishes by their former friends." The Czechs were told not only that if they failed to yield they would find themselves in "complete international isolation," but that "they would alone be responsible for the outbreak of war"; i.e., the Czechs would be considered enemies of England and France, if she "forced" Germany to wage war upon her! And the fact that, in the face of this, the Soviet Union repeatedly assured Czechoslovakia—privately and publicly—that she would stand by her commitments and defend Czechoslovakia if she were attacked (even if France did not do so, as required by Treaty), made even more urgent the betrayal of Czechoslovakia so far as the dominant bourgeoisie of France and England (and Poland and Czechoslovakia, too) were concerned.

G. E. R. Gedye, in his *Betrayal in Central Europe*, published in 1939 (N.Y., Harper) summarized the views of those responsible for Munich, using the device of quoting an unnamed English official, in this way:

"Probably Chamberlain and his friends hope that if Germany destroys

* Hubert Ripka, *Munich: Before and After* (London, 1939), pp. 14-15.

Czechoslovakia, she will go on down through the Balkans and extend eastwards in preparation for an attack on Russia. But by the time she is ready for this, they trust, we and France will be so strong that we shall be able to say to her: 'If you attack us, you will attack a strong opponent, and you know that Russia will attack you from the rear, whereas if you attack Russia, we can promise not to attack you, and to wish you luck.' (p. 356).

The Communist Parties of the world correctly analyzed the Munich developments while they were proceeding, and warned that they presaged world war. For example, the Communist Party of France, several months before Munich—commenting on a Foreign Ministers' meeting involving France and Great Britain and held in London wherein the line of Munich was announced—warned:

Obedying the injunctions of Hitler, Mr. Chamberlain has got the British and French Ministers to agree to a dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, the integrity of which is inseparable from France's security and the peace of Europe. Repudiating the treaties bearing the signature of France and the undertaking they solemnly renewed only a few days ago, the Daladier Government have agreed to this new capitulation to international fascism.

Compare this with the comment made at the same time, and concerning the same event, by Leon Blum, leader of the French Socialist Party:

Whatever happens, the consequences of the London plan will be far-reaching both for Europe and France. War has probably been averted. But it has been averted in such conditions that I cannot feel any joy, and am merely filled with mixed feelings of cowardly relief and shame.*

Well, if war was to be averted, one could bear up under Blum's feeling of cowardice and shame! But, if France's security and the peace of Europe were at stake, were "mixed feelings" appropriate? With hindsight, vouchsafed by history, all may see who was right and who was wrong. But shall not this lesson sharpen our vision for the present and for the future? Shall not the truth about Munich lead us to beware of the falsifiers of history seeking to peddle a new Munich twenty years after the original one ended in catastrophe?

All right, then, the war went wrong. But perhaps not all was lost? The Soviet Union was set back a decade; the threat of hegemony reverting to Berlin-Rome-Tokyo was undone; the domination of the U.S. ruling class in what

*Quoted in, Alexander Werth, *France and Munich* (N.Y., 1939, Harper), p. 264. As of this writing I have not yet had the benefit of reading *The Munich Conspiracy*, a new book by the English Marxist scholar, Andrew Rothstein (Lawrence & Wishart, London)

remains of world imperialism is clear. Now, on that basis, perhaps we can start all over again? And there remains as constant as the North Star, ever since that fearful 1917 Winter, the two fundamental and inter-locking aims: 1) destroy Socialism, particularly as this draws essential strength from the existence of the USSR; 2) re-establish imperialist domination of the world, with the United States ruling class as the king-pin of that kind of a world.

Potsdam symbolizes the "war that went wrong"; Munich heralds the "war that might have been." Therefore, Potsdam is repudiated, as we have seen, in spirit and in letter; and the policy of Munich, in the name of anti-Munich, is refurbished. However, *if twenty years ago the strength of anti-imperialism was great enough to force upon monopoly capitalism the "wrong war," today the strength of anti-imperialism is great enough to force upon monopoly capitalism competitive and peaceful co-existence.*

The Two-Bloc Concept

But perhaps there is no "lesson of Munich" at all? Perhaps, it is sometimes argued—as by C. Wright Mills in his *The Causes of World War Three* (Simon & Schuster, \$3.50)—scientific and technological changes have been so vast and thorough-going in the past two decades that our era is characterized by complete discontinuity of history, rather than a continuity of history? And perhaps, no matter what may have been true of the diplomacy and foreign policies of the past era, in our own day, given the qualitative changes that allegedly have occurred, what we are actually faced with are two behemoths, two vast concentrations of strength, really more alike than different? Therefore, perhaps, the danger of war in the present-day world arises out of the existence of the Two-Blocs; out of the enormous concentration of power thus polarized? This is, essentially, the position of the present leadership of Yugoslavia; it is the position of Professor Mills; it is conveyed in the image offered by Professor J. Robert Oppenheimer, of two scorpions in a bottle with each able to kill the other, and, therefore, the danger of the mortal conflict coming equally from both creatures.

But this view is not valid. There are leaps in history, but continuity, not discontinuity characterizes history. Imperialism produced World War I and World War II and it is imperialism which threatens World War III. Today there are two major constellations of power grouped around the United States and the Soviet Union respectively and there are other areas of more or less uncommitted strength—greater than is generally conceded by the "two-power" school. But the policies of these two constellations are not to be compared to two scorpions, for the policies of the two are contradictory; that is why one and only one finds its allies in figures like Franco, Salazar, Rhee, Chiang, Hussein, Trujillo and depends for support upon multi-millionaires, feudal landlords, compradores, and slaveowners. These two constellations are two because the social systems basic to them are decisively different; therefore, one stands for imperialism and colonialism, for racism and war-making; the other stands for socialism and national liberation, and for equality and peace.

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These truths are decisive for a comprehension of the world today. They apply to the whole area of foreign policy and to any specific zone for the implementation of foreign policy. They apply specifically to the German question; indeed, an examination of that question illustrates their validity.

Chronology and History

We have seen that the betrayal of the denazification, demilitarization and decartelization requirements of the Potsdam Agreement began, on the part of the Western Powers, within a matter of months after the last shot was fired in Europe. Simultaneous with that, there began to develop a move, led by the United States, for the separation of the Western part of Germany from the Eastern; this was necessary because in the East denazification, demilitarization and decartelization were pressed forward vigorously. This transformation had to be stopped in the Western zone, not only because it heralded the end of capitalism in the heart of Europe, but also because it heralded the end of the possibility of effectively waging war upon the Lands of Socialism (plural, now) at least from the European side. This is true because if Germany were to become an anti-fascist, anti-militarist state, with its location, its productive potential, and its 75 million people, it would be impossible, physically, to mount a war upon the USSR. When, after World War II, it appeared likely that the Soviet Union's Asia neighbor would rid itself of reaction and imperialism, and when this happened with finality in 1949, then keeping capitalism, reaction, and militarism alive in as much of Germany as was possible became a matter of top priority for U.S. imperialism.

Let us trace something of the chronology and history of this process of dismembering Germany and setting up a separate Western entity. Of the four zones into which Germany was divided after the fighting, it was the U.S. zone which made the first separate administrative move. This occurred in May, 1946 when the United States announced that reparations to the Soviet Union would no longer be paid out of the German zone under its control. Soon thereafter, prodded—as we saw in the first part of this article—by English promises to socialize basic industry in its zone—the United States urged the merging of Allied zones of control. The Soviet Union denounced the move at the time, and France announced itself as opposed; but Great Britain—its Labour Government anxious to renege on its promise—agreed. The result was the Washington Agreement of December 2, 1946, under which a Bizone was established; thus was consummated, as early as 1946, the first organizational crack in the Four-Power unity for the administration of defeated Germany, and thus was begun the process which was to culminate in less than three years in the formal setting up of West Germany.

The United States then concentrated on overcoming French resistance to the policy of separatism. This was accomplished in the early part of 1948 by the use of economic and political pressure and by detaching the Saar, economically, from Germany and attaching it to France. In March, 1948, the Three Powers an-

nounced the London Recommendations, which, among other things, proposed a separate currency for the area under Anglo-French-U.S. control, and suggested the possibility of the creation of a separate West German State.

This move aroused protests again from the Soviet Union, and from many Germans, especially within the Social-Democratic Party and the Communist Party. In fact, the Ministers-President of the *Lander* in the Western Zones addressed a letter to the Western Powers, in July, 1948, pleading that "everything should be avoided that would give the character of a state to the organization that is established."*

But that which the authors of this letter feared was exactly that which was intended. The new currency was introduced—unilaterally, without the approval of the USSR—and was even introduced into the Western-administered part of Berlin, creating financial chaos there and precipitating the so-called Berlin Blockade.

At the same time, under the lead of the United States, the three Western powers were preparing the launching of a Western Union alliance, the predecessor of NATO, and were contemplating the incorporation of a separate West German state within the military potential of such an alliance. The Soviet Union, in a Note sent to the Three Powers, January 29, 1949, warned that it could not look with equanimity upon the creation of the Western Union, especially since the Three Powers were:

striving to enlist and utilize for the furtherance of their plans, Western Germany where, chiefly with the help of the British and American authorities, the old pro-Hitler and militaristic elements of Germany are entrenching themselves more and more securely in all departments of administration.

On April 4, 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formally launched; on April 8, the Three Powers announced the merger of their Zones and the establishment of the German Federal Republic, whose Constitution was approved in May, 1949. And by the close of 1949, Chancellor Adenauer was announcing, publicly, that he would insist upon the building of a West German Army as a part of the European force projected in NATO.

With the actual creation of the Germany Federal Republic, the destruction of a single overall Germany subject to the cooperative administration of Four Allies was accomplished. As a result, and several months *after* that deed—in October, 1949—there was announced, with Soviet approval, the creation of the German Democratic Republic. Similarly, several months *after* the creation of NATO, and the moves to incorporate therein a renazified West Germany, the Socialist countries formed, in the Warsaw Pact, a defensive military alliance.

Efforts on the part of the Socialist countries to halt the developing remili-

* K. P. Pinson, *Modern Germany* (N. Y., 1957, Macmillan), p. 545.

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tarization of West Germany and to make possible the creation of a united, anti-militarist Germany continued. In 1950 there was held in Prague a Foreign Ministers' Meeting of all the European People's Democracies (including East Germany) and of the Soviet Union. Here was proposed, reported the Associated Press on October 22: "the undelayed conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, creation of a unified German state and withdrawal of all occupation forces a year after signature of the treaty." The next day from Frankfurt, William H. Stoneham, correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, reported that Western officials received news of this proposal with "something approaching consternation" because:

A unified Germany hasn't been figuring in the plans of Western nations for a long time and would present the West with a multitude of problems. It would end suggestions for German participation in a Western European defense force.

This, of course, was what the proposal was meant to do; for once a separate German entity had been created and integrated within a military alliance avowedly aimed against the USSR, then—unless this were undone—the unification of Germany and the termination of the Cold War became impossible. Though, in the same period, Premier Grotewohl of the German Democratic Republic made a personal appeal to Chancellor Adenauer for all-German talks looking towards unification, and though the *N.Y. Times* reported (October 10, 1951) that the six-million-member Federation of West German Trade Unions favored such talks, and, a little later (Nov. 5, 1951) that "a large number of politicians outside Dr. Adenauer's immediate circle and the lay and clerical leaders of the Protestant Church advocate discussions on unity," Adenauer rejected all appeals for such discussions. (Of course, throughout this period even the Bundestag, let alone the general public, did not know that Chancellor Adenauer secretly had offered the Western Powers several German divisions in August, 1950—something he did not tell his own legislature until February, 1952!)

On March 10, 1952, the Soviet Union tried again. This time it sent an identical Note to the United States, Great Britain and France. In this Note the USSR proposed an all-German government to be chosen in elections supervised by the Four Powers. The resulting Government was to be independent, but it was not to join any military alliance; it was to have severely limited defensive forces for purposes of internal police only; it was to ban all nazi or quasi-nazi organizations; it was to guarantee full civil liberties for all individuals and organizations that were not fascist or militarist.

This Note was not made public in the United States for ten days; its first publication, in English, appeared in the London press. When it was made public, it was summarily rejected by the U.S. Government, the State Department affirming it "contained nothing new." Dorothy Thompson, incensed, wrote in her column dated March 21, 1952:

Our Administration misrepresented the contents of the note, saying it contained nothing new. That is not a fact. The fact is that in thirty years of journalism I have never known such pressure for conformity, such withholding of basic historical knowledge, such ready-made interpretations and apologies for policies and so much official propaganda as exists today.

Russell Hill, *N. Y. Times* correspondent, wrote from Berlin (March 23, 1952) that "the United States does not want free elections in Germany now because they would upset the apple cart. The apples are the Schuman Plan and the European army, including twelve German divisions. . . ." The State Department sought, at all costs, agreed Walter Lippmann (in his column of March 27, 1952), "to avert an all-German election during the next sixteen months—that is to say before the Adenauer government has signed up with the West." Lippmann got his figure of sixteen months because the next general election in West Germany was scheduled for August, 1953, and:

The foreign policy of the Adenauer government . . . is to consummate the legal integration of Western Germany [into NATO] before the 1953 elections. . . . The theory of the policy is that while there is not now a popular majority in Western Germany for rearmament with the Atlantic Alliance, the West Germans can be persuaded to acquiesce on that if it is an accomplished fact before they have a chance to vote.*

The Washington correspondent of the *Wall Street Journal* wrote in that newspaper (March 26, 1952) that the Soviet Union's

move to offer Germany a peace treaty has President Truman's defense and diplomatic advisers really scared. . . . The U.S. worry is based on Germany's deep and earnest hope for being a united country. That hope spreads politically from the Left to the Right, and from the young to the old. . . . There's also a split between the Americans, the British and the French on this Russian move. The British and the French are inclined to take it as a chance of a deal with the Russians that could lead away from war.

The summary rejection of this Soviet move in 1952 was too much for two former Ministers in Adenauer's Cabinet; both publicly accused the Chan-

* This rejection of free elections by the U.S. seven years ago, when real issues were still unresolved—especially the full remilitarization of West Germany and its integration within NATO—is significant in view of this Government's insistence very recently that all it really wants is "free elections"! This reminds one of U.S. refusal to permit elections in Viet-Nam last year, as required by international agreement. The U.S. government apparently wants in West Germany the kind of "free elections" that it used to run and supervise in Latin America some thirty and forty years ago. John Foster Dulles, himself, was the U.S. "supervisor" of one such "free election," in Costa Rica in 1917. On this, see the valuable article by T. P. Wright, Jr., "Free Elections in the Latin-American Policy of the U.S.," in *Political Science Quarterly*, March, 1959.

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cellor of deliberately sabotaging the possibility of German unification on the altar of rearmament and adherence to NATO. In May, 1952 a contractual agreement was signed between the United States, France, Great Britain and West Germany, integrating the latter within the framework of the European Defense Community. But efforts to get this Agreement ratified by the Parliaments concerned were fruitless, though they extended over a two-year period. As we noted, in the first part of this article, parliamentary failure led to diplomatic effort, and the result was the London and Paris Pacts of October, 1954, recognizing the sovereignty of the German Federal Republic, integrating it within the Western military system, and allotting to it an ultimate total of 500,000 men under arms, including, to begin with, twelve fully mechanized divisions.

On October 23, 1954, the Soviet Union sent another Note to the Three Western Allies, urging the holding of a Four-Power Foreign Ministers' Conference which would consider: 1) the unifying of a peaceful and democratic Germany; 2) the withdrawal of all foreign troops from all of Germany; 3) the convening of an All-European Conference for the purpose of creating a system of collective security in Europe. This Note was ignored. On November 13, 1954, the USSR sent another Note to the major Powers, again urging the holding of an All-European Conference, plus the United States, to meet, if convenient, in Moscow, and as early as possible, with November 29 suggested as a target date. This time a reply came: the date set was too early. The USSR replied: set your own date. The reply came: rejection. On November 29, 1954, there convened in Moscow representatives from the Socialist countries of Europe; now the agenda of this conference was how best to secure their own mutual defense.

The Paris and London Agreements went into force in May, 1955 and West Germany became officially and fully a part of NATO; shortly thereafter, the Bonn Government placed orders in the United States for \$700,000,000 worth of armaments; in 1956 the Bonn government introduced military conscription; in 1957 General Hans Speidel—Hitler's General in command of occupied Paris—became the commander of NATO ground forces in Europe; in March, 1958, the Bonn legislature agreed to nuclear armament, and in the ensuing months hundreds of German specialists and millions upon millions of dollars were being devoted to implementing that agreement.

Jakob Altmeier, a member of the Bundestag of the German Federal Republic, writing in *The Nation*, January 24, 1959, states that many people in West Germany are convinced that "the authoritarian-minded Rhenish Catholic, Dr. Adenauer," in his insistence upon remilitarization and integration within the Western military system has demonstrated that for him "Germany's reunification is no more than lip service, that his heart has never been in it." Then follow two exceedingly important paragraphs from the pen of a West German legislator:

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It is now a year ago—January 23, 1958, to be exact—that this complaint was turned into an open and direct accusation. Dr. Dehler and Dr. Heinemann, two of his former Cabinet Ministers . . . told him to his face that they were resigning from their posts because they had come to the conclusion that his policy had prevented Germany's reunification. Twice, in 1952 and 1954, Soviet Russia offered reunification. Bonn had disregarded these offers and influenced the Western powers to do likewise. Adenauer had chosen the "policy of strength" to bring Russia to its knees.

Silent and pale, the Chancellor sat facing his accusers. Neither he nor any of his supporters dared to voice a denial. If anything is at all certain, it is that the "policy of strength" has ended in fiasco. Russia has not been weakened throughout the cold war; on the contrary.

The fact is that West Germany constitutes a key instrument in the double-pronged nature of the U.S.-dominated anti-Soviet policy; she is, first of all, the main component of NATO, itself the fundamental power for the frankly military assault upon the Soviet Union; she is, secondly—and here West Berlin in particular is decisive—the symbol of the whole policy of "liberation," as this policy expresses itself in attempts at counter-revolution.

It is on these bases that the present leadership of West Germany has flung itself into the State Department-Pentagon plans. Walter Lippmann correctly pointed out, back in December 6, 1950, that the West German military contribution had to be based "only on an all-out American strategic commitment not only to defend Western Europe but to liberate Eastern Europe"; two days earlier, even more sharply, pointing to French fears against the rearming of West Germany, he noted that these sprang from the "realization that a German army would wish to march, and to drag along with it all the rest of us, against Koenigsberg and Warsaw. . . . The idea that the Germans could or would dedicate themselves to the defense of the West is an illusion that is entertained only in Washington, and perhaps in London."

Richard Lowenthal, a leading adviser of the State Department on its anti-Soviet crusade, writing from Berlin in *The New Leader* (March 16, 1959), emphasized that the presence of Allied troops in West Berlin "only makes sense as part of a continuing concern for the freedom of East Germans and Poles, Hungarians and Czechs." And, he concluded, "*in West Berlin the circumstances of the postwar military arrangements have left us an obvious way to discharge these obligations.*" (italics added.)

Once again, however, it is necessary to repeat that no army yet has been created that could march only east, and could not march west; or in the language of General Telford Taylor, chief U.S. prosecutor at Nuremberg, "an army, mighty when marching east but feeble when marching west, does not and never will exist" (*Harper's Magazine*, March, 1950).

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The Nature of the Two Germanys

The U.S. press has presented the nature of the Two Germanys in this way: in West Germany is a magnificent democratic society, where tremendous economic advances have been made because of the superior quality of "free enterprise"; in East Germany is a sombre, impoverished, tyrannical land where economic stagnation is characteristic because of the stultifying effects of "totalitarianism." This presentation is as distorted as is everything else touching on significant social problems in the monopoly press of the United States.

In West Germany, as we demonstrated in the first half of this article, there has been a resurgence of nazism, anti-Semitism, contempt for democracy, militarism, and an intensification of the domination of the economy by cartels, with a generous dose of U.S. capital involvement. Recovery of productive capacity has occurred, to a large degree on the basis of the pumping into West Germany of billions of dollars by American sources, in return for a considerable share in the ownership of the economy by those sources; at the same time, the recovery and expansion have been spotty—the first three months of 1959, for example, showed a decline in pig iron and steel production—and all the "normal" accoutrements of capitalism have been present, including chronic and considerable unemployment ranging from 5 to 9 percent of the total labor force.

In East Germany, on the other hand, nazism has been extirpated and anti-Semitism decisively and consistently combatted; the junkers and capitalists have been eliminated; the economy has been fundamentally socialized; the society has been transformed in favor of the workers and the peasants; Prussian militarism has been uprooted; and the productive capacity and the standard of living have been enormously enhanced. This latter accomplishment is the more remarkable since East Germany is much the poorer from the viewpoint of natural resources and original industrial capacity, and since she could not depend upon billions being pumped into her by a country enriched and not devastated by World War II, but rather faced, in common with the whole socialist sector, the brutal policy of blockade instituted by the United States from 1947 on.

From the United Nations studies, *World Economic Survey, 1956* and *Economic Survey of Europe* in 1957, and in 1958, one learns that real wages in East Germany rose 115% from 1950 through 1955, so that while real wages were in 1950 about 42% below the pre-war level, they were, by 1955, 24% above pre-war level; savings deposits that totalled 3.7 billion marks in 1954, stood at 9.0 billions in 1957—with no inflation. Retail trade turnover in 1957 was 17% above 1954; production of electric power in 1957 was 68% higher than 1950; the production of meat, milk, eggs was considerably higher in 1957 than in 1955; industrial production in 1957 was 33% higher than it had been in 1953; and in 1958 it was another 11% higher than it had been in 1957. Overall, while the index of industrial production in West Germany grew from 100 in 1950 to 204 in 1957—certainly a rapid growth; the comparable figures in East Germany were even higher—from 100 in 1950 to 217 in 1957.

Indeed, recently the more sober among Western correspondents have begun to admit very notable advances in standards of living in East Germany, with those for working class elements more than equal to West Germany. This has been true in the writings of Denis Healey, a British M.P., and in the most recent columns of Walter Lippmann.

Meanwhile, in West Germany, whole neo-nazi parties and organizations flourish, the Communist Party is outlawed, various peace organizations have been banned, and harassment of trade-union organizations has increased. Perhaps the most dramatic exemplification of the basic differences between the two States will appear in a brief contrasting of the cabinet-level personnel of both:

(East) German Democratic Republic

Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl: Printer, former Social-Democratic Member of Reichstag, anti-nazi underground, twice arrested.

First Deputy Prime Minister: Walter Ulbricht, carpenter, anti-nazi underground, forced exile in Soviet Union.

Foreign Minister: Lothar Bolz, lawyer, stricken from rolls by nazis in 1933; forced exile in Poland and Soviet Union.

Chairman of Planning Commission: Bruno Leuschner, office-worker, anti-nazi underground, nine years in nazi jails and concentration camps.

Defense Minister: Willi Stoph, bricklayer, anti-nazi underground throughout Hitler era.

External Trade Minister: Heinrich Rau, metal worker, member, International Brigade, Spain, in nazi concentration camps.

Finance Minister: Willy Rumpf, office worker, anti-nazi underground, 5 years in concentration camps.

Justice Minister: Hilde Benjamin, lawyer, anti-nazi underground, husband killed in concentration camp.

Housing Minister: Ernst Scholz, painter, International Brigade, Spain, with French Maquis during World War II.

(West) German Federal Republic

Chancellor Konrad Adenauer: lawyer, Director Deutsche Bank, received full pension throughout Hitler era.

Foreign Minister: Heinrich von Brentano, lawyer, practiced law throughout Hitler era.

State Secretary, and Adenauer's personal assistant: Hans Globke, chief "racial questions department," Nazi Interior Ministry.

Minister of Interior: Gerhard Schroeder, lawyer, SA member during Hitler era.

Defense Minister: Franz-Joseph Strauss, teacher; political indoctrination officer, nazi Wehrmacht.

Economics Minister: Ludwig Erhard, professor of economics during Hitler era.

Finance Minister: Franz Eitel, lawyer, officer in nazi Wehrmacht.

Justice Minister: Fritz Schaeffer, lawyer, Nazi Party leader, fired by U.S. in 1945 as "notorious nazi."

Housing Minister: Paul Luecke, industrialist, officer in nazi Wehrmacht.

The City of Berlin

Berlin is the capital of the German Democratic Republic. It is located 110 miles east of the border of the German Federal Republic. It is split into two halves, with the western half the seat of the tripartite administrative and military machinery of France, England and the United States. This itself is the rump left from the original Four-Power administrative center established for the purpose of governing all of occupied Germany. This was in accordance with the original intent—stated in the Potsdam Treaty—of keeping Germany together as a single unit, and finally making a peace treaty with all of Germany, once that country was demilitarized and denazified. It is because of this origin that no provisions were made in the original agreement for the securing of transportation and communication from Berlin, or any sector thereof and any other part of Germany. This is not an "oversight" as it has been called in the U.S. press; this is indicative of the original conception of the Berlin occupation.

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This arrangement was made increasingly anachronistic as the Western Powers, led by the United States, as we have seen, moved toward the separation of the Western parts of Germany from the Eastern, and finally toward the establishment of a sovereign West Germany. These moves, months later and after repeated protests, were followed by analogous moves by the East Germans and the Soviet Union. Finally, the present situation was reached of two German States, each with a full apparatus for government, each with diplomatic missions in many parts of the world, and both recognized as such by the USSR and both receiving and sending Ministers to the Soviet Union.

West Berlin itself exists as a disembodied *Stadt*; it is not actually part of the German Federal Republic, so that, for example, it prints its own postage stamps, and while it sends a delegate to the Federal Bundesrat, that delegate may not vote.

Passage from and to the Eastern and Western zones of the city is perfectly uninhibited and requires no more than a little walk or a subway ride. All civilian transportation and communication from the rest of the world into the western sector of Berlin is now handled and has been handled for some time by the authorities of the German Democratic Republic. The only portion of this traffic which is not so handled, constituting less than 5 per cent of the total, is that required to service the military installations of the Western Powers; and it was the announcement of the Soviet Union that it desired to withdraw its personnel from East Berlin and turn over to the German Democratic Republic the handling of traffic for the Western military personnel that started the recent furore. Its concocted nature is perfectly manifest, for even Adenauer's government has reconciled itself to the fact that 95% of all traffic into and out of West Berlin is handled and approved by the authorities of the German Democratic Republic.

There are in fact today three political entities in Germany—the two Republics and the West Berlin concoction. Any objection to legalizing the recognition, internationally, of that which is a fact, and any objection to placing such legalization under the aegis of the United Nations, with exit and entrance guaranteed, can only be an objection by those who desire to keep West Berlin as a stimulant of the Cold War and as a center for espionage and counter-revolutionary propaganda. Its use for the latter purpose is notorious: one needs but mention the Gehlen organization and the Crusade for Freedom and its Radio Free Europe.* Recently, fairly full documentation has been offered of the frankly terroristic and reactionary work of the so-called National Alliance of Russian Solidarists, whose members fought with the Nazis during World War II and whose Director of Foreign Affairs is the son of the Czarist Minister, Stolypin, notorious, even in Czarist history, for his pogromist, Russifying, and ultra-reactionary policies. This organization, with plenty of money—most of it from American sources—operates with Adenauer's permission in West Germany, with headquarters in Frankfurt and branches elsewhere, including West Berlin. It con-

* For these, see the present writer's *The Truth About Hungary* (N. Y., 1957), pp. 69-110; and R. T. Holt, *Radio Free Europe* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, \$5).

ducts radio stations, prints newspapers and magazines and sends agents into the USSR, all for the avowed purpose of forcibly overthrowing it.** One hundred percent "freedom fighters"!

The Problem Today

The present problem is to force a liquidation of the Cold War. It is to reverse the U.S. policy, of "liberation" and massive coercion, whose bankruptcy is convulsing the "Free World." That U.S. policy, upon which Adenauer has staked his political life, cannot work, for its implementation has resulted not in the relative weakening of the USSR, but its strengthening; not in the unifying of the Western Alliance, but in its near shattering.

For the immediate future, a detente is needed in Central Europe, and this still can be achieved without the United States Government appearing to suffer a shattering blow to its prestige. The longer that Government resists, the more devastating to itself will be the accommodation that must in any case come. The accommodation must come because of the growing splits among the Allies: France insists that West Germany be content with the present borders of Germany, but Adenauer refuses; West Germany and France unite economically to oust Great Britain from important European markets and to compete more effectively in Africa, and Great Britain seeks means of effective retaliation, especially together with the Scandinavian countries. West German coal barons cut off imports of U.S. coal, and U.S. coal-mining and railroad corporations howl in rage; U.S. investors buy out whole English industries—as aluminium and others—and the British bourgeoisie seek to retaliate with Commonwealth restrictions.

And within each of the major "Free World" powers, dissension grows. Here space remains but to indicate some of the recent highlights of this development. First, the Left, led by the Communist Parties, continues to represent the largest single segment of public opinion—and to absolutely predominate among the working classes—in Italy and France, with the Left-ward swing of the voters in the March municipal elections in the latter country a decisive demonstration of this strength.

In Great Britain, opposition to the Washington-Bonn policy is sweeping the country; it is shaking the Conservative Party, pushing the Labour Party into more and more critical statements, and invigorating the valiant and growing Communist Party. The Aldermaston March in England, late in March, in protest against nuclear weapons, was several times the size of last year's, and this time the British press had to feature news of it. The *London Observer*, for example, reported: "The line of marchers was so long . . . that, unlike last year, few marchers could feel that they were part of a small and illicit band of near-martyrs. *Those not marching seemed the outsiders.*" (italics added.)

In West Germany itself there is tremendous mass sentiment against the

** A glowing account of this fascist-like movement, called *The House of Secrets*, by Gordon Young, has just been published by Duell, Sloan, Pearce, \$3.75, with an admiring foreword by C. W. Mendell, Dean Emeritus of Yale. Charles Poore in the *N. Y. Times* (April 4, 1959) commended the work but "forgot" to mention the Nazi alliance and the Stolypin brand.

Adenauer line, which increasingly is viewed as one which not only poses the threat of war, but also makes impossible the unification of an independent and peaceful Germany. This manifests itself, for example, in the decisions of the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party to confer with Premier Khrushchev, and in the proposal from that leadership for a settlement of the German question which, in any case, recognizes the real existence of the German Democratic Republic, accepts the sincerity of the Soviet Union's expressed desire for a settlement, and urges serious negotiation. Even Willy Brandt, Right-wing Social-Democratic Mayor of West Berlin—according to an AP dispatch dated April 21—said: "I would have liked that the West would have paid more attention to the Rapacki Plan [put forward by Poland's Foreign Minister for a demilitarized zone in Central Europe] as a basis of discussion."

To indicate something of what is seething among tens of thousands in West Germany, note is to be taken of the demonstration in January involving 500,000 residents of the Ruhr in opposition to the stationing of atomic missile bases in Dortmund; in March, in the same city, there assembled 700 delegates from West Germany representing the Congress of Opponents of Atomic Armament. Rector Mochalski, of Hamburg University, struck the keynote of this Congress: "Atomic rearmament, anti-Semitism, and anti-Communism belong together. They must all be eliminated at once, so as to prevent a catastrophe."

The decision of Adenauer to resign as Chancellor reflects the bankruptcy of his policy. It is true that, in seeking the Presidency, he will attempt, if successful, to pull a De Gaulle; this tactic reflects the increasing tendency towards fascist-like solutions on the part of reaction faced with defeat. It is not, however, a foregone conclusion that Adenauer will win the Presidency this fall, and it is very far from a foregone conclusion that, if he does, he will succeed in his planned reactionary *coup*.

Of even greater consequence than the splits among the Allies and the mounting political dissension within West Europe—and related to both—is the magnificent recovery of the USSR from the devastation of World War II, the success of the Socialist revolution in China and in several Central and East European countries since that War, and, particularly since 1956, the enormous leap forward taken by the Socialist sector in productivity and standards of living. This has tipped the scales, weighing the relative weight of the Socialist and capitalist sectors, in favor of the former. And now with the Seven-Year Plan of the USSR, the tipping of the scales will proceed at a constantly accelerating rate. This will, in turn, help to diminish further the already shrinking colonial world of imperialism, and further discredit capitalism in its main centers.

This development is of fundamental consequence in exposing the idiocy of the Washington-Bonn line of "liberation" and "massive strength." It does lead to the intensification of plans and desires for "preventive" war among the most fanatical of the Cold War criminals. This is dangerous to the highest degree; it is, however, a response of desperation born of accumulating weakness. With vigilance, organization and struggle, especially on specific questions as they arise, this danger also can be overcome.

Opposition in the U.S.

All the developments sketched above, plus our own national experiences, have been converging for months to produce here at home what now exists: *the most widespread and intense opposition to official government foreign policy in the history of the United States.* To do justice to this and to analyze it, would require a major study of its own and this is not the place for that. We wish, however, to repeat that the width and depth of this mounting suspicion and opposition is unprecedented; I have the feeling that many of us, especially of the Left, are too close to it, to really appreciate its enormous range and its great significance.

While a few years ago, those in the United States opposed to the dominant line of foreign policy were relatively few, today those who really favor that policy are the few. As the *London Observer* said of this year's March Against Nuclear Weapons in England, that now "those not marching seemed the outsiders," so today in the United States, those in favor of "liberation," "policy of strength," "brinkmanship," etc., are outside the mainstream of public feeling. American public opinion is becoming disgusted with the Eisenhower-Adenauer-Chiang-Rhee policy of futility and senility.

All these forces, pressures and changes together have compelled Eisenhower to accept the Summit Meeting. True, his belated acceptance is still hedged on the outcome of the May Foreign Ministers' Conference; and the Administration will seek to have that Conference fail and then to beg off going to the Summit. But the odds are against Eisenhower's making it this time. The General has been dragged almost to the top; with enough pressure he can be forced to go over.

A Suggested Program

The Cold War, founded as it is upon basic divergences of interest and ideology, will take much time to really thaw out. That time must be spent in cracking the ice field at specific points where the biggest blocks can be chipped away. Right now it is Germany, and that is the biggest block of all. How much of it can be chipped away this May, and at the ensuing Summit Meeting, and at the Summit Meetings that must follow, cannot be said with any assurance. I would suggest, however, the following as having nothing but salutary possibilities and as being realizable—given sufficient demand—through negotiation in the nearest future:

1. There must be mutual recognition of the existence today of two German States, the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic.
2. The atomic and nuclear arming of West Germany must cease at once.
3. The German Democratic Republic should withdraw from the Warsaw Pact; at the same time, the German Federal Republic should withdraw from NATO.

4. The Warsaw Pact Organization and NATO should sign a mutual security agreement, pledging that neither would war upon the other.

5. All foreign troops should be withdrawn, within a specified, brief period, from all parts of both German States.

6. The German Federal Republic must formally agree to the present boundaries of both German States, and forswear a policy of territorial aggrandizement by any means.

7. An "atom-free zone" of as wide an extent as possible, should be established, with proper guarantees, in Central Europe, comprising at least both German States, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

8. The unification of Germany—with full acceptance of the substantive Potsdam agreements—is to proceed, and is to be in the hands of the German people themselves.

9. Pending such settlement, West Berlin—with no interference from outside with its social system, and with guarantees for its supply requirements—should be declared a neutral zone, preferably under United Nations protection. Espionage and counter-revolutionary centers must be liquidated.

10. A final peace treaty with Germany should be negotiated by all the Powers participating in the late war against her.

This program-for-coexistence, focussed upon the problem of Germany, will go far, if achieved, to end the Cold War. It is realizable and it is necessary. Given sufficient effort, especially in our own country, agreements of this nature could be reached by the 1960 elections.

A neutral, demilitarized Germany makes war in Europe impossible. Surely that is a goal requiring and meriting the whole-hearted devotion of all friends of humanity, and lovers of our country.

Readers will be interested in two recent pamphlets that have come to the editor's desk. One, by Lionel Forman, is entitled *Chapters in the History of the March to Freedom*, and is a brief account of the struggles of the peoples of the Union of South Africa. Inquiries should be addressed to *New Age*, 6 Barrack St., Cape Town, Union of South Africa. The other is entitled *Revolution in Iraq*, and is published by the Society of Graduates of American Universities in Iraq. It may be obtained, for 25c, from Dr. A. F. Naji, 160 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn 18, N. Y.

Correspondence

COMMUNISTS AND THEIR HISTORY

THERE ARE SO many flagrant distortions and shocking falsifications of my book, *The Roots of American Communism*, in Oakley C. Johnson's article, "Ruthenberg and the Party's Founding," [in the March *P.A.*] that it would require another small book to set the record straight. All I hope to do in the allotted space is to point out enough of them to induce the interested reader to go to the original and make up his own mind.

1. Here is an example of a shocking falsification:

According to Johnson, "Ruthenberg was not 'enchanted by illegality,' as Draper falsely writes."

This is what I wrote of Ruthenberg: "An inveterate organizer, he was not enchanted by illegality" (p. 218).

Thus Johnson, in the very act of charging me with a falsehood, clearly falsifies what I wrote. Johnson's technique is to attribute to me the opposite of what I wrote—by leaving out one, little word: "not"—and then denying it!

2. Here is another example of a shocking falsification:

Johnson writes: "In one place, Draper is obliged to record that John Reed was among those who testified against Fraina, as Fraina himself admitted."

Again I could hardly believe my eyes. This is what I actually wrote:

"Reed had argued that, while no one believed the 'spy' charges against Fraina, the charges had been made and circulated in the United States, with the result that it might be a good idea if Fraina became inactive in the Party for several years upon his return" (p. 289).

Thus, in one sentence, Johnson commits three falsehoods:

Reed never "testified" against Fraina. Fraina never "admitted" any such thing.

Not only was I not "obliged to record" it but I recorded the exact opposite.

Since Reed did not even believe in the spy charges against Fraina, he certainly did not "testify" against him. Moreover, the Comintern rejected Reed's proposal. Furthermore, despite their factional differences, the dying Reed asked Fraina to prepare his speeches at the Comintern's Second Congress for publication, an inconceivable request if Reed had "testified" against Fraina on the spy charge.

3. We now come to a typically flagrant distortion in the main theme of Johnson's article—that I committed some sort of sin by trying to circulate the idea that Louis C. Fraina, not Charles E. Ruthenberg, was the "chief founder" of the American Communist Party.

The truth is that I never used the phrase, "chief founder." I carefully wrote: "If there was one man who

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led the way to a pro-Communist Left Wing, that man was Louis C. Fraina" (p. 60). And I was quite specific about what I meant.

From the beginning of 1917 to the fall of 1919, the way towards the Communist Party was primarily a propagandistic one. As editor of *The New Internationalist* in 1917-1918, *The Revolutionary Age* in 1918-1919, and the first book in English of the writings of Lenin and Trotsky in 1918, Fraina easily led the way in this respect. Once the party was organized, however, the propagandist, Fraina, gave way to the organizer, Ruthenberg, a not unusual process.

To my mind, it is a waste of time arguing over the title, "chief founder." But even if we assume that Fraina was the second or third most important personal influence in the formation of the Communist Party, what difference does that make to his very real and important contribution which the Communists had completely obliterated until I brought it to light?

4. Johnson finally admits that Fraina should not be omitted from the story—only in order to put all the blame on Fraina for the Party's early extremism. One would imagine from reading Johnson that Fraina was wholly or largely responsible for the Party's opposition to trade unionism and infatuation with force and violence.

The trouble here is that Johnson makes Fraina too important. If Fraina's writings in 1919 on these subjects showed "pompous infantilism," as Johnson claims, then that was the state of the entire movement. He was an extremist in an extremist period. Only his style was his own; his ideas were common currency in the Communists'

formative period. Unwittingly, by ridiculing Fraina, Johnson ridicules the whole early movement.

There is an easy way to test this fact. We know that Fraina left the United States at the end of 1919 en route to the Second Congress of the Communist International. Did the line on trade unionism and force-and-violence change after his departure from the American scene? Not at all. It was written into the Party's programs for at least two more years.

Ironically, Fraina was one of the first to change his mind in favor of working in the old trade unions. He was won over to this new policy at the Second Congress, held in 1920. When the news reached New York, however, his former comrades repudiated him and held on to the old anti-trade union line for another year (see *The Communist*, April 1921).

5. Johnson insists on dragging in Fraina where he does not belong and thereby commits several historical absurdities.

One such absurdity is Johnson's claim that Foster did not join the Communist Party until 1921 "after Fraina and other extremists were either out or on the way out."

First, Fraina was not a trade union extremist after 1920. Second, the other extremists were still very strong right through 1921. Instead of going out, they accepted the new policies and reunited with the rest of the Party at the end of 1922.

6. Johnson commits another absurdity by ignoring the fact that Fraina left the United States at the end of 1919. This one underlies Johnson's attempt to show that Ruthenberg took a different line from Fraina. To do so,

Johnson uses some of my material about objections offered by Ruthenberg's group to a Communist leaflet for railway strikers calling for armed insurrection. Johnson also charges that Ruthenberg was hampered in this connection at every step "by the extremists, among whom was Fraina."

Johnson neglects to state that this incident took place in February 1920 after Fraina's departure. He also neglects to state that the Ruthenberg group's objections were purely tactical. While opposing the leaflet, the group insisted: "The Party must be ready to put into its program the definite statement that mass action culminates in open insurrection and armed conflict with the capitalist state." Fraina might have written these very words the year before, but he could not have hampered Ruthenberg at every step because he was no longer in the country.

7. Johnson was also tripped up by another portion of my material. He categorically denies that Fraina had a "jail record." Evidently, he felt it necessary to do so in order to emphasize that "the only 'trials' that Fraina ever went through were his trials before Communist bodies, both in the United States and in the Soviet Union, as a spy and government agent."

Now I had merely mentioned that Fraina and Ralph Cheyney, the poet, were arrested for addressing a meeting of conscientious objectors in New York City in 1917 (p. 953). I did not go into the further details that Fraina was tried, convicted and served a thirty-day prison sentence early in 1919. One

of his prison colleagues at the Essex County Penitentiary in New Jersey was Roger Baldwin. So Johnson fell into the trap and obviously assumed that there had been no prison sentence.

8. We now come to the "spy and government agent" story.

Johnson's technique is one of piling innuendo on innuendo. First, he asserts that "the trials were not fully conclusive in any case." What would be considered "conclusive"? After the last "trial" in Moscow, Lenin personally insisted on the public retraction of the charges against Fraina by his principal accuser.

In fact, new documents published in the Soviet monthly, *Inostrannaya Literatura*, No. 11, 1957, clearly reveal Lenin's high regard for Fraina. One directive by Lenin reads in part: "For Comrade Louis Fraina who is remaining in Moscow for some time and who is the author of extremely useful literary works (about Bolshevism, its history and tactics) in the English language, it is necessary to find a few comrade translators from Russian into English for continuous work with him."*

Then Johnson adds that "such a lot of smoke makes it difficult to believe that there was no fire at all."

One wonders whether Communists would like to be judged by the smoke-and-fire test.

Finally, Johnson falsely claims that John Reed "testified" against Fraina, which we have already considered.

9. For reasons of space, I can deal with only one more point—Johnson's explanation for the obliteration of Fraina's role in Communist history, especially in William Z. Foster's *History of the Communist Party of the*

* An article describing these hitherto unpublished Lenin documents appeared in *The Antisov Review*, Winter, 1958.

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Johnson tells us that Foster has assured him that "Fraina was in fact named in his original manuscript." We may conclude, therefore, that the omission was the result of a deliberate decision, not an oversight.

The reasons that Johnson gives for the omission are hardly convincing. He says that "Communists were disinclined to attack him"—but Fraina (or Corey) was often attacked by Communists. Or that some hoped to bring Fraina back into the Communist movement—this as late as 1952, only one year before Fraina's death.

The Communists have been able to do many things, but they have not been able to face their own past. Oakley Johnson's article shows that the American Communists are still not able to do so.

Why?

—THEODORE DRAPER

DRAPER AND HIS HISTORY: A REJOINDER

Mr. THEODORE DRAPER's interesting and ingenious commentary on my article in the March *PA* succeeds in evading what I consider the two main points: 1) that Draper's *Roots of American Communism* tries to picture the American Communist Party as not a real political party but an agent of a foreign power, relying mainly on force and violence; and 2) that he seeks to make Fraina the founder of the Party in order to discredit it all the more.

Before considering the various points in Mr. Draper's letter, I must first hasten to apologize to readers of *PA*

for a serious slip in proof-reading in my published article, the consequence of a printer's error and an editorial mistake. The result was an unintended distortion of a passage in Mr. Draper's book:

I wrote the following:

"When the Communist International urged the American Communists to work toward the forming of 'a legal, open, mass party,' as Draper reports, the advice was right in line with Ruthenberg's ideas. Ruthenberg was 'not enchanted by illegality,' as Draper earlier points out."

Unfortunately, the printer moved the quote before the word *not* so that it followed *not*, and the editor, misunderstanding the sense of my statement, altered "points out" to "falsely writes." I regret this accident, and I'm sure Dr. Aptheker joins me in this expression of regret.*

It must be clear to anyone who has read "Ruthenberg and the Party's Founding" that my purpose in quoting Draper in this passage was similar to my other quotes from his book: to cite Draper against Draper, and from his own book to demonstrate the contrast between Fraina and Ruthenberg.

Now as for the remaining numbered points. I shall deal with them briefly:

In Point No. 2, Draper objects to my remark about the relations between John Reed and Fraina. The essential reference is in Draper's *Roots of American Communism*, page 289, in which Fraina himself supplies the evi-

* A re-examination of Oakley Johnson's original manuscript demonstrates that he is correct; the error was one of faulty proof-reading and over-hasty editing. The blame for this belongs to me, and I apologize to all concerned.—H. A.

dence which Draper quotes, as follows: "John Reed tries to get me suspended from the Party"—says Fraina—"the E.C.C.I. refuses, he resigns, is denounced unanimously, and withdraws his resignation." Now, should I have used the word *testify*, or just *tries to get me suspended*? This is the "shocking falsification" I was guilty of.

In Points No. 3, No. 4, No. 5, No. 6, No. 7, No. 8, and No. 9, Mr. Draper finds, he says, a variety of "flagrant distortions" and "historical absurdities" in my references to Fraina. I shall try to bring these points together briefly, and then take up the case of Fraina—and of Draper, too—in a broad, historical context.

In No. 3, Draper considers it a "waste of time" to argue about the Party's founders. But on page 490, his book index describes Ruthenberg as "*alleged founder of Communist Party*" (my emphasis—OJ); and on page 196 he goes to considerable trouble to classify as a "legend" the role of Ruthenberg as founder, preferring to stress "Fraina's outstanding role." So much for wasting time.

He says, too, that I charge him with "some sort of sin" because he dares to praise Fraina. He is in error here. What I am charging him with is something else: the re-writing of history in order to facilitate government prosecution of the Communist Party on foreign-agent and force-and-violence grounds.

In No. 4 and 5, Draper objects to my classifying Fraina as an "extremist" because there were other extremists, too, and because extremists continued in the Party even after Fraina's short career. I am putting all the blame on Fraina for the party's

early extremism, he says. No, again, this is not what I am doing at all. I am putting blame on Mr. Draper for trying to make the Communist Party responsible for Fraina.

In Point No. 4 Mr. Draper supplies us with an excellent example of his method of argument, which here involves a combination of shifting ground and assuming as proved the very point at issue. "One would imagine from reading Johnson," Draper writes, "that Fraina was wholly or largely responsible for the party's opposition to trade unionism and infatuation with force and violence." Here we have it, brazen and barefaced: *of course*, the party opposed (and still opposes, shall we think?) trade unionism, and *of course* the party was infatuated (and still is?) with force and violence! There is no room in Draper for the thought that an ideological struggle ever has to be hammered out.

In No. 6, Draper discovers an absurdity in my statement that Ruthenberg was hampered "by the extremists, among whom was Fraina," because Fraina left the country at the end of 1919. What Draper wants to say is that Fraina probably hampered Ruthenberg up to the end of the year but that two months later he couldn't hamper him because he wasn't there! Well, I'll settle for that, but I would like to add that it was early in 1920 that Ruthenberg walked out of the camp of the extremists in order to help launch the important but short-lived United Communist Party. Perhaps Fraina's absence did help rather than hamper him then!

In No. 7, Draper provides a clincher. Fraina *did* have a jail record: he served thirty days early in 1919. I'm glad to

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know it, but if I revise my sentence, will it make much difference? Let us say that "to equate a single arrest AND THIRTY DAYS IN THE CLINK, as Draper seems to imply in the case cited, with the court fights that Ruthenberg put up, time and again," is hardly in the interests of historical accuracy.

In providing this earth-shaking datum, Draper remarks, "Johnson fell into the trap." I'm afraid that Draper and the Fund for the Republic are after bigger game than myself. They hope that the American working class will fall into their trap by believing their carefully concocted slanders about the Communist Party.

In No. 8, Draper rakes over again the uncertainty of the "spy and government agent" charges, for which Fraina was twice tried in Communist organizations (in the American party, and again in the Communist International, with results which I had described as "not fully conclusive"). Draper defends Fraina by citing the fact that Lenin took the side of Fraina in the trial before the C. I.

It is quite true that Lenin took Fraina's side on that occasion, for the reason that I gave previously, namely, that the evidence against Fraina was *not conclusive*. But merely to cite Lenin's stand on a particular occasion against a particular person is "not conclusive" in Fraina's favor, either. Consider the case of R. V. Malinovsky, described in the latest Soviet *Encyclopedia* as one of the six Bolshevik deputies to the 4th Russian Duma (1912), who had Lenin's confidence but who was later found to have been a tsarist agent. In "Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder," Le-

nin refers to the time "when an *agent-provocateur*, Malinovsky, got into the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks." Lenin indicates that Malinovsky, before he was shown to be a spy, strongly opposed correct policies in the Duma, but that nevertheless he carried out those policies "in order to gain our confidence." It is clear that Lenin would not condemn a man for unproved charges, but when the facts were clear, as in the case of Malinovsky after 1919, he could change his mind.

Lenin also changed his mind in the case of Paul Levi, under circumstances somewhat similar to that of Fraina, except that Fraina's final defection came after Lenin's death, and except that the precise nature of Fraina's fault is not yet fully established. Paul Levi (1883-1930) was a German Communist who, like Fraina, was tried before the Communist International, and like Fraina, was defended by Lenin. This is how Lenin, in "Fox-Hunting, Levi and Serrati," explains his own mistake:

"Out of caution and a desire to prevent this undoubtedly wrong deviation towards Leftism from giving a false direction to the whole of the tactics of the Communist International, I did all I could to defend Levi and expressed the assumption that perhaps he had lost his head (I did not deny that he had lost his head) because he was frightened by the mistakes of the Left; and I argued that there were cases when Communists who had lost their heads had 'found' them again afterwards. Admitting even—under pressure of the 'Lefts'—that Levi was a Menshevik, I argued that even such an admission did not settle the question." But Levi soon left the Communists for the Social-Democrats, and switched allegiance from the Third International

to the Second, while keeping his Communist disguise as long as he could. Eight months afterward, Lenin wrote: "I was proved to have been wrong about Levi. . . ." (*Selected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 310-314.)

It is ironical that Draper, who laughs at American Communists for relying too much on Lenin, wants us to accept Fraina on the basis of what Lenin said some 37 years ago, before the evidence was all in!

In No. 9, Draper takes up again what he calls the "obliteration" of Fraina's role (although he also says that Fraina was "often attacked by Communists," which is not synonymous with *obliteration*). I have already said—agreeing with William Z. Foster in his review of Draper's book—that Fraina's name belongs in the early history of the Party, and that no good purpose was served by omitting it from Foster's *History*. Draper insists, however, that my explanation is "hardly convincing." What is Draper really worrying about? What does he want us to be convinced of?

Draper's concern about historical protocol is not as disingenuous as it sounds. His book is not, as he pretends, an objective account of the early history of the Communist Party in this country, but an attempt to misinterpret that history, mis-inform the public, and supply a war-minded State Department with cold-war arguments. Particularly is this true of his desire to exalt Fraina and credit him with the launching of the Communist movement. That is the hidden significance of the title of his argument, "Communists and Their History." It is not the movement of the working class toward freedom that catches his eye: it is the

individual Communist leaders, regardless of their services or their devotion, and first among them the extremist and renegade, Louis C. Fraina.

I would like, once for all, to make my position clear on the question of Fraina. The time has not come, and will not come for some years, for a thoroughly complete and calmly objective evaluation of such figures as he. Certainly Fraina, and others like him, walked the earth, and mingled with the human race, and were part-time participants in the activities of the proletarian vanguard. That their influence is now counter-revolutionary is clear enough, and needs no immediate elaboration. But to sort out their good deeds from their bad, and to set forth a judgment on their role in history, must be the task of a calmer period than the present, and of a more objective historian than an apologist for American imperialism.

One point, however, can be made now. By an accident of history, Fraina had an advantageous position as a journalist in Boston where the Lettish Federation had its headquarters, which had direct contact with Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders. As a result he was able—more than Ruthenberg, more than Louis Boudin, more even than John Reed at that moment—to popularize ideas that the Letts transmitted to him. I discussed this matter very briefly with John J. Ballam, a colleague of Fraina's in Boston, before Ballam died. Considerations such as this must go into the eventual judgments.

Mr. Draper—like Fraina, but in an inglorious sense—also is confronted with an exceptional journalistic opportunity. Not by historical accident, but

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by the natural development of capitalism. The *Foreword* in his book declares that he set "absolute independence" as a condition for writing *Roots of American Communism*, which was backed by the millions of the Ford Foundation. How fortunate that his thinking coincided so exactly with the thinking of the Fund for the Republic, which in its turn coincided with the arguments of the prosecutors who sent Eugene Dennis, Ben Davis and their comrades to prison in 1949! And, most of all, how fortunate that Mr. Draper whose freely written book is so useful to our monopoly-minded government should himself have been a part-time participant in the American proletarian movement—long enough, one may suppose, to qualify him as an expert on "Communists and Their History."

The American Communists, Mr. Draper says, "have not been able to face their own past," and, judging from my article, they "are still not able to do so." His meaning is, we can't face truth.

What an irony is here! Marxism has fought the lies of profit-takers since 1848, and set the standards of truth a-top the ramparts of capitalist apologetics. Since 1917, the Communist parties of the world—and ours not least among them—have fought for Marxism and for workers' rights, and American Communists from C. E. Ruthenberg to Henry Winston have gone to prison in defense of their principles.

Who is it that can't face truth? We know on whose side Mr. Draper is, and whose bread is buttered by it. We know that he supports the U.S. imperialist ruling class, the very incarnation of a lie, with its two-faced, racist, war-threatening "free world." It is Draper and the lying system he in part supports that fear to face truth. When truth finally triumphs, Mr. Draper's capitalism will have to step down for good.

OAKLEY C. JOHNSON

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