

The American
Socialist

By The Editors:

**A Statement
to Our
Readers**

DECEMBER 1959

35 CENTS

STALEMATE OF LABOR IN BRITAIN

What the elections demonstrated

SOCIALISM IN OUR TIME

The road ahead, East and West

THE CASE FOR A LIBERTARIAN SOLUTION

G.D.H. Cole on the socialist ideal

THE BEATS AND THE SQUARES

"The Holy Barbarians" reviewed

THAT DIRTY WORD: CLASS

Vance Packard's book on status

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Welfare State

The victory of the Conservative Party in Great Britain demonstrates one thing and demonstrates it conclusively: a welfare state will always be administered by the representatives of the possessing class.

A welfare state operates through statutory direction of private capital by the governmental administration. It consists of two parts, the governmental administration and the industrial machine. In the twentieth century, the industrial machine is far and away the more weighty factor in the combination. In a combination of this sort, whoever controls the industrial machine controls the state. In Great Britain private capital controls the industrial machine.

The possessing class selects, trains, and promotes the managers of that machine. It has a corps of trained personnel who are necessary for the functioning of the modern welfare state. The possessing class can, either directly, by withholding the necessary personnel, or indirectly, by deliberate ineptness and by ostracism and financial pressure on members of its own class who assist too well the administration of the welfare state, decisively affect the success of the welfare state.

When the administration is in the hands of the working class it uses these weapons ruthlessly.

The Labor Party in Great Britain, in addition to its revolutionary goal of national ownership of the industrial machine, had certain specific social objectives. They were wider diffusion of opportunity for higher education, old age benefits, unemployment insurance, and health insurance. These specific objectives have been achieved. The wider and more fundamental objective of national ownership was discarded for all practical purposes. It was made secondary to the improvement of existing social services.

The prodding of the Labor Party's revolutionary purpose had stimulated the possessing class to modernize the industrial machine and to a consequent higher level of production.

With the social services in operation and with a high level of production, the political issue became one of efficiency in the management of the welfare state. When the goal is simply contented consumers, the

possessors of the industrial machine—the largest and most important part of the social complex—are in the commanding position. They can assist the state administration or they can sabotage it. They have the status symbols to which a consumption-oriented working class aspires. The ability to assist and accept or to sabotage is always reflected in the electoral returns.

Why should people choose a party whose election will only result in greater social tension without any increased material benefits?

The only way the working class party can maintain its hold on the working class and on the governmental administration is by a continuing social revolution. It must set new goals consistent with the development of the industrial machine that appeal to the widest self-interest of the electorate. Fundamentally, however, to maintain itself in power it must attack the very basis of the possessing-class strength, which is the right of possession itself. Otherwise, it will be condemned once more to seeing a social reconstruction it has initiated taken over by a possessing class which has the organization to administer the new social equilibrium more efficiently.

The Democratic Party in the United

States, which has seen a Roosevelt-engineered social-industrial reconstruction elect a Republican president two times running, is well on its way to a repetition of the British Labor Party's fate.

Richard Jarrow, *Jackson Heights, N. Y.*

From India

I have a small suggestion to make. It may be capricious of me. You have very good book reviews of most important books and perhaps you print them as much as your space allows. Still I see that many other important books are left out. Could it be possible, that you could give a list of other important books, their authors, their prices, etc., just in half a column every month without detailed reviews? That sort of information would help us here in India very much, and also perhaps your readers in the States. In India the prices of American books turn out much higher than even the exact dollar exchange prices. If one makes the mistake of ordering something unsatisfactory, it always leaves a bitter taste in the mouth.

I do hope you gain some more readers in India. It is so important. People here simply don't know about your magazine. . . .

Recently a book called *Lokayata* appeared here, published by the People's Publishing House, New Delhi. It is on the materialist traditions of Indian philosophy. Several of my friends have praised it. . . .

O. P. A. India

NOVEMBER ISSUE
Readers will take note that we have skipped our November issue, Volume 6 Number 11. The present issue, Number 12, follows directly after October, Number 10.

The American Socialist

December 1959 Vol. 6, No. 12

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A Statement to Our Readers

by The Editors

THIS is our last issue. With it, the *American Socialist* ceases publication. We know this announcement will shock many of our readers. We assure them that the decision was made only after many difficult discussions among the editors and those most closely associated with the publication.

The decision stems from more than just financial difficulties. We have been financially embarrassed several times before in our six-year career and have managed somehow or other to raise the necessary money. The blunt fact of the present impasse is this: After the atomization of what remained of the Left in the recent past, it has been getting harder and harder to get the kind of support that a Left publication must have if it is to be a vital force. Consequently, in the past year, the editors have had to spend more time on fund-raising and administrative chores than in the preparation of the magazine.

There are a number of possibilities open to us to overcome our difficulties, but these add up to converting ourselves into still another messianic sectlet. We have rejected such a course in the past and we do so now. Organizational survival should never be an end in itself. It would be a case of misguided zealotry were we to attempt to maintain the publication by such means. We have already exceeded the life-span for non-institutional "little magazines" in this country and the time has now clearly come to close up this particular venture. (A business letter is being mailed to all those with unexpired subscriptions.)

WE are very proud of the six-year record of the *American Socialist*. We have tried to inject a new note into the American Left, a sense of mature political analyses, a rejection of petty bickering and theological hair-splitting, an attempt to transcend the simplistic world of hackneyed sloganeering and parrot-like repetition of unexamined dogmatics, a resolve to grapple with the unique and in many ways baffling problems of our new society in a world embroiled in cold war and up against nuclear menace, a

realization that socialism in the West has to be redefined and restated to cope with the changing times. Considering the slimness of our resources, we believe we have succeeded to quite an extent. We started new trends of thinking, we set a new tone, we made many aware of the dimensions involved in rebuilding a significant Left in this country. This is important and its effects will not disappear with the end of this publication.

But we were not successful in getting our intellectual accomplishments translated into some sort of organizational structure representative of a New Left. We made some progress along that line for a while but in the end the instrument broke. We cannot say that our expectations were dashed as we never had illusions about the ease with which it could be done. Remember, we started the magazine in the dark days of 1954 when the shadow of McCarthy loomed large across the country. It was not a moment of new radical stirrings, but of radical prostration. Still, like all publications worth their salt, we started the *American Socialist* with a few ideas we thought important, unique, and worth articulating.

FIRST, we decided to have a Left magazine that would tell the truth, that would not give way to slanted apologetics or special pleading. This was a more original concept on the American scene than some might imagine. It meant to us in the world of today a magazine that was independent of all the dessicated sects dwelling in their own make-believe worlds, and equally important, independent of the hypocrisy of Stalinism or the hypocrisy of official Western rhetoric. We were aware that much fresh investigation was required on many facets of welfare statism, bureaucracy, the mass society, and a number of classic socialist assumptions. But we never believed—we do not believe now—that the Kremlin or the State Department were the best mentors, overtly or covertly, wholly or partially, for these researches. We felt that a new radicalism could no more be projected under such guidance than

Luther could have fought the Papacy without breaking his connections with the Roman church.

Another of our ideas was that a new crisis was coming in the Communist movements. We sensed that a shift was in progress in post-Stalin Russia and that at some point it would result in an upheaval in the hitherto hermetically sealed Communist Parties abroad. We felt that such an upheaval taking place within an American radicalism which had already lost its self-confidence would lead to a lot of soul-searching.

We gave neither aid nor comfort to the notion that a new socialist party could be started in the absence of a radical upsurge in this country. But we thought that it might be possible to start a modest educational society outlining a body of ideas and approaches for a New Left if enough of the old radicals took the cure, rid themselves of their past misconceptions, derelictions, and bad habits, and grew up to understand the requirements of the epoch. Our general political estimations proved remarkably accurate, but the hope, unfortunately, was vain. What has been done in Britain in the past two years was not and could not be duplicated here. In retrospect, we can see that the regroupment discussions of several years ago had no chance. The decay had gone too far, and the atmosphere in the country was too forbidding to encourage a new beginning. It can be envisaged now only when authentic formations of a new generation again turn to radicalism.

WE remain skeptical, as we were from the first, of all varieties of synthetic action schemes to blast the Left out of its current isolation. These continue to preoccupy a number of wrong-headed radicals. Some swear by the Left running independent election campaigns. Others want the Left to become a ginger group within the Democratic Party. Either proposal strikes us as chimerical as a solution for Left disintegration. The existing personnel of any section of the Left or all of them put together is inadequate

to practice any major political tactic. That's the simple fact of the matter. It is true that several years back we supported the calling of a third-party conference, but it was only because it occurred in the period when radical regroupment still seemed a possibility. We viewed the projected conference as part of the process which might aid in the realization of a New Left. Once that possibility disappeared, we lost interest. The periodic cries for political action appear to us not only unrealistic, but an evasion of the propagandistic work that the Left has to perform and the creation of new social atmosphere where a mature socialist perspective for our times will recommend itself at least to the most imaginative and idealistic of the young generation.

History may well record that the passage of the Griffin-Landrum anti-labor bill and the current steel strike marked off the end of a euphoric post-war era characterized by such variegated items as unprecedented boom, national apathy, consumer-and-gadget hypnosis, indifference to McCarthyism, and disappearance of political dissent. From a number of signs, it would appear that the tensions which have built up in our society will lead to a new burst of political creativity in the coming decade. Of course, the Left is by now too shrunken to permit any continuity between the movements of the thirties and any manifestations in the sixties. But if the outlook is a correct one, we expect to participate with many of our friends in new exciting ventures. In the meantime, we intend to make our contribution along those lines which promise the best returns and in such ways as are open to us.

We want to close by thanking all those who have supported us so loyally in the past six years. You have with your various contributions made possible an independent, and we believe, an important Left publication that has struck some blows for progress. We hope that all of you are as proud of it as the editors are, and that you feel that your trust proved well placed.

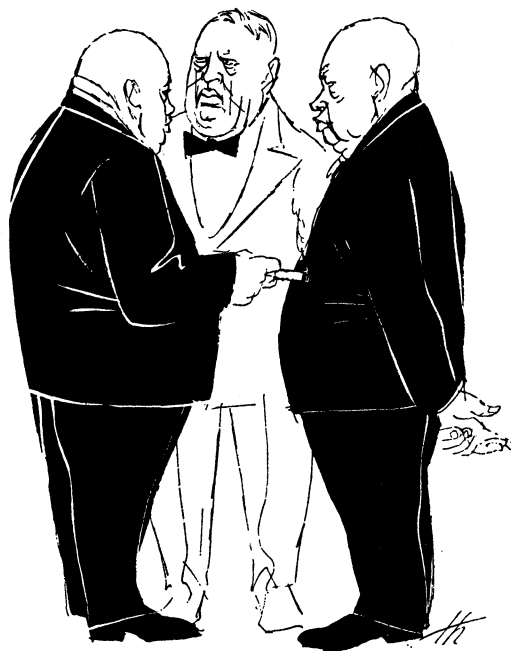
Stalemate of Labor in Britain

THE Tory victory in the British election on October 8 has touched off some quite predictable jubilation in the American press. Much of it was expressed in familiar terms of reactionary malice and vindictiveness, and some of the analysts have been quick to draw long-term conclusions to the effect that this may constitute a mortal blow to Labor and socialist hopes in Britain for good and all. Drew Middleton, writing from London in the *New York Times* Review of the Week on Sunday, October 17, believes that this election merely points up a continuing decline in the fortunes of socialism throughout Western Europe in the past decade. In this view, British Labor's defeat is part of a trend which has found other expressions

in the ineffectiveness of the German Socialist Party and the split of the French. *Business Week* goes so far as to suggest the possibility of a complete breakup in the British movement, including a split, after which a right wing will come to terms with the Liberal Party, and a small radical party will take its place on the extreme Left.

It is true that the stalemate of British socialism—as well as the standstill on the Continent—calls for some serious reflection and more serious answers than have hitherto been forthcoming from socialists everywhere. But the first thing that ought to be done is to reduce the “catastrophe” to its proper dimensions by cutting through the tendentious exaggerations of the American press.

The Labor Party lost the election, but the loss had little of the character of a rout or landslide. The hundred-seat majority won by the Tories is by no means an accurate reflection of the comparative voting strengths. The British electoral system is so constructed as to give this characteristic result, and a small Tory voting majority may be reflected in a large Parliamentary disparity. As a matter of fact, the 1951 Tory victory, a 26-seat edge over Labor, was fashioned out of a slightly smaller percentage of the vote than that won by Labor (48 percent as against 48.8). Gerrymandering and the rotten borough system are by no means dead in Britain, just as they remain alive in the American political structure.



Thus in the present election, the portion of the vote won by the Conservatives was 49.4 percent, actually a trifle smaller than their 1955 percentage (49.8), while the Labor Party lost about two and a half percent from its 1955 total (probably to the Liberals) to score some 43.9 percent of the electorate. This is certainly a clear defeat, but it is nothing like the 1945 rout which the Conservatives suffered when they fell to under 40 percent of the vote. Nor is it anything like the crisis which the Labor Party passed through in the early and mid-Thirties. At that time, Labor had behind it a slow but steady electoral climb of a quarter-century, from nothing up to 50 percent of Parliament, when suddenly its whole machine blew up in the Ramsay MacDonald "national government" fiasco, and in the 1931 elections Labor was pushed back to only some ten percent of Parliament. In contrast to previous debacles, Labor has this time suffered a more minor and more easily recoverable defeat.

A GAIN, commentators have made much of the fact that this is the third straight Conservative victory, something that hasn't happened to any party in almost a century of British politics. But this is a strictly formal point,

and more impressive on the surface than in reality. It can hardly be taken to mean that the British people have enjoyed eight solid years of contentment under Tory rule. As virtually everyone admits, the Macmillan victory was due as much to political good fortune as to anything else. Had the Tories been compelled to call the election three or two years ago, or perhaps even more recently, they would have been sure losers. The Suez adventure, a bit of brazen imperialism which endangered world peace, roused the British people as few other actions of their own government in recent years. At the same time, high unemployment rates and other economic troubles had the workers and parts of the middle class up in arms. Just how potent this last factor is can be seen from the fact that in last month's election, in Scotland, where unemployment rates are only a half-percent above the national average (2.4 percent against 1.9), Labor gained a few seats instead of losing as elsewhere.

The fact that the Conservative victory was fashioned out of fortunate timing and a happy economic situation, for the moment, is the strongest possible argument against taking too calamitous a view of Labor's defeat. An election that might have gone the other way, or certainly have been much closer, had it been held eighteen months sooner (or possibly eighteen months later) is hardly a firm peg on which to hang a historic trend towards the collapse of a powerful movement which still attracts the votes of 44 percent of the electorate. (As to the challenge of the Liberals, the "doubling" of their vote is somewhat less impressive when we remind ourselves that it now comes to 5.8 percent of the electorate, and leaves them with the same six members of Parliament as they have had for the past eight years.)

All of these facts should be considered before accepting the exaggerated "debacle" portrayed by the American press. But when all the demurrers have been entered, the third successive Laborite defeat in Britain and the decline of the Socialist parties on the continent remain to raise a number of important issues.

THE difficulties of British socialism, as of German for many years, arise from the road it has chosen to pursue, to power and in power. The British choice, accepted by the big majority of socialists and meeting with only partial dissent from some groups on the Left, is to accept the limits of parliamentary action, and to do no more than nibble at the political and economic power structure according to "rational reform" needs. In power, Labor has confined itself to measures which it could justify as ameliorating or softening some specific social situation. The radical, reconstructionist, social-revolutionary outlook, by contrast, sees parliamentary office as an opportunity to drive through measures that challenge the privileged ruling classes to a showdown, break their stranglehold upon the economy, and destroy, if possible once and for all, their chances of a political comeback.

It would be blind dogmatism to argue that a showdown contest and a radical reconstruction of society are possibilities open to any socialist movement at any given time. In post-World War I Germany, there is no question that such a course was dictated by requirements, and the fail-

ure of socialism led to horrors of slaughter and destruction the blame for which falls in part on the heads of those who would not smash the powers of German high-capital, Junkerdom, and jingoism when they were strong and these forces were weak. In Britain, the case is less clear. Although the matter may be argued, there is no sure proof that the temper of the British people, radical as it was in 1945, would have sustained a no-compromise onslaught on the entrenched position of their rulers. And what is sure and obvious from history is that there were no forces of British radicalism strong enough to challenge and upset the leaders of the Labor Party when they took the road they did.

To play the game according to the parliamentary seesaw, with no thought of taking the opportunity of power to destroy the bases of your opponent's strength by striking at entrenched wealth and privilege, private control over vast economic forces, manipulators of the media of propaganda, and encrusted traditionalisms of all sorts, leads to definite consequences. In the first place, you have given the ruling class a veto, within limits, over your actions because you have agreed to eschew measures that will destroy the social balance and bring on a showdown. Second, you have bound yourself to an electoral contest that has to be fought through all kinds of times, favorable and unfavorable, and this means you are always pressed towards the lowest common denominator of political program in order to maximize your vote to the last percentage point. It is true that your opponent labors under this same necessity, but for a ruling economic class this is not so much of a handicap, as its essential aim is to maintain the status quo, and it achieves that aim in case of either victory or defeat in an election, so long as the opposition party tends to a middle-of-the-road blandness. And finally, you run the risk of exhausting your following in repeated marches up the hill and down again, and encouraging a growing cynicism while bringing the promised fulfillment no closer to realization.

LABORING under these general difficulties, the British Labor Party faces a number of other, more specific, ones. Its appeal to the industrial workers remains overwhelming, but the industrial working class is not, as in the first decades of Labor history, a growing proportion of the population. As a matter of fact it is probably declining slightly. Not that it is being replaced by a propertied "middle class," as many light-fingered statisticians have asserted, but the new proletariat of technician-clerks, service workers, and the like, while it occupies the same subordinate position in the economy, is far different from the industrial proletariat in education, traditions, desires, fighting temper, and the like. As elsewhere in Western capitalist nations, the problem of a laborite and socialist appeal to these layers of the population has not been solved on a mass scale.

Aneurin Bevan, in sizing up the British election results, wrote that he had "no doubt that the main source of Labor's defeat is to be found in the attitude of the 21-30 age group," which he labeled "politically unadventurous." The young people, he said, are occupied with buying homes on mortgages and outfitting them with "domestic equip-

ment and gadgets of all sorts." He summarized: "In short, this section of the population has become thoroughly Americanized. Its chief ingredients consist of a brash materialism shot through with fear."

Whatever the reason, the difficulty of getting the attention and allegiance of the youth is certainly a major problem for a party that depends, like all movements for social change, upon the idealism of youth for its driving power and renewal. In this case, it is clear from many indications that the pussyfooting policies of Labor's leadership have cost dearly. The demonstrations and marches against the H-Bomb, organized primarily by small left-wing youth groups, have shown that given a militant appeal on the right issues, the fervor and high-mindedness of British youth can be tapped for socialism now as in the past. The revolt of the "angry young men" in the arts, at least part of which is linked with the Left politically, is a powerful symptom of the self-disgust of young people at the human weaknesses that cause them to go along with shoddy and inferior values as the price of an academic, white-collar, or middle-class life.

THERE is no easy answer to the standstill of British socialism. On the Left, for example, it is readily argued that Labor might have won the election with a more radical policy on nationalization of industry, banning the H-Bomb, giving freedom to the colonies, and the like. There were reasons to doubt this argument before the election, and now that it is over the evidence against it is pretty strong. For instance, Ian Mikardo, the vice-chairman of the British Labor Party and one of the strongest voices on the Left for a more radical policy, was himself defeated in Reading. Michael Foot, the editor of the *Tribune*, voice of the left wing, who lost his seat in 1955 by a very small margin, was defeated in his campaign this year by a far larger plurality. In short, while British Labor undoubtedly needs a more radical policy, there is little to show that such a policy would have won this election.

But such a policy would accomplish many other things, even if it couldn't rescue an election that was probably lost from the moment Macmillan called it. A more radical course would open the way for recharging socialism with the youthful vigor that it needs. It would draw the lines of a clear distinction between the parties, and start to rally the working class population behind the idea of serious changes in the country when Labor next gets a return bout. It would prepare the party for the unexpected catastrophic turns which may be taken by Britain, a nation which, despite temporary revivals, is in long-term economic decline under the capitalist system. And finally, and most important, a radical policy, seriously formulated and seriously pursued, could set the stage for the turning point, the wrench into a new society founded on different principles and a changed power relationship.

Sooner or later every capitalist country faces this Rubicon, and to cross it requires the exercise of conscious will and purpose. Many things have changed for socialism in the last few decades, but the rules of politics are still, at rock bottom, the rules of power, and those who drift can seldom be anything but the victims, not the masters, of politics.

Is mankind ready to ascend to a higher stage of society, socialism, or are the forces of advance too weak for mankind to realize its full potentialities at this point in history?

Socialism in Our Time

by Harry Braverman

VIEWED in the long perspective of human history, social evolution on this planet confronts a choice between two roads.

The first of the alternatives can be made clear by an analogy. The civilizations of Greece and Rome anticipated, in many ways, the later contours of society that emerged after the medieval age. They possessed the basic commercial forms and economic categories for capitalism, and much of the scientific knowledge upon which to base an industrial growth. But the decline of Rome under the many blows of internal strife and foreign invasion postponed that development for a full millenium. Looking back, historians have had no difficulty in concluding that the nascent forces of capitalism were too weak to break through. The prerequisites were all there, but they were too undeveloped, both technically and as economic and social forces embodied in a class of the population, to conquer the outlived institutions and fulfill themselves in a new society. Instead, the impasse of conflict and disintegration was met by a rigid feudal pattern which froze society at a point well below the potentialities exhibited in the peaks of Greco-Roman civilization. During a long hibernation, the commercial-industrial-scientific elements slowly gathered strength, man accumulated a new perspective on himself and his world, and finally, a thousand years after the fall of Rome, the elements of capitalism, now greatly amplified in power, scope, and self-confidence, began to emerge as an irresistible force.

If we translate this analogy into modern terms, it takes shape as the possibility that the forces of socialism are too weak, and that mankind will find another form of stability, upon a lower level of culture than it has already shown itself capable of sustaining, and freeze there. That kind of solution can readily be outlined in general terms: a rigidly bureaucratized society, in which economic and social plan-



ning will take the form of a manipulation and oppression of mankind by a ruling elite, rather than a conscious and humane shaping of man's environment to his needs by communities of truly free men. In this alternative, stability will be achieved through stagnation, crisis and conflict will be repressed in rigid social forms, and human purpose will give way to bureaucratic manipulation. To complete the analogy, a more or less lengthy period of such a bureaucratization would transpire before the elements of a true socialism gathered strength and eventually smashed the new medievalistic stalemate, so that man could finally take the center of the stage as the conscious director of his own history.

THE other alternative is the more familiar one that the forces making for socialism are not too weak, but so strong that they cannot be denied in this epoch. In this case, socialism will break through in the present round of social struggles. This need not be taken to mean that a truly new society will step forth in complete array; that there will be no transitional forms, some even protracted over a lengthy period. But it must be taken to mean that the direction of motion will be established, that the ideal will grip the human imagination, and that the social framework of economic planning, political government, and cultural expression will be democratic and humanitarian in basic respects and in long-term potentialities.

These two directions, in my opinion, mark out in the

most general terms the boundary lines of the present crisis of mankind. It will be noticed that I have not included as a realistic alternative the notion that capitalism will survive the epoch. I don't think that is possible. What must be decided is whether mankind will ascend to a higher stage, or whether it will congeal into some frozen and stagnant pattern born of its inability to realize its potentialities at this time.

No destiny watches over the outcome as between these basic alternatives. Socialism has always recognized the possibility of a "relapse into barbarism," or, in the phrase of the *Communist Manifesto*, "the common ruin of the contending classes." The struggle for socialism, because it is a human activity and not a fatalistic mechanism, must involve the possibility that the forces of socialism might prove too weak, at a given stage of human history, to win. It is not possible, in my opinion, to predict between these two massive outcomes with absolute finality.

Having marked out this vast battlefield, we can now try to define the perspective a bit more specifically as it shows itself in the two major spheres into which the world has divided: the Soviet-bloc East and the still-capitalist West.

IN Russia, we obviously have a phenomenon that can be interpreted both ways: either as a model for dictatorial planning and a totalitarian society, or as a stage on the road to actual socialism. Despite this inherent ambiguity which can be resolved only by further development, it seems to me that the arguments for the latter interpretation are overwhelming, simply for the reason that Russia exhibits all the earmarks of a dynamic and transitional society rather than a frozen and rigidified one. We need not minimize any aspect of the Soviet dictatorship; it is all there, including swollen police powers, thought control, and self-perpetuating rule. But, due to the history of its birth and the forces that have propelled it since, it is a revolutionary society, not a static one. There is no disposition towards a hardening of things in their present form. Rather, the technico-economic foundations of society are being revolutionized, along with that a mass scientific-educational revolution is in progress, and it is very hard to conceive that politics, culture, social stratifications, morality, and all the rest will not be drawn into this most staggering revolution of our age.

If it is history's intention to create in Russia the proto-

Khrushchev and Stalin Norman Thomas

The following comment by Mr. Thomas, for many years the leader of the Socialist Party in the United States, will be of interest to our readers. It appeared in the Jewish Newsletter, a bi-weekly publication; Mr. Thomas wrote it in reply to a communication from Louis Nelson, Vice-President of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union on the subject of Khrushchev and the Jews. Mr. Nelson had taken exception to earlier comment in the Newsletter drawing a distinction between Khrushchev and Stalin, and not only taking the position that the two were the same, but equating both with Hitler. Mr. Thomas replied as follows:

IN general I have been so much in accord with Louis Nelson's position on Communism in and out of Russia but I cannot subscribe to his statement that there is no difference between Khrushchev and Stalin. It is impossible to imagine Stalin making the kind of speeches Khrushchev made in the United States or apparently has made since he left us. To say this is by no means to hail those speeches as proof of any conversion of the Soviet dictator to democracy. Unquestionably, he still accepts the Leninist dogmas.

But also unquestionably Catholic and Protestant rulers and theologians still accepted their respective dogmas and held their respective opinions of one another after the not-too-satisfactory Peace of Westphalia (in 1648). Yet there was an end of religious wars in Europe. A period of co-existence began and religion was no longer a primary factor in Europe's subsequent wars. The analogy to our present situation is, of course, not complete but it is suggestive. The communist drive for power will continue but I think it quite probable that it will concentrate on competition in the realm of ideas and economic processes.

It is true that Khrushchev was Stalin's lieutenant during the horrors of Stalin's rule, but after Stalin's death a complete stop was put to his murderous anti-Semitism. There was a period sometimes called the "thaw," followed apparently by renewal of certain discriminations against Jews. These I made the subject of a letter to the *New York Times* on the occasion of Kozlov's visit. The reporters brought my questions to Kozlov,

who answered them unsatisfactorily. Nevertheless, it is a complete failure in comparative judgment to talk of the Kremlin's discriminations as if they were in any way comparable to the dreadful anti-Semitism of Hitler or of Stalin's last years.

I think that Mr. Nelson on consideration will agree with me that we will not fight Communism effectively if we think of it solely as Murder, Inc., which must be destroyed, before there can be peace. (How will it be destroyed? By war in the thermonuclear age? If so, what will survive?) A Communism which is only Murder, Inc., could not have brought about the advances in production, education, public health, science and technology, which are today evident in Russia and even in China.

I HAVE not been in Russia since a visit in 1937 but I have made it my business to read or listen to all available reports on present conditions in the Soviet Union, and I am deeply impressed by the changes for the better in spite of the continuance of dictatorship. The country I hear described bears comparatively slight resemblance to the terrible Russia I saw personally in 1937. The evidence seems to be that the present government has practically done away with vast slave labor camps as a feature of Russian economy. It has permitted the return of all the autonomous national groups summarily exiled by Stalin except the Volga Germans. To be sure, Khrushchev has politically liquidated some of his enemies, but only Beria has been put to death. (Few men have ever more richly deserved that fate.) Boris Pasternak was denounced but not arrested. This is not Stalin's Russia.

Mr. Nelson closes his letter by saying: "Chamberlain's appeasement policy must not be applied again." It is a potentially dangerous error even by implication to equate Eisenhower, Macmillan, the British Labor Party, *et al*, with Chamberlain, *et al*, in 1938, or the Khrushchev of 1959 with the Hitler of 1939, or a third world war with the second. In the thermonuclear age, World War III cannot possibly protect man or any of the values he cherishes. The necessary search for other methods than war by no means is to be stigmatized as appeasement.



type of a new medievalism, she is certainly going about it in peculiar and unworkable ways. I need not dwell here on the premonitory shudders which have already dethroned Stalin with a few curt words of thanks for his brutal services, and loosened many knotted tensions in Soviet life. Unless human activity is entirely without rhyme, reason, or causative connections, as some of our more fatuous scholars have recently tried to convince us, these early rumblings are nothing to what will come as Russia advances, as she surely must, to levels of economic activity and scientific-educational achievement transcending anything yet seen in the West.

How can Russia's further transformation into a genuinely socialist—hence free—society be achieved? There is a revolutionary way and there is an evolutionary way, and there are many possible combinations of the two. Contrary to those who try to find the answer to this in sacred texts, I think it is still an open question, and that tendencies in each of these directions have been seen in the past decade. But what is important for the larger question being discussed here is that the dynamism of Soviet society, and the ideals which, often despite its own rulers, it is beginning to reconstitute before the eyes of its people, have a heartening bearing on the issue of whether mankind will be able to achieve socialism at this stage of its history.

WHAT about the Western capitalist countries, and especially the United States, stronghold of capitalism? If we focus our minds decades ahead, on the understanding that the trends of the past several decades will continue, we get a picture, as we approach the end of the century, something like this: Due to the spread of the colonial upheaval throughout Africa and Latin America, and due possibly also to the further enlargement of the Soviet areas in Asia and elsewhere, the sphere of Western capitalism will have shrunk still more. It may not include much more than North America and a piece of Europe. At the same time, Russia and some of the countries within its orbit will have achieved a considerable superiority in production and

living standards, and will show a far more civilized and attractive image to the world. In other words, in most of the ways that are used to reckon power and well-being, Western capitalism is heading towards a distinctly inferior position.

Obviously, such a trend of things will bring enormous pressure to bear on American society. For one thing, it will shrink the area of economic maneuver for capitalism at a time when it badly needs enlargement; this squeeze alone raises the specter of economic strangulation and calls for socio-economic adjustments. At the same time such a position of inferiority, novel and shocking to Americans, will show capitalism to be uncompetitive in the well-publicized contest of the two worlds, compounding and intensifying the pressure.

Some have concluded that this is the "road to socialism" for America and the West. This over-simplifies the problem tremendously. Having anticipated these developments and the tensions they will set up, we have to take account of the fact that there must be some mechanism, some leverages, whereby they will be transformed into social changes here. Without minimizing the importance of the race between East and West, can we conceive that the losing side will surrender its social system, out of shame, chagrin, or just plain sportsmanship? In this competition for the future of the world, where is the umpire who will award the prize to the victor? Unless the conflict is seen ending in a military settlement, which we omit from our discussion because it would "settle" all present human problems and also because it seems less likely with every passing year, some way has to be envisaged for the "victorious" social system to find a point of purchase indigenous to the other side.

Here again, the major alternatives are readily outlined. We can conceive of a transformation from above, in which a ruling elite meets the enormous dislocations with an *ersatz* socialism, by organizing the present corporation system into a unified whole, and by imposing the necessary pattern of planning to render the nation effective, equal in some way to its most besetting problems, and capable of survival. Or we can conceive of a sweeping popular movement which transforms the country through democratic and widely participatory means of one kind or another, consciously throwing out the old and bringing in the new, with all the flavor of a fresh start, an opening of doors, and the claiming of higher ground that such a social revolution implies.

The hinge of fate upon which this entire future turns is whether we in America are on a long, slow toboggan to futility—a Roman decline—or whether new social crisis will bring mounting popular discontent, a strong movement of protest, a growing socialist sentiment, and finally the development of a powerful organized socialism. If we must eventually face the impasse without a healthy and democratic ferment and an organized radical opposition, the American people will enter their hour of decision baffled, apathetic, feeling vaguely defeated and betrayed, but sullenly and grudgingly accepting whatever invisible chains are forged for their "organization" and whatever insipid entertainments and stereotyped slogans are devised for their manipulation.

I HAVE sketched this gloomy prospect frankly because I think it should be faced, but I must hasten to say that there is little possibility of its realization. There are factors which appear to me adequately powerful in the other direction.

1) The pattern by which America's power elite will try to meet the crisis, or rather the long succession of crises, has, in my opinion, already been set. Bold and resourceful moves, grasping the overall economic structure, as well as measures of abdication or self-abnegation, are absent from that pattern. The "solutions" that have already been found for the farm problem and the industrial-output problem involve, in each case, the organization of waste, by storage outside the market, by restraining production, by planned obsolescence, and other devices. In each case, also, the solution re-enforces the prerogatives of private management, and seeks to achieve the maximum of profitability by combining price and output at the optimum market levels. These are moves which sublimate the traditional economic crises of the American economy into other and more manageable forms, such as waste and stagnation, but there is no guarantee they will always be effective. Some of them, notably the farm solution, threaten to become unworkable. Most important, measures along this line cannot restore competitive efficiency to the economy, or prevent the social resentment that is bound to grow.

Yet it is becoming increasingly clear that the American capitalists have little to offer beyond such measures. If a program were devised by desperate politicians which, instead of reinforcing the power and wealth of the corporations as an aid to stability, sought instead to break their autocracy and drastically reduce their profitability in order to achieve that end, the reaction would be ferocious and the plan would open an epoch of social struggles instead of closing it. While no one can predict such a matter with certainty, there is nothing now in the cards hinting that this is a practical perspective.

2) Rather than view American politics as a continuation of the drift of the past dozen years, I think it must be taken as an axiom that we will see the development of oppositions, protest movements, eventually radicalism. The United States is in no condition to expect an era of staidness and apathy. It is a bundle of unresolved social problems, ranging from foreign policy to the erosion of industrial employment by automation, and from medical care and education through the all-sided crisis of urban living. Against the background of fumbling, failure, and waste, sharper and more explosive issues born of economic ups and downs and industrial class conflict will emerge. The organized confusion and fakery of American no-issue politics will have to give way to a polarization around social programs—a process which Soviet successes will help along by pointing up our bankruptcy.

3) Sooner or later, the moods of the forties and fifties will fade. The image of socialism, which was smashed by the course of Russian development, will be restored. It is true that the romantically attractive and unblemished image of the days of Debs and Jack London can never return in its pristine glory. Socialists can never again be the "golden boys" of history that they were in the pre-

World I years, idealism unscathed, overwhelmingly persuasive to men of good will, with every moral credit in their column and nothing shameful to answer for. But in a more knowledgeable and sophisticated way, the aura of moral superiority can be expected once again to settle on socialism. Totalitarian horrors and crudities will inevitably recede into history, and take their place as extraordinary features of a frightfully difficult transition.

Plainly, this process depends—more than many socialists like to think—upon the turn taken by things in the Soviet bloc. It is in this way that the Russian competition with American capitalism can make its impact felt. Serving as a background to social crisis at home, it can help to encourage a socialist radicalization in the United States. And the prognosis for Russia is, as indicated above, very hopeful; if this should be wrong, much else will be called into question.

SOcialism has come a long way in its single century of existence. It has been unexpectedly seized first by the people of nations with primitive economies, and used by them as a means of development, and at the same time has been stained and compromised by brutalities and unforeseen problems. Along with its nobility, idealism, and successful critiques of the old order, it has fallen into vast confusions, opportunist weaknesses, and sectarian dogmatisms of the crudest kind.

But it has sunk massively and ineradicably into the consciousness of humanity. Take that fact together with the inability of capitalism to find its way much further into the future, and you have a combination that offers the greatest likelihood of socialism as the next stage of human history. If so, the shameful irrationalism, pessimism, and obscurantism that pervade the West will stand out upon all whom they have afflicted as a badge of disgrace, for it is the dawn, not the dusk, of the gods.

WHILE his external form will probably ever remain unchanged, except in the development of that perfect beauty which results from a healthy and well organized body, refined and ennobled by the highest intellectual faculties and sympathetic emotions, his mental constitution may continue to advance and improve till the world is again inhabited by a single homogeneous race, no individual of which will be inferior to the noblest specimens of existing humanity. Each one will then work out his happiness in relation to that of his fellows; perfect freedom of action will be maintained, since the well balanced moral faculties will never permit anyone to transgress on the equal freedom of others; restrictive laws will not be wanted, for each man will be guided by the best of laws; a thorough appreciation of the rights, and a perfect sympathy with the feelings, of all about him; compulsory government will have died away as unnecessary (for every man will know how to govern himself), and will be replaced by voluntary associations for all beneficial public purposes; the passions and animal propensities will be restrained within those limits which must conduce to happiness; and mankind will have at length discovered that it was only required of them to develop the capacities of their higher nature, in order to convert this earth, which had so long been the theatre of their unbridled passions, and the scene of unimaginable misery, into as bright a paradise as ever haunted the dreams of seer or poet.

Alfred Russel Wallace, 1864

The time is coming when the libertarian tendencies in socialism will be able to reassert themselves with growing strength, and when bureaucratic tendencies will be correspondingly weakened.

The Case for a Libertarian Solution

by G.D.H. Cole

TO my mind, there have always been two fundamental cleavages in socialist thought—the cleavage between revolutionaries and reformists, and the cleavage between centralizers and federalists. But much more attention is nowadays paid to the first of these than to the second, partly no doubt because the second line of division is less clear and varies a good deal from country to country, and partly because the second is all too apt to be dismissed as a quarrel between socialists and anarchists or anarcho-syndicalists, who were turned out from the Second International and then from the Third, and have been excluded by revolutionists and reformists alike. It is true that, in recent years, there has been a good deal of talk about “decentralization,” first of all in Yugoslavia and more recently in the Soviet Union as well; but “decentralization” and federalism are essentially different ideas. Broadly speaking, decentralization, at any rate in the Soviet Union, is only a matter of local or regional freedom and initiative in administrative matters, rather than in the control of high policy, whereas federalism involves an insistence on local control as primary, and on the federal co-ordination of affairs over larger areas, so as to leave the final authority in the hands of local agencies directly responsive to popu-

This article by Professor Cole was written by him shortly before his death, early this year, as the foreword to a volume of selections from his writings brought out by an Italian publisher. It has been made available for publication here by the International Society for Socialist Studies, which Cole founded several years ago for the promotion of socialist ideas. The organization is located at 22 Nevern Road, Earl's Court, London, SW5, England, and publishes a quarterly information bulletin.

lar opinion. Bakunin's hostility to the state rested on regarding it as essentially a coercive and authoritative organ of government, set over and against the people, and on his insistence that the only legitimate basis of cooperative or communal effort was a locality small enough to be permeated by the spirit of local fellowship and solidarity; whereas Marxists, defining the state as essentially an organ of class coercion and maintaining that it was destined to wither away in a classless society, at the same time insisted on the need to capture and remake it for the purpose of the transition, rather than abolish it prematurely as an instrument of socialist construction. This holds good both for Social Democrats and for Communists, though the former aimed at capturing and adapting the existing state, whereas the latter insisted on destroying the bourgeois state and replacing it by a workers' state embodying the principle of proletarian dictatorship. Moreover, both—but especially the Communists—laid emphasis on the growing internationalism of economic affairs, as requiring a more than national unity of the working class for taking over the control of them.

INDEED, both right-wing and left-wing Marxists have always been strong supporters of centralized authority, and deeply hostile to all notions that involve breaking it up. Long ago, Social Democrats were arguing—as Kautsky, for example, did repeatedly—that the process of capitalist unification of businesses into large trusts and combines was preparing the way for socialism as a unified structure of economic control and welcoming large-scale enterprise as a necessary prerequisite of socialism. Marxists always had a peculiarly strong dislike of the peasant, because of the small scale characteristic of peasant agriculture, and insisted that the large industrialized farm was greatly superior to it. Indeed, they again and again prophesied the impending disappearance of the peasant because of his inability to compete with large-scale farming, and received with displeasure and even incredulity statistical evidence of the persistence of peasant holdings. In the Soviet Union the collectivization of farm holdings was regarded as a great and essential step in the direction of socialism both because large-scale farming was believed to be more productive, as making possible the mechanization of farm processes and the application of higher techniques, and because collectivization would help to socialize the minds of the peasantry by weaning them from individual to collective habits of mind and by assimilating them to the industrial proletariat. According to the Marxian doctrine, socialism involves the application of the most advanced techniques to every branch of production; for otherwise the high output needed to put an end to the scramble for the means of good living cannot be brought to an end. Large-scale production is assumed to mean more efficient production, and its full application to involve still greater concentration of control, up to the co-ordinated planning of whole economies on a national, and even on a supra-national scale.

Thus Marxists—Social Democrats equally with Communists—have always been unifiers, and have regarded the building of socialism as bound up with the extension of

mass-production techniques. As capitalism has, in any case, tended to bring about an ever-increasing scale of both production and marketing, this has meant that Marxian Socialists have been, to a considerable extent, working with rather than against the grain of capitalism, in a technological sense, and have regarded as "ripest" for socialization those industries and services which, under capitalism, have already become concentrated in few hands. They have also gone beyond what has been achieved under capitalist auspices by advocating fully planned economies, resting on unified planning of output and marketing in all branches of production.

Against this concentrationist tendency of Marxism there have always been ranged tendencies to insist on the importance of the small unit as offering a greatly superior chance for real democracy. This tendency has been manifested in a number of movements which have rejected the concentrationist aspect of Marxism without necessarily rejecting its other aspects. In Bakunin the form taken was insistence on the fundamental importance of the local community group, as embodying a natural solidarity essentially different from the artificial solidarity of larger groupings. In Proudhon the same tendency took the form of insistence on the key importance of a social basis of "free contract," backed up by a system of "gratuitous credit" as the means of ensuring for the small producer the full fruit of his personal or family labor. In Pelloutier's version of the syndicalist utopia and in other variants of anarcho-syndicalism the stress on the natural solidarity of the local commune re-emerged, but with greater stress on the specialized occupational groups comprising the commune and accordingly with more emphasis on the role of the *syndicats*—the local trade unions—in the structure of the coming society. The Guild Socialists and the industrial unionists in America dissolved the extreme localism of anarcho-syndicalism by assuming that functional democracy could be realized on a larger, national scale; but they too—or at any rate the Guild Socialists—aimed at a practical diffusion of authority as a means of preventing undue concentration of power in a single instrument, however conceived. They were Pluralists, in opposition to the monolithic tendencies which seemed to them to be inherent in the Marxism of both Communists and Social Democrats; and they found themselves in conflict with both variants of Marxism because they wished to diffuse social power and responsibility instead of concentrating them in the hands of an omni-competent state, whatever its nature. On these grounds, they were dismissed by the Marxists of both camps as "petty-bourgeois ideologues," putting forward notions inconsistent with the Marxian insistence on the pre-eminence of class and class unity in the struggle for socialism.

YET the libertarian socialists certainly did not regard themselves as unfaithful to the conceptions of class struggle and class unity. Both Bakunin and Proudhon wrote eloquently, in their several ways, about working-class solidarity; and the doctrines of class war took a prominent place in the expositions of the syndicalists in France and Italy and in American industrial unionism. The Guild Socialists, too, made their appeal to the class of producers and

sought to build up the new society on a foundation of working-class solidarity. **What marked all these off from the Marxists was a tendency to insist that the working class was not an undifferentiated mass, to be progressively unified in terms of class under the leadership of an industrial proletariat engaged in large-scale industry, but rather a greatly diversified body of persons having common basic interests which would find concerted expression through their own organizations, so that the control of society as a whole would express their unity in difference rather than their simple unity. This difference comes out very clearly in controversies over the control of industry. Thus, while Social Democrats argue for ultimate control by consumers—that is, by all, in their normal capacity as consumers—and Communists reject, in the name of working-class unity, projects of sectional control in industries by those engaged in them, syndicalists and Guild Socialists urge the need for control to be broken up, so as to be brought more nearly home to bodies of workers employed in a common industry or enterprise, while recognizing the need for co-ordination between industries and enterprises in terms of an agreed common objective.**

It is because I agree fundamentally with the last of those views that I have never regarded myself as a Marxist. It has always appeared to me that to treat either the whole body of consumers—or working-class consumers—or the entire industrial proletariat as constituting in essence a single unified mass is inconsistent with real democracy because masses so large and amorphous are incapable of acting together except under a top leadership which is bound to substitute its own control for the control of the mass it is supposed to lead. In other words, so-called "mass democracy" inevitably leads to bureaucracy and bureaucratic control in which the individual is unable to make his voice heard in shaping of policy. The worst example of this tendency in practice is the so-called "democratic centralism" of the Soviet Union, under which the democracy fatally disappears, and what is left is only the centralism of a party leadership able to ride roughshod over the main mass, and more and more inclined to outlaw as "fractionalism" every attempt of persons and groups outside the recognized leadership to think for themselves and seek to influence policy. Men are not so constituted that they can extend the scale of their operations indefinitely without forfeiting the power of controlling them. The place where the shoe pinches most, in everyday affairs, is the place where a group of fellow-workers are engaged in a common enterprise of a specific kind; and if men are deprived of the opportunity to regulate their common affairs at this modest level they are incapable of exerting any real control over the conduct of greater affairs, which are often past their understanding and technical competence.

Ordinarily, in the conduct of associations which are supposed to be under the members' control, the need is recognized for splitting up the larger aggregation into branches or groups, to which are assigned at any rate some powers of self-determination and control. Even the Communist Parties have their local branches and cells, to which certain limited powers, as well as functions, are assigned. But it makes a vast difference how powers are actually dis-



tributed between the center and the lesser units of an organization. Thus policies and proposals can either be habitually passed down from the center for local or group endorsement or can be passed up from the lesser units for central consideration—or, of course, there can be a two-way process providing for both methods of policy-making. What seems to me beyond question is that, where the initiative rests mainly or exclusively with the center, real democracy vanishes and is replaced by a totalitarian form of control. Even if the central body is in a better position than any branch or section can be for envisaging the total result of any proposed line of action, this does not justify it in imposing its will on the lesser groups, or in monopolizing the flow of relevant information so as to deprive the lesser groups of effective access to proposals coming up from below, or advocated by a dissident section of opinion. This cannot be secured unless a diversity of views is placed before the whole body of members, or unless the holders of divergent opinions are free to engage in propaganda for them without being accused of “deviation” or worse. The alternative, under which one set of opinions is passed from the center and the effective expression of other views is suppressed, or severely limited, is “centralism” no doubt, but not democratic centralism, which could be at most an enforcement of unity in action after full and free discussions of alternative lines of policy.

I AM not saying, be it observed, that it is *never* right to suppress expressions of opinion. I agree that, especially in revolutionary situations, such suppression can rightfully occur, and is fully consistent with the spirit of democracy. But suppression should be directed only against opinions which are clearly hostile to democracy, and dangerous to it; and it should never be used to enforce con-

formity in any matter in which conformity is less than essential in the pursuance of democratic ends. There may be, in *some* circumstances, *some* matters on which conformity is truly indispensable; but they are surely few, and the occasions for them exceptional. It is all too easy for a well-entrenched bureaucracy to suppose that exact compliance with its opinions, in word and deed, is a *sine qua non*; most of all, when the bureaucracy has convinced itself that there is but one correct view, of which it is the rightful interpreter. But it is a mere mockery to call a system whereby such conformity is enforced democratic. Indeed, the only argument by which such a claim can be plausibly defended is that a class is so far removed in character from the individuals comprising it that will is an attribute, not of individuals, but of classes, and that to each class in society there corresponds a single, unified class-will. Opinions, of course, will in fact differ; but, in this view, the divergent opinions of individuals or of groups are mere utopianism or sectarianism, sharply distinguished from the collective will and doctrine belonging to the class as a whole. This collective doctrine is regarded as something in the possession of the bureaucrats as class-leaders; and even if they begin by seeking to act as interpreters of this class-will, it is all too easy for them to slip over into mistaking their own will and interest for that of the class and thus ceasing to be interpreters and becoming dictators instead—dictators on behalf, no longer of the class, but of themselves. Nor is it unlikely that, having taken this step, they will follow it up with another by assigning to one man—the most powerful and authoritative among them—the task of proclaiming the collective will, provided that he constitutes himself the protector of their special interests as a bureaucracy.

This is clearly what took place in the Soviet Union in

Stalin's later days, and had begun to happen from the moment when Stalin had cleared the rivals from his path and consolidated his ascendancy over the Soviet Union bureaucracy of party officials. That this was so was implicitly, and in fact explicitly, recognized in Khrushchev's furious attack on Stalin in 1956; but that attack stopped short at denunciation of the "cult of personality" and did not go beyond recalling the Soviet Union to centralism of a more collective type, in which the tasks of leadership were shared among the members of a dominant group without any repudiation of centralism as such. It is true that the ending of Stalin's personal autocracy was a considerable gain; but is the dictatorship of a caucus really any more democratic than that of an individual? During the past years there has been, undoubtedly, some relaxation of the extreme rigidity of Stalin's reign of terror and also some attempt to apply measures of administrative decentralization; but, after a short period of relatively unfettered discussion, a halt was speedily called to the freer expression of divergent opinions, and the decentralization appears rather to have been devoted to strengthening the regional and local bureaucrats than to putting any real power into the hands of the main body of party members, who are still called upon to follow without question the policy leadership given them. I do not deny that there has been some relaxation of the discipline exercised in the name of the party over the individual citizens; but nothing, I think, has been done to touch the essentially bureaucratic conception of party leadership.

More has been done, no doubt, in Yugoslavia, especially during the period of acute tension between it and the Soviet Union. The decentralization of functions into the hands of Workers' Councils and People's Committees—the latter being the new organs of local government—has involved a real diminution in the functions and powers of the center, and has given both the rank-and-file workers and the general body of citizen-producers an increased influence in economic matters. But one cannot help wondering how far this has gone in practice, or questioning whether there has been any corresponding diminution of authoritarian control in political matters. I, for one, simply do not know how in practice functions are divided between Workers' Councils, Managing Boards, and the individual establishment directors, or between all these and the superior planning and controlling authorities; and it is almost impossible to arrive, by study of the published documents, at any conclusive judgment on the matter. It seems, however, clear that, whatever decentralization of control may have been achieved in the economic field, politically the party obligarchy remains firmly entrenched.

However that may be—a question on which I feel compelled to defer judgment—the essential issue of one-party rule remains. The issue of free discussion and democratic participation is clearly bound up with that of "one-party" rule.

NOW, the notion that there can be but a single party authorized to rule is based on the idea of class-unity. There can be, it is said, but one dominant class, placing

its impress on all essential social institutions; and therefore there can be but a single party, embodying the collective will of the dominant class. If differences of opinion exist in fact within the dominant class, this can be only because some individuals or groups are in error about the collective class-interest and therefore put forward what are in fact sectarian points of view, and must accordingly be suppressed in order to prevent them from misrepresenting the class. Such dissidents, it is said, cannot constitute a real party, because they do not represent a class: they are mere sectarians, seeking to substitute their individual or sectional opinions for the will of the class. There is no wrong, it is argued, in suppressing them, because, however much support they may elicit, they represent no real social force.

The plausibility of this argument rests on the double assumption that there is a single rightful class-doctrine and that those who in fact control the party machine are in full possession of it. But surely either of these views may be mistaken. It is by no means self-evident that to the question, "What is the class interest in such and such a matter?" there is only one possible correct answer. Surely there may be cases in which there is something to be said both for and against two or more ways of dealing with a particular problem, and the pros and cons may be fairly evenly balanced. If so, the answer, wherever possible, should surely be sought in full discussion of the alternatives over the widest possible field, without the balance being tilted by any monopolization of the argument by the advocates of one solution as against another. Secondly, even where there is only one legitimate answer, the bureaucracy may be mistaken in supposing that it is in full possession of this answer, and that accordingly no discussion is called for. To maintain this is in effect to throw over democracy in favor of authoritarian bureaucracy; for the application of democratic methods might possibly record that the bureaucrats are in truth the sectarians, advancing as class-truth what is no more in reality than sectarian bureaucratic interest.

Finally, one either believes in democracy or disbelieves in it, whether the democracy in question is that of a class or of the whole people. The essence of democracy, in either case, is the real and effective participation of all those concerned in the process of decision-making, from the stages in which the decision to be taken begins to be debated up to the point at which it is finally taken. In theory, the Communist philosophy accepts this, with the added corollary that the decision, when taken, becomes universally binding, even upon those who have thrown their weight against it while it was under debate. But in practice this cannot happen if decisions are made at the center without prior and widely diffused debate, and critics are allowed no opportunity of expressing and organizing dissident opinions.

It is, moreover, a most dangerous error to suppose that uniform decisions are necessary on most questions. Even if there has to be a broad general framework of accepted doctrine, there is every reason for limiting it to as few matters as possible, and for encouraging diversity of experiment in other matters—for example, against subjecting the Ukraine and Asiatic Russia to more than a very limited basic uniformity of institutions. I am, of course, aware

that the Soviet Union is in form a federation, and that each Republic within it has its own partly autonomous institutions, whose range of competence has been to some extent widened recently. But with this must be considered the fact that the entire Soviet Union has a single Communist Party and that this party has largely taken over the functions of central government and substituted itself for the Soviets as the essential organ of guaranteed power. Indeed, the process of substitution goes still further; for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, acting in these days directly and not, as previously, through a Comintern which it despotically controlled, claims the right to dictate policy to the Communist Parties in other countries and to ensure the compliance of their policies—and of their leaders—with its own. This would be much less harmful if the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were internally a democratic party, in which decisions were arrived at by free discussion among the whole body of members; but, as things are, it means that the controlling Russian bureaucracy dictates not only to critics of the Soviet Union but to a considerable extent to Communists throughout the world—subject of course to the possibility of these parties feeling strong enough—as in the case of China—to stand out against such dictation, or—as in the case of Poland—being driven to do so by the force of opinion pressing on them from within a country.

I DO not wish in this article to enter into the dispute between those who conceive of democracy in terms of entire populations, irrespective of class, and those who think in terms of class-democracy and claim the right to exclude from it those who are regarded as class-enemies. Even if the latter view is preferred, and only class-opinion needs to be taken into account, I claim that all such opinion ought to be counted, and not exclusively that of a particular “vanguard” within the class. Even if a narrower

view is taken, and consideration is given only to opinion within a class-party, it must still extend to all sections of the party, and not exclusively to a “vanguard” within the “vanguard” composed of the party leadership alone. It must, moreover, take full account of both local and sectional variations of such opinion, and must refrain from imposing on the whole party inflexible orthodoxy save in a very few matters in relation to which uniformity is really indispensable. Lenin himself was a highly authoritarian thinker, who did not mince his words in denouncing dissidents; but he did at any rate insist on a considerable amount of free party discussion and showed no vindictiveness in pursuing his critics, unless he felt them to have gone over irretrievably into the hostile camp—which he was, no doubt, in certain cases, too prone to do. I think Trotsky was right in holding that Lenin would have been horrified by the degeneration of party democracy that had taken place even before his death, and that advanced so swiftly after his removal, converting the dictatorship of the party as the vanguard of the proletariat into a dictatorship of officials over the party, over the proletariat, and over the whole Soviet Union and the Communist Parties outside it.

The contrast between the two conceptions of socialism, centralist and federal, has, however, nothing to do with this degeneration. The Communist conception is, quite apart from it, definitely centralist, with the emphasis on unity and unification over large areas and on the advanced proletariat engaged in large-scale industry as the constructive force in the making of socialism. The entire conception of the federalists, of a society built up on the natural comradeship of neighborhood among small groups of fellow-workers, is utterly alien to the spirit either of Communism or of Social Democracy, which alike envisage socialism as a higher stage of economic development resting on the most advanced techniques of large-scale production. As



against this, Peter Kropotkin used to argue that large-scale production was by no means necessarily the most efficient, and that in particular the advent of electrical power could provide the opportunity for a scattering of industrial operations over country districts and for a return to small-scale production using the most advanced techniques and thus defeating the mass-producers at their own game. Admittedly, there is not yet much sign of this in the advanced countries; but we are at any rate beginning to see that it is highly relevant to the problems of such countries as India, where man-power is superabundant and capital very scarce in relation to it; and I think it may also be highly relevant to areas such as southern Italy, in which somewhat similar situations exist, and also to the problems of peasant economies in many countries. Proletarian socialism, finding its support among the workers in big, mechanized establishments, has always been instinctively unfriendly to peasants, even when it has sought to use them as allies, because it has regarded peasant agriculture as an obsolescent method of production; whereas it may not be so, given both full use of co-operative methods of purchasing, marketing, and the supply of credit and also full access to electrical power and modern machinery for its day-to-day operations.

SIMILARLY, ever since Marx predicted the impending disappearance of the "artisans," the craftsmen engaged in small-scale production, who, he held, were destined to be flung down into the ranks of the proletariat, proletarian socialists have been scornful of these artisans and have refused to recognize them as full proletarians in their own right. They have been regarded rather as petty bourgeois, or at any rate as sharing in the petty bourgeois attitude to social questions. Yet it is undoubtedly true that the artisans have contributed largely to the development of socialist ideas—especially to those forms of socialism in which a high value is put on personal and small group liberties and on the wide diffusion of power and responsibility in a free, socialist society. From the days of the Paris artisans and of the Swiss watchmakers of the Jura Federation, the artisans have been among the foremost advocates of a libertarian socialism hostile to the mass-socialism of the Marxists, and have contested many battles with them. Until quite recently, despite the persistence of relatively small-scale enterprise, such libertarians have appeared to be working against the grain of technological development, which has fostered the growth of mass production and concentrated a growing proportion of the workers in large establishments for the performance, in the main, of repetitive machine-tending operations. But today the trend seems much less certain. Mass production will no doubt continue to involve more and more branches of production; but will it continue to involve the aggregation of great masses of relatively unskilled labor? Broadly, the trend has been hitherto towards such aggregation; but the tendency now seems to be to get rid of much of the machine-tending labor, which is to be replaced by automatic devices calling for much less numerous bodies of relatively skilled supervisors. So, even if the establishments continue to grow larger, it no longer follows that the labor force will grow larger with them. We may be facing a situation in which, at any rate in the

most advanced countries, a much larger mass of capital will be needed to set each productive worker to work, and such workers will come to be actually employed in considerably smaller groups, especially where the most advanced techniques are introduced. If this comes about, will there not be a return to a situation more closely akin to that of artisan production, with each individual playing again a more responsible part in the work? I remember that the first of the great anarchist philosophers, William Godwin, in his dislike of the tendency towards mass production, looked forward to a day when the most advanced instruments would be operated by single workers, with the aid of great reserves of mechanical power. This at any rate looks much less unlikely today than it did while technical progress was favoring the aggregation of workers into bigger and bigger productive groups, while undermining for most of them the distinctiveness of their individual operations and reducing each of them to a mere unit in a larger and larger mass. Marxism as a centralist doctrine grew up while this tendency was everywhere gaining force in the advanced countries: we may be on the eve of a period during which it will be reversed, not in respect of the scale of the operations themselves, but in that of the type of employment involved.

If this be the case, may we not expect it to be accompanied by a change in the nature of socialist ideas—by a reversion to stress upon the smaller human unit and to the distinctiveness of its contribution and therewith to a reassertion of the claims to participate effectively in control by these relatively small groups of distinctive contributors to productive service? I think so; and I think I see already signs of it in a revival of the demand for "workers' control" exercised by workers on the job in their several establishments as against control by the entire working class envisaged as an undifferentiated mass of human labor. I am not suggesting that there is not a need for control in both forms, or that those employed in a particular establishment can claim a right to operate it as they please, without regard for wider social needs. What I am suggesting is that if all, or nearly all, the emphasis is put on collective control by the whole mass, and none, or hardly any, on diffused control on the particular job, the vital question of personal and small-group liberty is in danger of being overlooked, and what is likely to result is a formal mass-democracy which will degenerate in fact into bureaucracy. I am indeed suggesting that precisely this degeneration has tended to come about in the operation of industries both under Communism and under Social Democracy, which have both made the mistake of confusing high technical development with the aggregation of the producers into larger and more homogeneous masses of routine workers.

I DO not, of course, profess to know how far or fast automation will advance, either in the most advanced areas of production or elsewhere. But socialists, who profess to stand for something superior in its productive efficiency to even the most advanced capitalism, are clearly called upon to think ahead of the trends of capitalist production and should be on their guard against basing their plans on an assumption that the trends of the past will be continued indefinitely, or they may find themselves laying plans for

carrying further trends which are already becoming technically obsolete.

I feel no doubt that in the case under discussion a reversal of past trends is ardently to be desired by socialists who value the quality of life as well as the mass of commodities made available to the whole body of consumers. As long as sheer poverty exists in the world, it is impossible for socialists not to be in favor of increased production; for socialist aspirations cannot be fully realized while there is still a scramble for scarce means of living. But it is surely much to be desired that the highest practicable production shall come to be consistent with the liberation of mankind from the sheer burden of uninteresting repetitive routine labor and that the mass of mankind shall come to enjoy both greater leisure and more interesting employment, which they will be more and more able to regard, not as unavoidable drudgery, but as an opportunity for creative self-expression. To be sure, if automation brings about under capitalism a sharp decline in the demand for labor it will become a still more urgent task to achieve its supersession by an economic system based on a fairer allocation of the fruits of productive effort, as the only way of averting a relapse into large-scale unemployment. But no one, except some capitalists and sheer reactionaries, wants to re-establish a permanent "reserve of labor" in order to keep the employed workers from asserting their claims; and socialists need anticipate no difficulty in meeting a fall in the demand for labor on account of automation by reduction of the working day to any required extent. What I want to see is steady pressure from the trade unions for

such reduction, accompanied by increasing claims for a share in control "on the job" and by measures designed to prevent the sacking of workers alleged to be redundant without the offer of suitable alternative jobs and, where needed, adequate training for them.

In short, I hope and believe that the time is coming when the libertarian tendencies in socialism will be enabled to reassert themselves with growing strength, and when the bureaucratic tendencies will be correspondingly weakened. I am not a syndicalist; but I believe none the less that syndicalism had hold of an important element of the truth which has been grossly underrated by the politicians of Communism and of Social Democracy alike, as shown in the Marxian emphasis on the virtues of large-scale production and in the belief that it involves the progressive disappearance of individuality from the productive process and the increasing resolution of the working class into an undifferentiated mass of what Marx called "abstract human labor." As against this, I believe that the individual and the small working group count for a great deal in terms of sheer productive efficiency and also in determining the satisfying quality of work, which occupies necessarily so large a part of the lives of men—even if it can come to occupy them less as the curse of poverty is progressively conquered by technological improvement. Socialists, far from being able to ignore the importance of productive techniques, must always endeavor to be well ahead of the capitalists in interpreting them; and my suggestion is that, for the most part, they are no longer interpreting them aright.

The New Campaign of Chinese Communism

The following dispatch by the Yugoslav correspondent Branko Bogunovic, from Peiping, appeared in the Belgrade Politika of July 19, 1959.

* * *

APPROXIMATELY a year ago the well-known campaign for iron and steel was in full swing in China. The most impressive picture of Chinese everyday life in those days was the hundreds of thousands of native furnaces for smelting iron and steel erected in all the vacant spaces in villages and towns.

For months these furnaces smoked by day and night, and then the campaign passed and not a trace, so to speak, was left of the characteristic picture of Chinese daily life referred to.

Today a new campaign is on the agenda, and a new picture has come to take the place of last year's on the same stage. Almost in the same spaces where iron foundries were hurriedly erected in last year's steel fever, in streets and courtyards there are pigsties, poultry pens, and stables for dairy cows or beds for cabbage and other vegetables. The campaign for the universal cultivation of vegetables, pigs, and poultry is in full swing.

In this campaign, literally all citizens, more particularly the inhabitants of the big towns, are requested to exploit every little plot of vacant space for the cultivation of various vegetable crops and to engage en masse in the breeding of pigs, ducks, and poultry as well as in the keeping of dairy cows and the erection of cattle pens, farms and fish ponds—in the same places where they had their courtyards until yesterday. According to Peiping press reports, the campaign has already gained such momentum that there is almost no major town in China where the movement for mass cultivation

of vegetables, pig breeding and poultry-keeping has not spread. . . . There has been a great shortage of all these goods in the Chinese markets in the last year.

At first glance this feature might appear contradictory, for after the big leap ahead in agriculture and the official statistics on the overall rise in agricultural production by almost 100 percent, it would be normal to expect a great increase in the output of agricultural produce such as meat, eggs, milk, fish products, fruit and vegetables, and so on.

But the dearth of these commodities on the market is almost greater than in the previous, nonrecord years, and the explanation of this feature apparently lies precisely in the character of the campaign for the big leap ahead last year. In that campaign, hundreds of millions of people were mobilized exclusively for the attainment of record increases in grain, rice, iron and steel, whereas all other branches of the economy and the auxiliary occupations remained in the background. . . .

AS emerges from the writing of the Peiping press, the chief aim of [the new] campaign is the removal of the discrepancies and difficulties in supply which have arisen largely because of last year's campaign for iron and steel.

But as can also be seen from the character of the measures taken, the style and the methods with which it is desired to achieve the purpose referred to have remained completely identical with those used in the steel campaign, and which actually resulted in the present difficulties. What has changed is merely the leading slogan in the execution of the campaign, and whereas in the steel campaign that slogan ran "all engage in the production of steel" the leading slogan in the present campaign is "all engage in the cultivation of vegetables, pigs, and poultry."

The Beats and the Squares

by Bert Cochran

THE HOLY BARBARIANS by Lawrence Lipton. Julian Messner, New York, 1959, \$5.

LIPTON announces that "the barbarian is at the gates." The language is somewhat inappropriate as it conjures up a vision of legions of blue-eyed Saxon giants storming with an elemental fury the ramparts of an effete and decadent empire. This hardly fits the bearded and besandaled beatniks. No one will accuse them of storming anything, and being knight errants of solipsism, they cannot make up any kind of army, even an army of abdication. But you don't have to be a keen observer of the social scene to have become aware of the incredible spread of this somewhat bizarre cult with its own ritualistic dress, its ghetto argot, its sex mystique.

Bohemianism is not a new proposition. It is as old as bourgeois industrialism, and a case can be made out that the *minnesingers* of the Middle Ages were a kind of Left Bank revolt against the boredom of feudal existence and the unbearable confines of medieval Church and State. Determined researchers have even pointed accusing fingers at Sappho's school on the island of Lesbos. But whatever, if any, blood lineage exists between various cultural revolts, bohemianism in the bourgeois age has been an attempt to escape from the corroding influences of a money-grubbing society by a commitment to art, to sexual love, to a more satisfactory community. Bohemia seeks to create an oasis of freedom and beauty spiritually apart from the desert of capitalist philistinism. Some cultural revolts are of exclusive artistic interest; others have a larger social importance generally of a symptomatic na-

ture. They are a sign of disease in the social body just as a lump on the human surface may alert one to a deep-going disorder in the internal mechanism.

FRANKLY, that was why I was curious to read the book. I was more interested in trying to plumb the sociological significance—if I may get fancy about it—of the rise of the beat generation than in Lipton's earnest endeavor's to enlighten me on Zen Buddhism or the magic circle of community which arises like a mysterious all-enveloping flame out of the marijuana jam sessions at the beatnik pads.

Lipton has been very helpful. Although he identifies himself as one of the "holy barbarians," he comes from the generation of the twenties and the earlier rebellions of Chicago and Greenwich Village. Consequently, for all his dedication to the new deities, he has not foresworn the need for rationality in estimating the new movement. Furthermore, his exposure to social thought in the twenties and thirties (when interest in these things did not stamp a man as either a hopeless square or fanatic sectarian) has paid off handsome dividends in the production of an excellent book which, by placing it in a social setting, provides some coherence to an essentially incoherent movement.

Fortunately, also, Lipton, because he is a product of a different day, is not quite with it in the "open" or "elliptical" free-swinging style that is so prized in beat circles. He therefore writes clearly, directly, and understandably. For my purposes, that is an advantage.

I am particularly grateful to get a

reasonable assessment of the beat movement from a conscientious artist who knows it from the outside because after the publicity hucksters had gone to work on it, it was difficult to tell bohemian revolt from synthetic fad. The mass media, ever on the alert for new sensations, have often delivered the *coup de grace* to new cultural shoots by transforming them into seven-day bike stunts and finishing off what remained by seducing their spokesmen with the glamor treatment. The techniques of the Florida real estate boom and the Atlantic City beauty contests were already employed in the twenties on Greenwich Village and "flaming youth." It wasn't clear after Luce, Hollywood, and the night clubs got through with the beatniks whether there would be anything left besides a few new cafe society entertainers and thriving coffee houses. But Lipton establishes that there is actually a personality of sorts beneath the posturings and veneer.

I pass over any extended comment on beatnik philosophy—except to touch on it another connection presently—because it has not graduated from the sophomoric. Lipton's reproduction of discussions among the hipsters on Zen, sex, and the creative act are remarkable for their evocation of flavor and mood, but their interest is primarily social, sometimes clinical, never ideological. As for Norman Mailer's recent lubrications in "The White Negro" concerning the new profound societal truths to be discovered in the pursuit of the fourth dimension of sex—well, many of us are seized with no worse brainstorm time and again, but is it not best to save these for midnight bull sessions after all hands on deck have soaked up their share of the liquor? These are assuredly times of chaos where all of us are groping half-blindly for an exit out of our suffocating caves. But I cannot believe that the map is to be found in a bottle, a pot, and a horn.

IT is likewise difficult to go along with Lipton in his opinion that the beat rebellion has deep artistic reserves from which is destined to come a new significant art. Critics with greater competence and knowledge than I have in the field are very skeptical of the experimentations to evolve a syn-

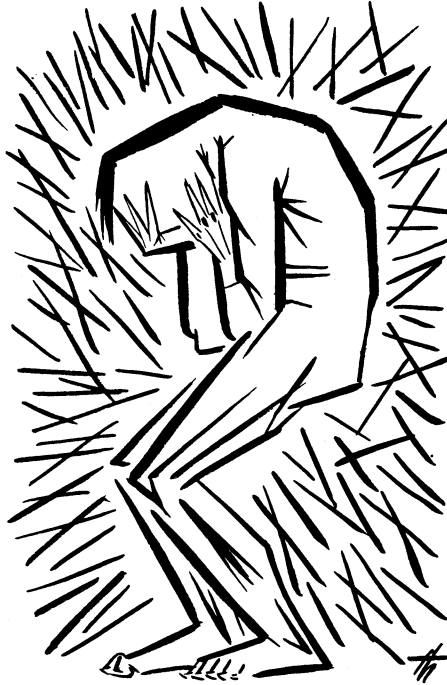
thesis of jazz and poetry, or poetry and fiction. As artistic creators, the "holy barbarians" do not compare with the luminaries of the "lost generation," thus far at any rate. But the rebellion of the fifties has more social depth than its predecessor.

The number of people who actually participated in the literary upheaval of the twenties, if we include the expatriates and all the "little magazines" at home, was tiny. As for the many thousands who drifted to Greenwich Village or the Chicago jazz haunts for the excitement and to mingle in a semi-or pseudo-bohemian atmosphere, their revolt was all but indistinguishable from the rather widespread existentialist nihilism which was sweeping across parts of middle class America. Many of the fraternity and sorority youth in mid-western and southern college towns were making their sacrifices at the altar of the new trinity of Gods—jazz, liquor and sex—in styles that were materially no different than the new crop of Greenwich Village recruits. The cultural shift—rebellion is really too strong a term for it—of the twenties was consequently tintured with the snobbery and upper class sybaritic pretensions so masterfully portrayed and personified by F. Scott Fitzgerald, although he moved and was interested in its upper circles.

THE beatnikism of the fifties is a more plebian and solid affair. Naturally, the percentage of those actually working at the arts is also slight. But tens of thousands (Mailer estimates that there are one hundred thousand) who consider themselves hipsters have demonstratively rejected the most cherished values and ideals of this society, resigned from the rat race, and are dedicated to constructing their own subterranean world. It is an amazing fact that thousands of the most sensitive of our young men and women have decided to slam the door on the middle class life extolled in pulpit and press in order to climb the slopes of a rather poverty-stricken Parnassus. The attractive force is this: the beat movement presses nerve centers which are the focal points of today's social sickness and pain, apotheosizes widespread feelings of loneliness and terror, and then transmutes these base metals into

the gold of generalized philosophy and art.

Even if the philosophy is a transplanted and naively bowdlerized Buddhism, and the art is, strictly speaking, not first rate, the beats have caught unerringly the moods of alienation that have infiltrated almost every layer of



our population. By now everybody knows what these are. As in the decadent age of the Roman Empire, there is an inchoate feeling of impending doom. The appearance on the surface is of an organized, successfully regulated, superbly meshed social mechanism, but there is a haunting fear that behind the chrome-plated facade is a Kafkaian chaos, that this machine is running wild, that it no longer responds to human direction. The correlary reaction is of individual helplessness. What can you or I do? What can any of us do? The old expression went, "Go fight City Hall!" Now man's impotence in a world that has slipped from his control has reached gargantuan proportions for the very fate of human survival is beyond his grasp. What follows is that since official talk is all a big fraud, and nothing can be done about it, let's live for the day. That's the only thing that makes sense.

The beatnik has taken these vague, half-formulated attitudes, has articu-

ated them, rhapsodized over them, whipped them into a philosophic soufflé—and thereby transformed middle class escapist dreams into a way of life. By being beat, the hipster gives up all struggle, all strife, all desire to control people and events. He quits the loathsome scramble for place and pelf. He turns his back on the shibboleths of official rhetoric—and tosses in the achievements of 150 years for good measure. Rationality, and the striving for it, is to him but another "shuck"; he accepts chaos, man's aloneness and state of anxiety as a condition of life. His grand conclusion is like a sublimated version of the philosophizing of a barroom drunk: Time has shrunk into itself. The past has no relevance in a world gone amuck and with the mushroom cloud overhead, and the future has no relevance when it has slipped from control. Only the present, only the moment of living can still be grasped, and only within it can he commune with existence. Hence, he devotes himself to sharpening and heightening his senses. He is "real gone" and "far out." That is the only way to come to terms with reality and realize his authentic identity. Under this flaming banner made up of equal parts of social abdication, individual defiance, and existentialist sensuality, the beatnik has emerged as the vanguard of the middle class subconscious, although ultra-left in his extreme measures for the easement of unbearable tensions.

THE notable thing about the new cult is not as much its adherence to an existentialist philosophy in a time like the present, as its carrying through to the end its rejection of this society by disaffiliating from what Lipton calls "Moneytheism and all its works and ways." It is true that the rebels of the twenties also seceded—that was H. L. Mencken's word for it—from Babbitdom. But it is one thing to talk of secession over expensive meals in well-appointed hostelryes (Lipton says of the twenties: "We had disaffiliated ourselves from the rat race but we had not rejected the awards of the rat race."); it is a horse of a different color for a cult to embrace poverty and scorn the prizes of the establishment. It represents the ultimate in alienation and is categorical as a vote of no confidence.

This is the chasm between the beats of the twenties and fifties. It is symbolic of society's growing estrangement from its own members.

Politically, of course, the beat movement is a cipher. Bohemian rebellions are always socially impotent, and this one is no exception to the rule. It is pointless to measure it with gauges

that are customarily employed to test political and social movements. The beats couldn't pass the lowest grammar school exam on that count. Disappointment also awaits those who try to discover in the beats some hidden embryo for a new political radicalism. They'll never find it. Bohemianism is animated by entirely different ether waves. As a

matter of fact, beatnikism feeds on the discreditment of political dissent in post-war America. But students of social disorders have a lot to learn about our society from a study of the beat movement. It is the handwriting on the wall, the sign in the sky, the burning bush. Lipton thinks it is an omen of a spiritual crisis.

BOOKS

That Dirty Word: Class

THE STATUS SEEKERS by Vance Packard. David McKay, New York, 1959, \$4.50.

MR. Packard has written a light-handed summary of the facts and indicators of class stratification in America. Like many recent attempts at social criticism, it is a journalistic effort to jell some of the vague feelings of discontent about the turn taken by American society. It seeks to convey a message the author regards as urgent: that class lines exist, that they give rise to a chase after status, that this situation is bad, because it polarizes American existence around values that are cheap, imitative, and artificial, and that this situation is getting worse, chiefly because of the change in the nature and duties of the labor force. To get this message across, the author spreads out for the reader a considerable body of fact, both statistical and anecdotal.

The book has been well reviewed in most cases, and is a best seller. But a couple of the reviews by professional sociologists were murderous. Seymour M. Lipset of the University of California, for example, writing in *The Reporter*, gives the author a merciless roughing-up, throws doubt on his honesty, denies him any shred of competence, and lets on that he is a fake anyhow, having spent twenty dollars on an associate membership in the American Sociological Society while not having any of the academic qualifications of a sociologist.

Not being even an associate member myself, perhaps I ought to keep my mouth shut, but I can't help feeling such attacks reveal some vital things about the present state of the sociological profession. There is no need to dwell on the obvious odor of guild exclusivism; the academics guard their territories like beer barons in the Prohibition days, and Mr. Packard gets the treatment reserved for outsiders who try to muscle in. What stands out most strongly in the controversy is that while Mr. Packard has written a book with a message, Professor Lipset is angry because he has not produced a book such as a sociologist might have written: purposeless, blurred, inconclusive, smugly biased in a conservative

direction, and endlessly occupied with cavils.

Briefly, Professor Lipset's attack is based on the charge that Mr. Packard distorts the evidence to show that class lines are hardening in America. As is known to those who have followed the studies in this field, this is a much disputed point. But Mr. Packard gives the bulk of the evidence quite fairly, and his conclusion is by no means so outrageous as Professor Lipset tries to make it appear. As a matter of fact most of Lipset's points are to be found in the recent text by his colleague, Joseph A. Kahl, called *The American Class Structure*, and Professor Kahl, while very cautious, reaches a conclusion on the trend of class stratification that is closer to Mr. Packard than to Professor Lipset: ". . . a small decline in over-all mobility has probably taken place" in recent decades.

WHAT Professor Lipset cannot deny, although he obviously would like to, is that apart from questions of trend (which play a very subordinate part in *The Status Seekers*), Mr. Packard has given a comprehensive and vivid picture of class lines and status strivings that *do exist in America*. To all this he can only reply, "Old hat!" entitling his review "Vance Packard Discovers America." Stripped of its academic trappings, his position is that of an apologist who, confronted with a book that reflects discredit on his Eden, rushes in shouting: "Well yes, but that's an old story, and has been going on for a long time, and besides, it's getting a little better, or at any rate it's not getting any worse, or if it is, not *much* worse!"

Of course, as readers of Mr. Packard's previous book, *The Hidden Persuaders*, will anticipate, this is not a particularly deep book, and is not designed to add much to the available thinking on the subject. It is a popularization, and while it has the faults of its type, it has also the advantage that it will get its story across to a much larger audience than the sociologists, with their smothered mutterings and strangled jargonizings, have been able to reach. But it does exhibit a number of sharp insights, which Mr. Packard ought to have explored further.

Right at the outset, for instance, he has an illuminating flash about the nature of basic class lines: "A working-class man, however, does not move up into another social class just by being able to buy a limousine, either by cash or installment, and he knows it. In terms of his productive role in our society—in contrast to his consum-

ing role—class lines in America are becoming more rigid, rather than withering away." Here Mr. Packard shows an instinct to analyze the class structure by bringing occupation, place in the industrial hierarchy, to the fore, and while he does not develop the point, it stands him in good stead throughout the book. Of all the facts about class, the most significant is that the United States has been transformed from a country made up chiefly of self-employed farmers and artisans or shopkeepers, to a nation of employees, and this process has continued right up to the present day without sign of reversal. Modern American sociology, while it has rediscovered class in the last two decades, has shied away from seizing this key link firmly, and has thus shaded its picture of our class structure with innumerable refinements and a multiplicity of criteria, which add to the completeness of our knowledge but cost us something in the kind of analytic power that can only be had by focusing on essentials before going on to details.

SECOND, Mr. Packard has, probably without designing it so, given the middle classes a rough time. A lot of his data is reminiscent of the tradition of Shaw, who could admire the ruthlessness of the ruling class, and the directness of the working class, but who had nothing but scorn for the pretensions, snobbery, and hypocrisies of the middle class. The middle class usage of "launder" for "wash," "wealthy" for "rich," "pardon?" for "what?" "Ill" for "sick," "perspiration" for "sweat," "position" for "job," "trousers" for "pants," "limbs" for "legs," and "go to business" for "go to work," are all characteristic of the striving for euphemism, adornment, and gentility which, as Mr. Packard points out, do not show up in the speech at the top of the social pyramid. The plainer and more direct usages are also characteristic of working class speech.

Where a well-fixed society matron of Dallas and Southampton, when asked for the "secret" of her success in entertaining, answered, "Why, I just give them peanuts and whisky" (you're likely to get something similar at the other end of the social scale), in the middle class home you will be smothered with an assortment of canapes, relishes, and other magazine-picture gee-gaws likely to be served more for their appearance and as a score in the one-upmanship game than to appease appetites and stimulate thirst.

"In general," Mr. Packard writes, "both the upper classes and lower classes in America tend to be more forthright and matter-of-fact in calling a spade a spade . . . than people in between, members of the semi-upper and limited-success classes." He cites Lord Melbourne's opinion: "The higher and lower classes, there's some good in them, but the middle classes are all affectation and conceit and pretense and concealment."

There is no need for me to try to categorize or summarize the information contained in this book. Largely, it deals with signs and indicators of class, in the fields of housing and neighborhoods, occupational and consuming patterns, sex habits and friendship patterns, clubs and associations, church affiliations and voting patterns, education, and race or nationality barriers. Much of it is based on the work of Hollingshead, Warner, Kahl, Baltzell, Mills, Whyte, and others whose writings have been reviewed in these pages. But even readers who are familiar with the data will get much that is new, in the form of anecdotes, personal experiences, newspaper items, and similar bits and pieces that add vividness and depth to the story.

"Until recent years," Mr. Packard points out at the start of his book, "even sociologists had shrunk away from a candid exploration of social class in America. Social classes, they realized, were not supposed to exist. Furthermore, Karl Marx had made class a dirty word. As a result the social scientists, until a few years ago, knew more about the social classes of New Guinea than they did of those in the United States of America."

IN view of this, it is good to see a book telling Americans this story—which many of them know from personal observation but which is partly obscured in their minds by myth and illusion—about class stratification. It is a further step in our national maturing that we can face things which, only a few years ago, were indignantly denied as "socialist claptrap." The book is spreading a bit of authentic knowledge around, no matter what Professor Lipset may say to the contrary.

I think all this is true, yet somehow, as I read the book, a worm of doubt kept gnawing at me. Is it purely a thirst for enlightenment that makes a book like this one a best seller? I noticed on the margin of my copy—this time a library and not a review copy—that one reader had carefully computed what must have been his own status position according to a numerical scale which Packard gives. I could not help but wonder how many readers were soaking up status tips on neighborhoods, clubs, speech habits, home decoration and furnishing, and the like. Can it be that, like so much else in this amazing country, where idealism, science, knowledge, and morality have been put to peculiar uses, this book too is serving as a strivers' handbook; that readers, perhaps despite themselves, are taking the marks and frills of status not as vanities but as important information well worth

having; that a lesson in maturity of taste and independence of spirit is being valued as a practical guide to the status system; that, instead of being appalled by the picture, many of the Americans who have made this a best seller are studying it avidly for tips on how to show up better?

But that way lies madness. Let's assume that all the readers of Mr. Packard's book are equalitarian, above such petty feelings, and strictly objective in their interest. None of them, we are sure, will contradict the assumption.

H. B.

Keynes in the Colonies

THE KEYNESIAN THEORY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT by Kenneth K. Kurihara. Columbia University Press, New York, 1959, \$5.50.

KEYNES' economic theory dealt with "mature" capitalism and its alleged incapability of further "automatic" development. It was designed to combat depression and large-scale unemployment. If the rate of private capital formation is too slow, that is to be compensated by government financing and public works. The great depression ended in war and the latter solved the problems with which Keynes had been concerned. Meanwhile, however, war and post-war conditions have required modifications and implementations of Keynes' original theory to fit it into the changing economic scene. Professor Kurihara's present book attempts to apply Keynesian theory to the entirely un-Keynesian problem of the development of capitalism in underdeveloped nations, i.e., he extends the theory from "mature" to "immature" capitalism.

Kurihara introduces his subject with a brief background review of various theories of economic development from Adam Smith, through Malthus, List, Marx and a few lesser lights, to Joseph Schumpeter. Keynes' theory, in Kurihara's view, serves as a frame of reference for the endeavor in the book to "clarify the technical possibilities and limitations of economic growth in general and of the economic development of underdeveloped countries in particular."

As important structural characteristics of underdeveloped economies, Kurihara lists low per-capita real income, shortage of natural resources in relation to population, insufficient capital equipment, technological backwardness, underemployment, extreme income inequalities, and foreign indebtedness. To end these conditions, there must be capital accumulation and industrialization at a "socially optimal rate of growth" with respect to population, technology and capital. This rate of growth must be desirable from the standpoint of both consumer welfare and labor productivity. But for quite a number of reasons, the rate of saving, or accumulation, needed to finance this rate of growth may not be forthcoming. Saving, or non-consumption, moreover, does

not necessarily release human and material resources for the production of capital goods, because of the different types of labor, equipment, and raw materials released from the consumer-goods industries. In short, Kurihara concerns himself in great detail, and by way of model making, with various difficulties confronting capital accumulation and discusses these difficulties *vis-a-vis* the opinions and models of other contemporary economists.

ALL this is instructive and no doubt true. But it does not exhaust the problem, for it leaves out the exploitative interrelationship between advanced and colonial capitalist nations which is as much an aspect of capital accumulation as is the exploitation of labor by capital in each separate capitalist nation. Here, however, Kurihara hopes, as Keynes had hoped, that "international economic homogenization" will lead to "universal prosperity and lasting peace," if only the saving propensities of the world's richer nations are put at the service of the development needs of poorer countries. The World Bank is to bring about this reversal of capitalistic behavior and though not much has been accomplished along these lines, according to Kurihara, it is the very "idea of a World Bank for the specific purpose of reconstruction and development that is both novel and significant."

By considering "immature" capitalism, Keynes' "general" theory of employment loses its "generality." It does not account for unemployment caused by a lack of an effective demand sufficient for the utilization of existing capital. As Joan Robinson suggested, there are two types of unemployment: "Marxian unemployment," i.e., the expanding and contracting industrial reserve army in the course of capital accumulation and "Keynesian unemployment," i.e., unemployment as a lack of effective demand under conditions of stagnation. Kurihara thinks it a mistake to dismiss Keynes' theory of employment as totally inapplicable in underdeveloped economies as these economies, too, experience cyclical shortages of effective demand. However, Kurihara acknowledges the greater importance of non-Keynesian unemployment inherent in underdeveloped economies and manifesting itself in disguised form in unproductive occupations. Far from helping capital accumulation, this disguised unemployment is more "likely to hinder it by giving 'aid and comfort' to dubious projects of an employment-generating rather than a capacity-increasing nature."

"Disguised unemployment" in underdeveloped economies simply means that people try to exist even under the most miserable circumstances and are quite unable to pay attention to the "long-run" needs of capital accumulation. Whether "dubious" or not, the preference of an "employment-generating rather than capacity-increasing" scheme of economic activity is not a question of "economic choice" but of necessity, expressed in political actions within the limits of existing material conditions.

IN the bourgeois mind, economic progress presupposes an unequal distribution of income in order to enable the capitalists to invest part of their income for the benefit of all mankind. However, when the rich no longer invest, this justification of inequality ceases to convince even the capitalistically perverted mind and the Keynesians recommend the narrowing of income disparities. So long, however, as the capitalists re-invest, it appears to them, as Kurihara puts it, that "the classical economists had been correct in tacitly justifying income inequality as an indispensable prerequisite to economic progress." Yet, in Kurihara's mind there is at least a theoretical possibility of the "compatibility of greater equality and capital growth"; in other words, there is the possibility of giving to the development problem in backward countries a Keynesian twist.

Keynes' anti-depression policies were of an inflationary nature, opposed by some economists and hailed by others. Inflation as a means of capital development may be related also to underdeveloped economies and there, too, it finds friends and enemies. Kurihara favors the Keynesian approach, provided it does not lead to hyper-inflation and detrimental consequences. Fiscal policy, too, according to Kurihara, should serve the requirements of accumulation. The state's taxation policy must influence the "propensity to consume," in such a way as to assure savings and a rapid rate of capital expansion. But here, again, he thinks that "fiscal operations to redistribute income from lower to higher brackets for the sake of greater private saving may come in conflict with an 'egalitarian' objective that an underdeveloped economy may entertain." And thus it is only "by abstracting from its sociological impact . . . that one can concur in the classical justification of income in equality as a *sine qua non* of economic progress." Because of this situation, Kurihara comes to the indecisive conclusion that "the realization of a more comprehensive long-term fiscal policy for stable growth depends not only on further theoretical analysis but also on how far the economic possibilities of fiscal policy can be made reconcilable with its political limitations."

KURIHARA ends with a chapter on foreign trade and economic development. After discussing the implications of various Keynesian and anti-Keynesian approaches, he concludes that "if the choice must be made between domestic growth and balance-of-payments equilibrium, most underdeveloped economies will probably prefer

the former to the latter . . . for capacity growth is a presumption in favor of gradually improving balance of payments, while excessive preoccupation with the balance-of-payments problem tends to encourage the one-sided growth of 'exchange-earning' industries at the expense of overall industrialization, as colonial history so abundantly illustrates." But this is not a question of one-sided decisions but of international power relations and their economic substance. Kurihara merely offers the hope, based on no evidence, of a gradual easing of the balance-of-payments problem in the long run.

In summing up, Kurihara compares his own ideas with those of other post-Keynesian theorists. He finds unrealistic the liberalistic interpretation of Keynesianism, favored by some of Keynes' disciples, in advanced economies and even more so in underdeveloped economies. Neither is he inclined to accept some "Keynesian variant of laborism" as advanced by Joan Robinson, or complete government ownership of the means of production in a system of "state socialism." The stabilizing role of the state associated with the name of Keynes must, in his view, "be coupled with its develop-

mental role in the specific context of underdeveloped countries and on a much larger scale than in the past." The state must "maximize productive capacity" and this necessitates the mixing "of central control and central ownership in proportions appropriate to the task and consistent with the social philosophy of a particular country."

This is, indeed, a generous attitude in the Hegelian spirit which sees the real as rational and the rational as real. But it incorporates also the abdication of political economy by way of economics. As Keynes' theory was not a theory of capital development, but merely a fancy description of depression conditions and of the measures used to combat them, so Kurihara's post-Keynesian theory of economic development is not much more than an attempt to fit actual disconnected occurrences into a set of economic categories. They offer no clue as to the real nature of society and the character of its development, for, like Keynes, Kurihara takes capitalism for granted, and its economic system is for him economics *per se*. If something different should evolve, this may be too bad but it lies outside the economists' jurisdiction.

PAUL MATTICK

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/s/ Bert Cochran
Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of September, 1959.

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