

# INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

## **The Future of Socialism In America**

— Two Views —

**Socialism —  
At Rock Bottom**

by Harvey O'Connor

**We Must Start  
From Where We Are**

by the Editors

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## **The Soviet Challenge To Capitalist Economy**

by Arne Swabeck

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*The Workers Councils in Poland*  
*Anthropology Today*  
*Early Years of American Communism*

by Edgar Morin  
by Evelyn Reed  
by James P. Cannon

**Spring 1957**

**35 cents**

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Vol. 18 No. 2

Spring 1957

Whole No. 139

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## From Our Readers

Only a few days after mailing the last issue of *International Socialist Review* we received the following letter from Needles, California:

Editor:

I received the Winter issue of the *ISR* yesterday. I would have written then but I was so absorbed in reading the magazine that I decided to wait. The issue was superb. . . I always judge the *ISR* by the following points: 1) The quality and number of mistakes, and 2) The clarity of the writing, i.e., whether it is easily understandable. This issue came through on both points with flying colors.

W.D.K.

\* \* \*

A critical opinion, which is just as welcome, comes from Detroit:

Editor:

Not being a member of the SWP or any other leftist group, I have no right to criticize the policy of any or-

ganization. No one has ever proved that the best way to combat capitalism is to condemn the Soviet Union. Any organization has the right to isolate itself from a third of the world if it so desires. Likewise the American workers have the right to utilize their energy in the struggle against capitalist exploitation and also against the growing threat of a clerical dictatorship. Thanks for the copy of *International Socialist Review*.

An Auto Worker  
Detroit

\* \* \*

With the publication of the Winter issue we wrote to the growing list of subscribers to the *Militant*, the weekly revolutionary socialist newspaper. We invited *Militant* readers to subscribe to *ISR* and sent them a sample copy. In the first few weeks following this mailing we received 18 new subscriptions from all parts of the country. Some of the new subscribers ask for back numbers of the magazine in order to get the first installments of serialized articles by Trotsky and the letters of James P. Cannon on the history of the

American Communist movement.

We are happy to report a modest but continuous increase in both subscription and bundle circulation. This is true not only for domestic but also foreign circulation. We have a new distributor in Scotland and our London agent has ordered an additional 75 copies for regular distribution. Requests for books by Leon Trotsky and subscriptions to *ISR* have come from Ceylon and India during the last month.

Two letters that couldn't be published in our last issue follow:

\* \* \*

Editor:

I am studying Socialism and find it quite congenial to my way of thinking. I want you to know I got a lot of knowledge and enjoyment out of reading the *International Socialist Review*. Long live socialism and the Socialist Workers Party.

R.A.L.

\* \* \*

Editor:

Your book review of *Militarism and Civil Liberties* by David Miller was very exciting, interesting and inviting. It's the first time in my life I've ever bought a book after reading a book review. When I was in the army, the army tried to ban the pocket book, "From Here to Eternity." They were so busy banning it that, in their typical stupidity, they didn't notice it was playing in the Post movie and gave it a million dollars worth of publicity by trying to ban it!

C.D.

**INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW** is published quarterly by the International Socialist Review Publishing Association.

Editor: Joseph Hansen

Business Manager: Frances James

Managing Editor:

Duncan Ferguson

ADDRESS communications and subscriptions to 116 University Place, New York 3, New York. Telephone: ALgonquin 5-7460.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: U.S.A. and Latin America, \$1.25 a year (4 issues); single copies, 35c.; bundles, 25c. a copy for 5 copies and up. Foreign and Canada, \$1.50 a year (4 issues); single copies, 35c.; bundles, 26c. a copy for 5 copies and up.

Reentered as second class matter April 20, 1954, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

# The Future of Socialism In America

— Two Views —

## Socialism — At Rock Bottom

by Harvey O'Connor

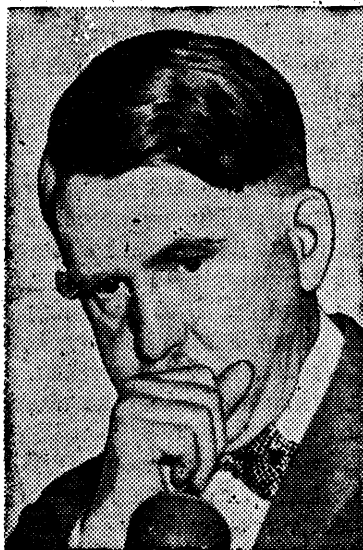
We have always said that the future belongs to socialism. In recent years that has seemed a dim prospect here in the United States. The very word "socialism" has almost dropped out of the American vocabulary, so complete has been the abandonment of the concept in the past generation. About the only recognition given the word is in its connotation of describing what exists in the Soviet sector of the world, and there, because of the drenching propaganda to which we have been subjected, socialism has become synonymous with tyranny. What a sad fate for a word which in better days was linked always with liberty!

If the concept of socialism has reached rock bottom we may at least be cheerful for that reason. The concept now has no place to go but up. And up it will go, without a doubt. The threat of national suicide tied up with our current social system is forcing people to wonder if there is not some way out. That they wonder is of course the fault of people who call themselves socialists. If there were a socialist movement worthy of the name, the people could know that

there is an alternative to suicide.

The inky curtain that hides the plight of one-third of the nation that is still poorly fed, wretchedly housed and badly clothed, of the two-thirds (what an understatement!) that is systematically poisoned and chloroformed in our schools and in other channels of mass idiocy, has convinced some that there is no hope in preaching the message of socialism.

Fortunately, when it is darkest,



HARVEY O'CONNOR

the dawn is not far away. There is a reawakening of interest in socialism. Many are willing to listen, for deep down they know there is something rotten. They are looking for something that makes sense. What Karl Marx had to say a hundred years ago has a good bit of application today, and it's about time someone took the trouble to show people where hope lies.

A clear sign of the reawakening is the discussion going on now about "unity," "regroupment," the strengthening of the organs of socialist opinion. There is not too much hope for any early coalescing of the existing forces, for the disagreements in the past have been too hopeless, strange and bitter to assure any genuine unity now among those who are quarreling about the wrong things.

The socialist movement in this country for a generation has been like an iceberg, with only one-tenth of it showing, and that tenth all split into forbidding icy crags. The nine-tenths has been below the surface, representing those who never could join the various sects, or had never even heard of them.

The new socialist movement will not grow out of the old sects, with their endless scholastic disputes about what should have been done in Russia (or Hungary, or Poland, or Tibet), whether Lenin (or Trotsky, or Stalin, or Tito, or Gomulka, or whoever) had or has the "correct" program. It will grow out of the needs and thinking of people

in this country as they face the prospect of national suicide involved in the atomic weapon race, the growing threat of national idiocy implicit in our "educational-entertainment" industry, the poverty and misery of a good share of our people (and especially the Negroes), and the stark menace of

losing completely what remains to us of the Bill of Rights.

The new socialist movement will be based on young people, the minority who can free themselves of their miseducation and their fear of being obliterated economically in their effort to earn their daily bread. Such young people will be

both intelligent and brave, for they will need both virtues. They will look with wonderment at the sad record of the socialist movement (did I say "movement"?) in this country in the past generation, and build something a lot better. The sooner they take over, the better!

# We Must Start From Where We Are

by the Editors

**W**E ARE glad to publish Harvey O'Connor's contribution on the subject of socialist regroupment. A long-time foe of monopoly capitalism and champion of socialist ideas, O'Connor is the author of the well-known work, "Empire of Oil." We hope others will follow him in presenting their ideas on what should be done to bring together the genuine socialist forces in America.

In considering the problem of regroupment, the question immediately arises: Where to begin? To us, it seems necessary to begin with what we have, namely, the existing organizations. The powerful socialist party that we wish to see built cannot be conjured from the atmosphere. It must be constructed by and with the human material now available.

Historical continuity is a consistent feature of the socialist movement everywhere. Each generation of socialist fighters has stood upon the shoulders of its predecessors. How will our youth learn, if not from the older generation — studying both their failures and their triumphs, for the history of the socialist movement from the time of its founders is compounded of both. To us, it seems neither necessary nor desirable to attempt a new start

that leaves the past out of account.

O'Connor, on the other hand, would begin by rejecting what he calls the "old sects." He would do this, apparently, without any regard for the programs they follow. Indeed, it appears that he would not even inquire into the relative merits of the different programs, assuming them all to be bad or inadequate or of no consequence one way or the other, since they are the product of "endless scholastic disputes."

We believe a good architect does not reject the material at hand because it does not conform to ideal specifications. Since O'Connor rejects the existing organizations, which we consider to be the only realistic starting point in a socialist regroupment, he is under an obligation to tell us where he would begin. We agree with him wholeheartedly that the new socialist movement will be based on young people. But winning the youth for socialism must be the goal of the new movement. Obviously it cannot be the starting point.

So the question remains: Where to begin? Upon further reflection O'Connor will, we feel sure, find it desirable to define his attitude toward the existing social-

ist organizations. They are the repositories of that body of experience in socialist struggle upon which the youth must draw; they embrace the builders of the initial structure of the party of victorious American socialism — there are no others.

We must confront another question. Political power is wielded by social classes through political parties. The transference of power from one class to another is not an automatic process. The party of socialism, facing a well-organized capitalist class highly conscious of its interests, must strive to excel the enemy in both organization and conscious will. It cannot, if it is to reach the historic goal, be an amorphous all-inclusive society of undisciplined dabblers, for whom discussion and debate are the highest forms of political activity.

This at once brings up the question of principle, or program. A party with a vague program, or, worse still, no program at all, would be like a soldier without a gun.

How are we to distinguish between the programs now extant, those of the Communist Party, the Social-Democracy and the Trotskyists, unless we compare them carefully? We think that this com-

# The Soviet Challenge To Capitalist Economy

by Arne Swabeck

parison is a necessary first step toward regroupment of the forces of revolutionary socialism. We would like O'Connor to take an active part in this process of examination and evaluation. He can do much to help crystallize political ideas.

We must say quite frankly that we cannot agree with O'Connor that the disputes about what should have been done in Russia, etc., were simply "scholastic." Stalinist policies gave the Soviet Union a totalitarian police state, replete with frame-up trials and executions, mass deportations and slave-labor camps, thereby retarding the country's development and besmirching the good name of socialism. Stalinism in its evil course, aided and abetted by the Social-Democracy, sabotaged the revolutionary struggle for socialism and thereby helped prolong the life of capitalism. Why is it "scholastic" to discuss all this?

Stalinism and Social-Democracy have delivered grievous blows to socialism. But we are not among those who believe that the negative experiences of mankind are a dead loss. People learn from *all* their experiences, whether positive or negative. In the regroupment of the revolutionary socialist forces in America, we are convinced we shall see a synthesis of both.

O'Connor sees "not too much hope for any early coalescing of existing (socialist) forces, for the disagreements in the past have been too hopeless, strange and bitter to assure any genuine unity now among those who are quarreling about the wrong things."

More optimistic are we. Out of the present ferment in the radical movement and the coming radicalization of the workers we see the emergence of a revolutionary socialist party that will lead the working class in conquering America for the American people.

**T**HE dynamism of the rapidly advancing Soviet industrial development is gradually dawning upon an incredulous capitalist world. In the military field and in the diplomatic sphere the challenge of Soviet power and effectiveness has long been recognized by leading circles in the capitals of the West. But a challenge on the economic front was, until recently, considered unthinkable.

Ever since the 1917 revolution it had been smugly assumed that whatever else might be true about the Russians, they would always lag behind economically. This idea was fortified, especially in the United States, by the official bourgeois doctrine that capitalist relations of society are incomparably the most productive and a "natural order," as Adam Smith put it, in which "man's self-interest is God's providence." The validity of this official doctrine seemed borne out during the last fifteen years by the fabulous productivity of American economy and, to a lesser extent, by the recent economic upturn in Western Europe. But these beliefs are now about to be swept into the dustbin of history.

The rise of the Soviet Union to the position of a modern industrial power, second only to the United States, has compelled the capitalists to take another look at all their past perspectives. Industrially the USSR has far outstripped the capitalist countries of Europe. Its tempos of growth are without parallel. And living social forces are now settling the de-

bate about which is more productive — capitalism or the new economic forms established by the Bolshevik revolution. The socialist foundation laid down in the USSR in 1917 has demonstrated its right to victory, not in theory alone, but in terms of steel, coal, electric power and instruments of production.

The Soviet Union now occupies first place among nations in the rate of continuous capital investment in industry. About 25% of its 1955 national income was re-invested as industrial capital, according to a survey of the UN Economic Commission for Europe. For the United States the rate of capital investments, government and private, was about 18% of national income, and this was the highest percentage in the post-war period. According to the ECE, France and Britain ranked lowest in capital investments with a rate of 8% and 6% respectively.

Of course, the high rate of capital accumulation in the Soviet Union has its opposite side of low living standards for the working population. But this we shall discuss later.

A study of Soviet economy in the April, 1956, *Lloyd's Bank Review* of London calculates that in 1950 the Soviet Union's industrial output was 35% of the United States figure. In 1955 it came close to 50%. For the same period the authors estimate that the industrial output of the United States increased by 24%, while that of the Soviet Union made a leap of 75%. Other estimates, for the same period, came to roughly

similar conclusions.

At the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, held in February 1956, Khrushchev claimed a twenty-fold increase of Soviet industrial output since 1929. Of course, in the early stages of industrialization, starting out from a low level, percentage increases will naturally be large. Yet, however exaggerated Khrushchev's claim may be, the astounding growth is acknowledged from all sides. Moreover, the Soviet achievement stands out more sharply in view of the colossal destruction of industrial plants in World War II. In comparison, American industrial output for the same period (26 years) is variously estimated to be from two and one-half to three times; and not a single American industrial plant suffered damage from the war. So, the discrepancy in the figures, whatever it may be, is of far less importance than the general trend that is indicated.

Consider, for example, the wild gyrations of the American economy since 1929. It took the catastrophic plunge into the Great Depression and went up to the high peaks of war production during World War II and the intervention in the Korean civil war. Since then we have oscillated between relative prosperity, artificially stimulated by a gigantic armaments program, and recessions, farm crises and the mounting inflation that has cut the purchasing power of the dollar in half. Compared to this delirious performance the Soviet economy — in which recessions or depressions are not known — presents a picture of robust health and enviable stability.

### Labor Productivity

The relative advance of labor productivity affords another means of comparing the two world economic systems. Its supreme importance lies in the fact that labor productivity is the measure of strength of an economic structure. "All economy," said Marx, "comes down in the last

analysis to an economy of time." And the function of technique is precisely to increase the productivity of human labor.

But the difficulty of making an exact estimate of labor productivity is commonly recognized. Considerable variations in given industries occur over specific periods, depending on many different factors. And when evaluations of relative productivity levels are extended to a comparison between nations, many more variables are involved. Galenson makes this amply clear in his study of Soviet and American productivity.\* He traces the development of several specific industries, but direct calculations cover only the pre-war period, with some suggestions of comparative trends up to 1950. Thus the estimated productivity of Soviet labor in 1937-39, for the industries examined, would average out to about 42% of that of American labor. It is worth noting that a contemporary Soviet statement reached approximately the same conclusions.

Galenson calls attention to the decline of Soviet labor productivity due to the destruction of plants and equipment in the war. But the lost ground has been more than recovered, for a 1950 Soviet industrial productivity index indicates a substantial narrowing of the pre-war U.S.-Soviet productivity gap. While Galenson expresses some doubts about this, the editors of *Lloyd's Bank Review* estimated that Soviet labor productivity had advanced in 1955 to about 50% of the American rate and might be about the same as the British. And here we enter the most significant aspect of the question — the rate of increase of labor productivity.

For the decade 1928-38 Galenson concludes that Soviet industrial labor productivity rose at a rate, compounded annually, of about 6% a year. Evaluating this

\* *Labor Productivity in Soviet and American Industry*—A Research Study by the Rand Corporation. Columbia University Press. 1955.

against the American experience, he cites Solomon Fabricant's authoritative conclusion that during the 40 years from 1899 to 1939 the average annual productivity increase in U.S. manufacturing was about 2% per man and 2.75% per man hour. Thereupon Galenson hazards the guess "that the Soviet productivity increase from 1928 to 1938 has been unmatched." The rate declined in the 1940-1950 decade. Included in this period was the effect of destruction of plants and equipment during the war; nevertheless Soviet index figures imply an average rate of productivity growth of about 3% a year. Against this, Galenson cites the 1947 *U.S. Census of Manufactures*, which indicates an annual rate of productivity increase in U.S. manufacturing of about 1% between 1939 and 1947. The commonly accepted rate of 2.5% for U.S. manufacturing apparently failed to materialize. But Galenson adds that there might have been an approximate annual productivity increase in American industry of 2% since then, while *The Nation's Business*, August 1956 estimates an annual average of 2.9% from 1947 to 1954.

These figures for the U.S. do not seem very impressive when compared to the growth of Soviet labor productivity during the fifth Five Year Plan (1950-55). Although projected targets were admitted to have not been fully attained, with agriculture lagging far behind its goals, Bulganin reported to the Twentieth Congress that in industry productivity rose 44% or an average annual increase compounded of 7.6%. "Indeed," exclaimed Khrushchev, "higher productivity accounted for more than two-thirds of the total increase of industrial output during the fifth Five Year Plan."

According to Bulganin and Khrushchev the increase in labor productivity is due solely to the superiority of planned production. Basically this is true. But it does not tell the whole story. Intensified labor, spurred by the bu-

reaucratic whip, became a part of the whole process of industrial growth. It became a part also of the intensified social antagonisms.

### Facts or Lies?

But the question has often been asked: "Are Soviet data reliable?" No serious analysis has unearthed outright fabrications. But bureaucratic pressure develops a tendency to embellish the facts, and exaggerate accomplishments. Besides, under the same pressure, statistics for segments of the industry where growth rates are low can be conveniently dropped. Over and against this stands the necessity of maintaining a sufficiently accurate statistical control of measurements of production as well as productivity without which rational planning and allocation of resources, human and material, would prove impossible. And Galenson comments on his examination of Soviet data: "To construct a fabricated system of statistics attaining such a degree of internal consistency would require herculean labor."

A Columbia University study, made by Dr. Seymour Melman, indicates that the productive efficiency of Soviet industry is going up twice as fast as that of the United States and two to three times as fast as that of Western Europe. The rise of Soviet productive efficiency is estimated at a rate of roughly 6% a year. Dr. Calvin Hoover reaches a similar conclusion in the January *Foreign Affairs*. It is true that these figures are more conservative than Soviet estimates. Nevertheless the general trend is now clearly established; the *rate* of growth of both production and of labor productivity is far greater under the socialist type of property forms and state planning than under the most highly developed capitalist economy.

Soviet post-war trade has leaped to almost three times the prewar level. The share of the Soviet bloc countries, including China and Eastern Europe, in total world trade reached about 10% in 1955.

It illustrates one aspect of the growing interdependence of nations in world economy. Even though roughly four-fifths of this trade is carried on within the Soviet bloc, this only serves to point up the severe losses incurred by the imperialist world. And now, while the capitalist embargo against trade with the Soviet bloc is being whittled down gradually, the Soviet Union has embarked on its avowed aim of competitive penetration of the world market. No major trade deals are involved so far; but the potentials are indicated by the stormy growth of Soviet industry. Hence, in Wall Street as well as in Washington, this emerging economic penetration is viewed with ill-disguised apprehension.

### In Science, Too

But the imperialists, who once felt so sure of their world supremacy because of the superiority of capitalist industry, have shown even greater apprehension over Soviet progress in science. It is now recognized that since the 1917 revolution the advancement of science and engineering—despite some lamentable instances to the contrary—has been fostered by Soviet planning. "A prodigious effort has been expended on scientific and technical education," says Allan Dulles, the Director of American Central Intelligence. (*U. S. News and World Report*, May 11, 1956.) And as one example he cites the fact that in 1955 the Soviet Union graduated 130,000 students in the physical and biological sciences as against 77,000 in the U. S. For graduates in engineering the comparative figures were 62,000 as against 24,000.

The apprehension of Allan Dulles is shared by former Senator William Benton, who, upon his return from a visit to Russia, cried out in alarm: "The Soviet Union is challenging us fundamentally at what have traditionally been our two strongest points, technology and mass education." In the *New York Times* of April

1, 1956, he described his experience at a Moscow bookstore overrun by 15- and 16-year olds, excitedly buying, not comic books or Westerns, but texts of physics, engineering and chemistry. In other words, the interest in science is higher among the Soviet people than among the American.

How does the United States compare? At its last annual meeting the American Association for the Advancement of Science considered an extensive committee report on social aspects of science. "The social environment in the United States," said the report, "does not elicit a maximum interest in science . . . on the part of the public or of those who attempt to judge the public mind for purposes of directing the media of information." The report complained that agencies which use scientific knowledge (industrial management, military and medical) encourage scientific research which "seems to promise information that might be useful for their own specific purposes."

In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, the function of science is closely integrated with the planned social and economic development—including, of course, the military aspect—not, however, to extract maximum profits for private entrepreneurs, but to increase national income. Science advances on a qualitatively new foundation, assuming direct responsibility within the conscious overall social direction and development of the productive forces. This leads to a greater utilization of human intellectual resources, as demonstrated by the ability of planned economy to attract scientists and to generate science.

But the most eloquent testimony to the progress of science in the USSR comes from a group of American scientists who participated in a Moscow conference on high-energy particle physics in May 1956. They reported that the Soviet Union has achieved a lead in pure nuclear research that the United States probably cannot

overcome within the next ten years.

Two American physicists, Marshak and Wilson, described in the *Scientific American* August, 1956, the advanced nature of the experiments at the great new physical research center at Bolshaya Volga, near Moscow. "They knocked my eye out," Wilson said, ". . . the detectors, counters and electronic circuitry are not the homemade affairs typical of a U.S. laboratory but are beautifully engineered."

Almost a couple of centuries of painstaking technological research and development in the capitalist world have been absorbed by the Soviet Union in a few decades. At the same time, new and incomparably more effective industrial methods corresponding to planned directives were made possible by concentrating the means of production in the hands of the state. The results achieved reveal the inner powers and resources of the Soviet Union as the material expression of a new and progressive historical tendency. But the grandeur of these achievements underlines all the more heavily the still existing inadequacies.

### Cracks and Seams

Comparative indices for the volume of *per capita* production are far less favorable to the Soviet Union. While the amount of coal produced per inhabitant is only slightly higher in the United States, yet for such basic industrial items as steel and oil, the U.S. per capita figure is almost 3 and 5 times as large respectively. The far greater proportion of the latter figure is due primarily to the shift to oil in the U.S. for industry and transport. And while the most striking expansion has occurred in Soviet production of electric power — a 34-fold increase since 1929 — the U.S. per capita output is still about four and one-half times as large. Per capita annual use of electricity in the U.S. is 3,455 kilowatts compared to 758 in the USSR. However, Soviet production of machine tools,

in 1955, exceeded that of the United States, according to Allan Dulles, which would indicate proximity in this vital industry. Moreover, by the end of 1955 — with the completion of the fifth Five Year Plan — Soviet industrial output and labor productivity were only about half that of the United States.

As an explanation in this instance, the time element is an important consideration. It could not be expected that the Soviet Union would attain the U.S. level of technique, either quantitatively or qualitatively, in the brief span of a few decades. The relatively leisurely development in the United States permitted a technically more homogeneous and therefore a more efficient industrial and agricultural structure. It permitted a more harmonious integration of plants and equipment, a higher coordination among factors of production and more adequate means of transportation. Other advantages, not the least of which was access to the resources of the world market, favored the United States.

In contrast the Soviet economy still contains gaping disproportions. The backward and antiquated exist alongside of the most advanced; motive power by draft animals is combined with the latest in nuclear development; and the backwardness of certain branches greatly decreases the useful operation of others. Besides, bureaucratic arbitrariness and mismanagement aggravates all disproportions.

Concerning machinery and equipment Bulganin complains ". . . we still have many old turning lathes . . . the foundry machines . . . have only one-third or one-quarter of the productivity of modern automatic and semi-automatic machines . . . the level of mechanization is insufficient, and the proportion of hand labor is very high." And indicating bureaucratic mismanagement, Bulganin adds: "In certain branches of industry production capacity is

by no means being used to the full."

Means of transportation are altogether insufficient. The Soviet railway system has only about one-third the American total of 370,000 miles of tracks. And ". . . It must be admitted," says Khrushchev, "that railway transport is lagging behind technically. In the main, steam locomotives are used, although it is a well known fact that the efficiency of steam traction is low . . . only 2,267 kilometers of railway, or 58% of the five-year target, were electrified in the course of the last five years."

Turning to the problem of freight haulage by roads, Khrushchev hints at some more bureaucratic mismanagement. He points an accusing finger at the "unbelievable lack of centralization. A vast number of dwarf organizations have sprung up," says Khrushchev, "to which many heads of plants and institutions cling. Suffice it to say that 85 per cent of these organizations have ten vehicles or less."

But the disproportion between industry and agriculture presents a far more serious problem. Agriculture has consistently been the weakest element in Soviet economy, a fact now officially admitted. Its traditional backwardness, the past disasters of forced collectivization, and the recurrent peasant passive resistance, are all well known. Even today crop yields per hectare are far less than in advanced European and American farm areas. As a result food and industrial crops have remained in short supply.

It is true that soil conditions, rainfall, temperature and other climatic factors are generally less favorable in the USSR. In addition there is inadequate irrigation, commercial fertilizers, buildings and equipment for livestock, not to mention the lack of rural electrification, all of which require large capital investments. Even more detrimental has been the long-standing Kremlin policy of favoring the development of in-



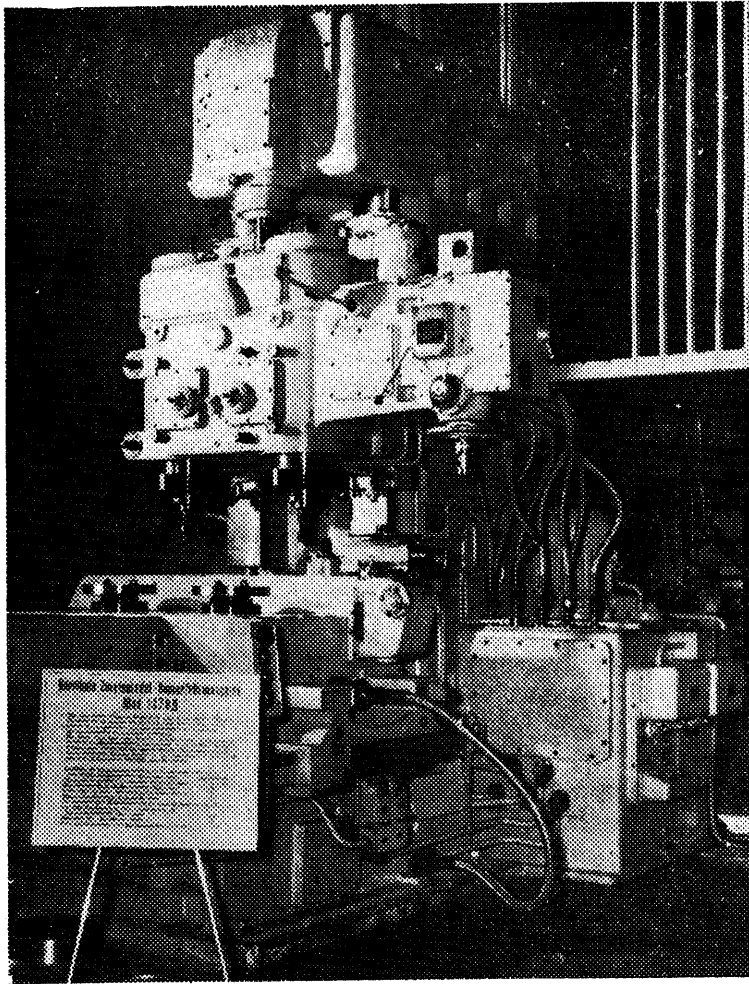
dustry at the expense of agriculture. This has meant lack of machinery for the collectives and lack of manufactured goods for the countryside with the consequent fostering of individualistic tendencies among the peasants who favor their midget plots to make a livelihood. As a result, output per farm laborer has remained relatively low. In rough terms it requires one farm worker to supply four persons in the USSR, compared with one farm worker for every sixteen persons in the United States. These were the conditions that prompted Khrushchev to admit at the Twentieth Congress that the Central Committee "has brought to light serious shortcomings and mistakes in the guidance of agriculture. . ." Guidance by whom if not by the bureaucracy? Acknowledging the importance of grain farming as the foundation of agriculture, Khrushchev was compelled to admit further:

"The outcome of all this was that in 1953, when the requirements in grain had risen greatly in comparison with the pre-revolutionary years, the area under grain was almost the same as in 1913."

Considerable improvements have been claimed for 1956. The harvest is reported to be the largest in the history of Russia. Unfortunately one year's crop, even a bumper crop, is not yet decisive for future perspectives. Least of all can it decide the ultimate success or failure of the presently extended cultivation of the semi-arid, "virgin and fallow lands" of Central Asia and West Siberia.

### The Sixth Plan

The sixth Five Year Plan aims to overcome some of the more glaring disproportions in the Soviet economic structure; it also aims at a more permanent solution of the farm problem. State capital investment in agriculture is to be nearly double the amount of the preceding plan — approximately 120 billion rubles. Collective farms are expected to invest



A vertical two-spindle copy-milling machine (MOD 1C70D). Able to work simultaneously on two pieces placed next to each other. The machine has two tables that can be moved hydraulically in two directions. Exhibited at the Soviet pavillion at Leipzig Fair last March.

an additional 100 billion out of their own resources. The goal is to increase agricultural production approximately 70%. This is to be achieved, according to Khrushchev, by going over from mechanization of separate jobs to the comprehensive mechanization of all agricultural production, animal husbandry included. Industry is to supply new farm machinery for the five-year period in quantities approaching the total of all previous deliveries. A big increase in the supply of mineral fertilizers is promised, along with extended irrigation and expanded rural electrification. Coupled with more advanced farm technique and crop specialization, these measures, we are told, will assure the projected

increase of both farm production and farm productivity.

But the sixth Five Year Plan continues the previous emphasis on the construction of heavy industry. It calls for an overall increase of production of approximately 65%. Of this projected total gain, capital goods production is earmarked to increase in the five-year period by approximately 70%, and consumer goods production by approximately 60%. However, some revisions of these plan targets already point to a cut-back in capital investment in industry. These revisions arise out of the great pressure for more consumer goods and especially for more housing.

Total projected state capital investment for the entire economy is 990 billion rubles or more than the combined amount of the two preceding plans. In comparison, the first Five Year Plan that began in 1928 was financed by a modest 58 billion rubles.

A few examples will illustrate graphically the plans for the present five-year period. The goal for electric power is an increase of 88% and for electric power per industrial worker more than 60%. The directives call for the construction of several atomic power plants with an aggregate capacity of 2 to 2.5 million kilowatts; a greater total capacity than those contemplated, for the same period, in the United States and Britain combined. Even more notable is the attention given to the problem of improving industrial technique.

The sixth Five Year Plan calls for the introduction of automatic processes in the metallurgical, extractive, machine-building, electrotechnical, chemical and construction industries, as well as a member of consumer goods industries. In the machine-building industries alone, it is proposed to put into operation some 220 automatic and semi-automatic production lines and shops. On the whole, the production goal for all such equipment is a five-fold increase. Moreover, projected strides in technique such as these, permitting a more rhythmic operation of plants, are visualized as the basis for a projected labor productivity increase in industry of approximately 50%.

Thus the Soviet system not only allows for a speedier development of the productive forces, but tends to revolutionize the productive processes, to permit technological advances at tempos unattainable by capitalism. From this follows, as a primary feature of planned directives, the qualitative extension to more efficient processes and work methods.

The principal economic aim, as expressed in the sixth Five Year

Plan, is "to overtake and outstrip the most advanced capitalist countries in per capita production." An entirely correct and worthy objective, corresponding to the needs and aspirations of the Soviet workers. However, the task of catching up is still far from realization, all the bureaucratic boasting about the triumph of socialism and the transition to communism notwithstanding.

"Socialism," said Trotsky, "could not be justified by the abolition of exploitation alone; it must guarantee to society a higher economy of time than is guaranteed by capitalism." And Trotsky added the words that are as true today as when they were written: "In that sense, decisive for all civilization, socialism has not yet triumphed. It has shown that it can and should triumph. But it has not yet triumphed. All assertions to the contrary are the fruit of ignorance and charlatanism." (*Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 78-79.)

#### What About the Workers?

To what extent have the workers of the Soviet Union benefited from the giant strides in economic growth? No analysis of the progress made can afford to minimize the decisive importance of this question, especially when it is considered in terms of progress toward socialism. After all, socialism concerns not only economic development, it is a question also of human relations.

National income in 1955 was more than 14 times that of 1928, according to the new statistical abstract, now published in Moscow. During the same period in the United States real national income roughly doubled. In this case also percentage increases in the USSR would naturally be much higher due to mass production of goods previously imported or manufactured in antiquated ways. But a comparison of living standards gives us an entirely different picture. In the first place a disproportionate share of national income was devoted to capital

investment in industry and technique. The swarm of bureaucratic locusts devoured a huge part. Another large share went into monuments, public edifices, Soviet palaces and institutions of learning—of which the new Moscow University is rated the greatest, the most imposing and the best equipped educational structure in the world—and into ornate projects such as the Leningrad and Moscow subways and even luxurious sanatoriums—mostly temples of rest for the upper layers of Soviet society. A large share went into armaments for defense. Obviously, only a minor fraction of the steeply rising national income was devoted to the elevation of the living standard of the workers.

Reporting to the Twentieth Congress on the material and cultural needs of the people, Khrushchev admitted, ". . . we must say that we do not yet have an adequate quantity of consumer goods, that there is a shortage of housing, and that many important problems connected with raising the people's living standard have not yet been solved . . . the speed of house building seriously lags behind the development of our national economy and the growth of towns and industrial centers. Besides, many ministries and other bodies regularly fail to carry out their housing programs." Bulganin calls the housing shortage acute. And all objective observers agree that despite the huge efforts in house building, particularly for the upper layers of Soviet society, these have not kept up with the immense growth in urban population. Workers' living quarters remain wretched and terribly overcrowded.

#### The Greatest Disproportion

The general rise in culture in the Soviet Union cannot be disputed. Yet it is true, that since its inception state planning has conceded only second place to the people's needs. Consumer goods are still in short supply and poor in quality. As a result the dimly

low working-class standard of living stands out as the greatest disproportion in Soviet economy. Planning in the hands of the bureaucratic oligarchy has displayed elements of the cynically raw disregard for the most precious component of all capital — human labor power — that was characteristic of the capitalist Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

While the brutal police repressions of Stalin's time have now markedly eased, immense material and cultural inequalities still remain. Distribution of life's goods still takes place on the basis of the capitalistic measure of value. Their trade unions devitalized and workers councils liquidated, workers have been deprived of any sense of ownership in the nationalized means of production, of any voice in planning, in management, in allocation of resources and in division of national income.

The growth of privileged social layers has been spurred at the cost of the immense majority. In many cases the members of these privileged layers receive monetary rewards at rates twenty times as high as those of factory workers. Such are some of the effects of the bureaucratic regime which still remains the most serious barrier on the road to socialism. Progress toward socialism demands democracy for the producers and consumers as an absolute prerequisite for the free flowering of creative initiative and sense of social responsibility.

But it is not possible to accept either the social-democratic or directly bourgeois-inspired versions of the condition of the Soviet workers; these reflect primarily an anti-Soviet bias. One such example — ridiculous to be sure — offered in the *U. S. World Report*, September 21, 1956, informs us that the new minimum monthly wage in the USSR will buy: one pair of men's leather shoes and one pair of socks. The question this fails to answer is: how do the Russian workers man-

age to eat? Another example is the charge made in the *New Leader* supplement, December 24-31, 1956, that "Soviet labor's real wages at the end of 1952 . . . [were] still below the 1928 standard."

No facts are supplied to support these misrepresentations, because none can be found. An entirely different conclusion appears in the analysis made in *Foreign Affairs* by Dr. Calvin Hoover. Comparing observations and studies made on visits to the Soviet Union in 1939 and 1956, his estimate is that "real wages of urban workers increased by somewhat less than 40% over the last 17 years." He warns that this should not be regarded as a statistical conclusion; but he discounts the higher Soviet claims. Hoover adds that "average real hourly earnings of workers in manufacturing industries in the United States, during the same period, increased by nearly 50%." The latter estimate may appear somewhat high to American workers. However this may be, the fact is that whatever was gained was due, not to the generosity of Big Business, but to the workers' own massive organization of industrial unions.

Presumably the estimate of Soviet real wages takes into account the substantial number of social services available to the workers. There is free medical care, day nurseries for children of working mothers, payment during maternity periods, free vacations at rest homes, sick benefits, pensions, etc. Khrushchev reports that during the fifth Five Year Plan the state spent a total of 689 billion rubles for these social services, including education. But even so, it is a known fact that the standard of living of the workers in the Soviet Union still remains comparatively low.

The sixth Five Year Plan projects an increase in real wages for Soviet workers of approximately 30% over the five-year period. Income of collective farmers, in cash and kind, is to increase by ap-

proximately 40%. The workers are promised a shorter work week (seven-hour day, six-day week) at no reduction in pay, beginning in 1957. At the same time, all tuition fees in higher educational institutions are to be abolished.

A fundamental revision of the existing wage structure is to be an integral part of these efforts; it has in fact been under way for some time. But the revision is designed principally to bring wages and output more closely into line with technical efficiency already achieved. Bulganin stated this rather delicately in his demand of "bringing order into the wage rate system in industry and clearing the way for mass scale introduction of technically substantiated output quotas."

In the struggle to raise labor productivity the Stalinist bureaucracy introduced the most crude and naked forms of inequalities. The piecework system and bonuses and premiums for greater output, on the one side and penalties on the other, were used as speed-up incentives. Stakhanovists and other shock workers, technicians and managers were the main beneficiaries, and they became a part of the more privileged social layers. The average workers on the other hand were underpaid. But the increasing inequalities collided with the growing socialist elements in the economy. The intensification of labor tended to keep the basic wage at a low level. Administrative speed-up of shock brigades became a disorganizing factor and elemental worker resistance against the sharp differentiations affected adversely the general level of labor productivity. At the same time, the constantly increasing proportion of the labor force drawing bonuses and premium pay, tended to increase the cost of labor. And owing to all these features, the wage system has become increasingly anachronistic.

To keep rising labor productivity in step with the technological advances, a greater equaliza-

tion of wages has now become mandatory. But the workers, who have good reason for distrusting the bureaucracy, have already given one indication of their fear that wage revisions are to be carried out at their expense, by the sitdown strike last year at the Kaganovich ballbearing plant. On the other hand, a reduction of the bonuses and premiums given the more privileged layers would tend to bring into question the privileges of the bureaucracy itself. This is the dilemma. Khrushchev proclaimed its solution to be "the socialist principle of payment according to the work performed." It would have been more appropriate to justify this method of payment by reference to necessity. To declare it to be a principle of socialism is, as Trotsky said, "to trample the idea of a new and higher culture in the familiar filth of capitalism." (*Revolution Betrayed*, p. 82)

The truth is that the character of the wage system in the Soviet Union—based predominantly on piecework payment—is still much more capitalist than socialist. The prevailing level of productivity and the level of per-capita production is still below the highest capitalist standard. These are some of the most forceful indications of the actual state of development of Soviet society. It is still a society in transition from capitalism to socialism. And real progress toward socialism will be measured, above all, by the degree to which inequalities disappear.

The evolution of Soviet society remains internally determined by the conflict between the ruling bureaucratic caste and the needs and interests of the Soviet masses. This is also its major contradiction. Its great advances were achieved despite the obstacle of a bureaucratic regime. Conversely, the greater the advances, the more clearly is revealed the role of the bureaucracy as a brake on the harmonious growth of the productive forces.

### The New Tendency

During the earlier Five Year Plans, millions of peasant recruits were brought into industry; they tackled machinery with barbarian clumsiness. Because of the unprecedented tempo of its formation, and the lack of skill and experience, the Soviet working class was then less homogeneous than any other in modern times. Against the background of defeats of the working class on the international arena, these conditions provided the most potent lever for the power and sway of the bureaucracy. But the effects of this lever are now in process of being turned into their opposite. The working class has grown numerically, and it has undergone a qualitative change. New additions to the industrial labor force come now mainly from the urban centers. The former peasant recruits have become proletarianized; and in this decisive sense the working class is more homogeneous. It has acquired skill and experience. By this changed status its former fragmentation has become converted into social coherence and unity.

Being determines consciousness. And being—in this case the unexampled advance of the material forces of production in the USSR—is decisive in imparting to the working class greater self-confidence and socialist consciousness. Out of the bitter experience of Stalinist repression, the Soviet workers are arming themselves with new and higher ideas and methods of struggle. Fear of imperialist encirclement has been largely dissipated by the growing strength of the Soviet Union and by the colonial revolutionary successes. All these factors taken together herald the birth of a new tendency emerging out of the womb of the prevailing order of things. This new tendency has manifested itself, on the one hand, in the actual and genuine concessions that the mass pressure has compelled the bureaucracy to grant. On the other hand, it has manifested itself in the power and determination of the working-class movements in

the Soviet zone of Eastern Europe, culminating in the Hungarian revolution. In both instances the workers proved to be the decisive social factor, demonstrating their devotion to the system of nationalized economy alongside of bitter hatred of the ruling bureaucratic caste.

The birth of this new tendency opens a higher stage in the dialectical development of the historical process in the Soviet Union. As the Soviet working class progresses and the economical backwardness is overcome, the very basis upon which the bureaucracy grew and arrogated its powers and privileges is undermined. The bureaucracy is compelled to retreat and grant concessions. Each concession strengthens the working class. At the same time the bureaucratic privileges collide ever more sharply with the interests and the needs of the masses. These opposites interpenetrate in their mutual conflict. Free labor is incompatible with a bureaucratic regime; and a bureaucratic regime cannot tolerate free labor. This is the essence of the crisis of Stalinism. And it is in terms of these new conditions that the struggle against the hated bureaucracy will unfold.

The dynamic growth of the Soviet productive forces is conclusive testimony to the historically progressive character of the socialist type of property relations established by the 1917 revolution. But the Stalinist bureaucracy, which usurped political power, constitutes a parasitic growth upon the progressive foundation. It is the main force of degeneracy in the workers state; a consequence of the isolation of the Soviet Union and the inheritance of backwardness; a feature that is in sharp contradiction to the historical future that is clearly implied by Soviet economic developments today.

(Continued on page 71)

# The Workers Councils In Poland

by Edgar Morin

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The following article, based on interviews held by Edgar Morin with worker militants in Poland recently, is extracted from a pamphlet scheduled for early publication in France.

The article was published in the February 15 issue of *La Verite*, newspaper of the French section of the Fourth International.

We join with the editors of *La Verite* in expressing appreciation for Morin's informative report while not necessarily sharing all the author's opinions.

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**T**HE NATIONAL explosion of October 1956 was preceded by a social explosion — Poznan — and was linked to a social revolution, incomplete and partial, to be sure, but deep-rooted. The thread of this revolution unravelled slowly before my eyes in the course of conversations until I came to the end of the skein at the WFM motorcycle and Zeran automobile plants. What was involved was the decisive action of a working-class vanguard against the state bureaucracy, an action supported by all social layers of the country. It was, in my opinion, a genuine, revolutionary class struggle.

Actually the vanguard of the working class was the driving power in the events of the last months. In Poznan the movement was launched by the workers of the Stalin plant, just as the East Berlin uprising began with a demonstration of the workers of Stalin Allee. (What beautiful Marxist symbols of the fact that Stalinism is its own grave-digger!) In Warsaw, during the feverish October days, the workers from the plants

mobilized, took up arms, made their weight felt through their delegations at the Eighth Plenum, and centralized the workers movement that broke out simultaneously in the industrial centers and provinces.

After October a revolutionary working-class force developed which tended to replace the old economic-social structure with a new one. This was the Workers Councils movement, which arose out of the Zeran and WFM plants.

This is not in any way to lessen the role of the intellectuals, or the role of numerous sections of the Polish Workers Party. I do not wish to reduce all the complexities of the Polish events to a bare formula. But recognition of the main fact makes it possible for us to understand how a semi-organized, yet organizing motive force, the force of a working-class vanguard, played the decisive role at every turning point.

To be sure, this action of the vanguard (for we must emphasize that it was not a matter of the working class as a whole, but only of the workers in certain plants and areas) could be decisive only because it found an immediate response in the whole population. The uprising of an entire city, Poznan, and the mobilization of an entire city, at Warsaw, are two examples. Thus there was a kind of pre-established harmony between the workers' demands and the general demands of the nation; and this harmony was due not only to a common national sentiment of oppression but also to a new distribution

of forces and roles in the class struggle, in contrast to the traditional class struggle in the bourgeois world.

## The Working Class In the New Polish Society

The fact is that in the Stalinist world of the People's Democracies the old social differentiations are blurred in the general pauperization and enslavement, while a fundamental differentiation appears between the state bureaucracy and all other social layers. Thus, for example, the antagonisms between the rich and poor peasants are blurred over in the Polish countryside, since the "rich" peasants are themselves pauperized by the special taxes levied against them. In the cities, the "capitalist" elements, reduced to a tiny fraction of artisans and merchants, no longer serve as a pole for the resentment of the working masses themselves directly dependent on the state. It is within the general pauperization and the general subjection to the state that social relations are now established. All classes have a fundamental interest converging against the state - as-boss, state - as - parasite, state - as - policeman, which maintains itself in power thanks only to the presence of the Red Army.

At the same time, the working class is undergoing a complete transformation. As a class, it is losing some of the traits that have distinguished other laboring classes. In the bourgeois world, the working class is the almost exclusive bearer of communist ideology. In the world of the People's Democracies, "communist" is no longer synonymous with "working class," and genuine communists appear in every layer of society.

On the one hand, the working class as such has not been privileged in the People's Democracies. On the other hand, the working class is no longer a victim of

social segregation. It no longer occupies the sociological ghetto of the bourgeois world. If it suffers the most harshly from the imperatives of the planned economy, it is nevertheless not a lower class in its social status; conversely, although ideologically glorified, it lacks power.

These facts have led some of our Polish friends to conclude that the working class has ceased to be a revolutionary class, and they support this conclusion with other observations. According to them, the working class has lost its vanguard. This vanguard, made up of Communist Party members, has in great part gone over to the apparatus of the state and the party or has been elevated to technical positions, thanks to the opportunities of the new regime. Moreover, accelerated industrialization has brought into the working class a whole mass of rural workers, politically and socially uneducated, conservative, religious, even anti-Semitic. (In certain plants, we were told, an anti-Stalinist could be smeared by crying, "He's a Jew." And when there were to be layoffs, the privileged Stalinists were successful in using the slogan, "Fire the Jews first.")

Furthermore, these friends say, the working class has lost its ideology, not only as a result of the foregoing factors but also because this ideology collides with an allegedly achieved socialism that corresponds in no way to the aspirations that had been nourished in the capitalist world. Socialism is discredited—the workers do not feel that they have either power or authority in their factories or their cities. Hence, an ideological pauperization that prevents the working class from acquiring full consciousness of its own class role and duties.

### **Social Role Of the Vanguard Workers**

This pessimistic outlook contains, no doubt, important grains of truth. But the events of the last months show us that the

greatest political energy, the highest social consciousness, the greatest organizational capacity appeared, if not in the working class as a whole, at least in a vanguard of the class. For it was this vanguard that acted as the motive force in the revolutionary transformations of Poznan, the October events, and the Workers Councils.

To understand this, we must first of all recognize that some of the factors listed above as negative are in fact positive. The working class, for instance, has lost its old vanguard, which went over to the state and party apparatuses. But does this not equally mean that the working class has got rid of those Stalinists most inclined to bureaucratic careers? This promotion of an "elite" has, so to speak, de-Stalinized the industrial plants in advance. In the Stalinist world the wheat always tends to sink to the bottom while the weeds rise to the top.

Similarly, the working class has not so much lost as de-Stalinized its ideology—in the living, concrete, irrefutable experience of forced labor. It has lost its myths, its illusions. To be sure, in arousing the reaction among the workers of "No matter what, anything is better than this," the Stalinist oppression might, at first thought, seem to have accomplished the miracle of making the workers want what they have rejected from the most subtle bourgeois paternalism. But the latest experience demonstrates that the change wished by the working class is not to a return to the past. It is the elimination of the bureaucratic and police regime, and, still more, ascendancy to collective management of the plants—that is, precisely, achievement of socialism itself.

The most highly developed industrial plants are natural fortresses of struggle against the bureaucracy. There is, in reality, no bureaucratic excrescence within the factory. The desks are occupied by technicians, who are production experts, not parasites. The

"functionaries" (two from the party and two from the union at WFM and Zeran) are not numerous enough to constitute a bureaucratic layer and seem, on the contrary, to be tied rather to the masses. The atmosphere of the plant even tends to regenerate and purify the local organs of the party and the trade union. It is no accident that the healthy branches of the party are the local sections in the large industrial enterprises; it was these sections, inspired either by old militants who had not forgotten everything or by very young cadres who had not yet been corrupted, that played an organizing role in the revolutionary events of Poznan and October.

Moreover, within the industrial enterprises conditions are favorable for constituting a common front between workers, party militants, technicians and factory administration, against the external bureaucratic enemy—the Ministry, the State. They all have a common enemy in the plan which is imposed abstractly from above and which is so deadly to the maximum profitability and productive capacity of the plant. The plant directors are the least sure elements in this common front. Appointed by the ministries, they sometimes come to feel more tied to the fate of the ruling bureaucracy than to the fate of their plant. And so we see plant directors opposing control by the Workers Councils. But we also see directors calling for and promoting the formation of these councils, as at Zeran and WFM, because they see in them the best way of liberating the productive forces from the bureaucratic yoke.

That is why the revolutionary action of the working class was decisive wherever a block was welded of all members of the enterprise, embracing the nuclei of plant staff, management and party. In those cases, the awakened consciousness rose to the height of the economic, social and political problem. The struggle against

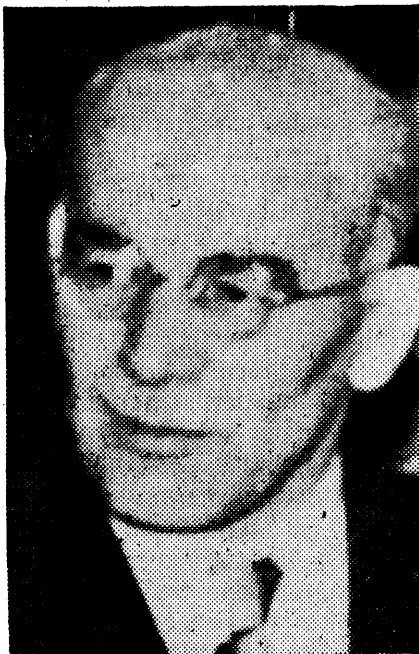
Stalinism, against the state bureaucracy, against possible Russian intervention, was a single struggle, and this struggle contained a positive program. Zeran and WFM, which were mobilized day and night during October, remain today the pilots of the new course. Delegations flock there from factories all over Poland to study these models in the organization of Workers Councils.

Marx saw in large-scale capitalist industry the revolutionary stronghold against the bourgeois world. Today we can see in large-scale nationalized industry the revolutionary stronghold against the Stalinist world, because it is the social cell which the bureaucracy cannot corrupt from within, because it is constantly purified of its bureaucratizable elements by the suction pump of the apparatus, and because it is basically de-Stalinized through its class experience. The working class is the motive force of the new class struggle in Stalinist society because, as the class least susceptible to becoming either parasitic or host to parasites, it is the anti-bureaucratic class *par excellence*. The working class is the motive force of the class struggle, but against the real conservatives, the holders of Stalinist power.

The working class is capable of drawing behind it, in the common interest, all layers of the population. It is capable, that is, of orienting the collective action in a definitively socialist direction, thus avoiding in the People's Democracy the catastrophic consequences which naturally follow the discreditment of socialism.

#### Coalition Against The Parasitic Bureaucracy

Stalin's famous sentence turns ironically against Stalinism: "Only the working class can carry the banner of national independence." Actually, Polish independence was reconquered thanks to the Poznan insurrection and the pre-insurrection of October; and this reconquest cannot be dissociated from



GOMULKA

a revolutionary social conquest. It was out of a single movement that the working-class vanguard, at the head of the Polish masses, restored to the country the foundations of its national freedom, breaking their chains—the chains of semislave forced-labor—and projected an economic-social system in conformity with the needs of the producers themselves as well as the development of the productive forces.

Although the national emancipation struggle hid from many observers the social revolution, the two processes were in fact indissociable. I do not say that the social revolution was the substructure of the national revolution, or vice-versa; it is a matter of two faces of a single complex movement.

The history of recent months acquires full significance in the general perspective of the conflicts within Stalinist society. Stalin's death opened a new era. A thaw began in the latent antagonism between the ruling bureaucracy and the NKVD—that monstrous excrescence of the already monstrous bureaucracy, whose power it first guaranteed and

then threatened. At the same time, the rusty connections of the system began to loosen up. The destruction of the NKVD through the combined action of leading party circles, the army and the Soviet state (liquidation of Beria), opened a revolutionary period which will be brought to a close only by the reestablishment of the police terror or the liquidation of the caste system.

In the general ferment, the working-class vanguard marched into the streets, in East Berlin in 1953, in Poznan in 1956.

(In Hungary, it was not the working class *as a class* which was the first to march into the streets, and this perhaps explains the weakness of the Nagy regime in the first days of the insurrection. In Poland a powerful movement of workers' delegations was the dominant influence at the Eighth Plenum, played a decisive role in the nomination of Gomulka, and forestalled the military preparations of Rokossovsky and the Red Army. In Hungary, however, the genuinely working-class pressure made itself felt only slightly in the party, and Gero thought that he could easily crush a movement of students. The councils sprang up only after the Russian intervention. I do not say that things could have turned out otherwise than they did in Hungary, but I believe the chances of a different outcome would have been better had the councils appeared before they did.)

The working-class vanguard in Poland has been mobilized since Poznan. It animates with its energies the local party and trade-union sections. In the advanced enterprises, it is united with the technical direction. It is the only political force, partly organized, against the gigantic bureaucratic state apparatus, which is itself half-paralyzed, subject to contrary influences, including a partial urge toward liberalization.

If I do not dwell with the intellectuals it is not, I repeat, because I underestimate their role,

but because I shall deal with it more thoroughly in another place. For the moment let us note this essential aspect: it was the intellectuals who blew the sharp blast of criticism that dispersed the mystical miasmas of Stalinist ideology. Overwhelmed by their own responsibility, ashamed of having lived as the servants and chorus leaders of tyranny, torn by their guilty consciences, drunk with the freedom they were winning to express themselves, all these young party intellectuals suddenly became men. Their need for the truth had a powerful echo. It was not only a subjective, petty-bourgeois, idealist need, it was the enormous political need of the popular masses, of the working class. The need for truth became a major political force. It welded together the huge coalition of all social layers against a power which henceforth had only one support — the Russian army.

#### **Breaking the Chains Of Semislave Labor**

The October events are well known. Less well known is the working-class revolution that shattered the semislave-labor framework of industrial labor. Police pressure in the plants had already been sharply reduced after Stalin's death and the liquidation of Beria. By the end of 1955 or the beginning of 1956 layoffs were no longer arbitrarily decided but had to be taken to joint arbitration commissions (of union and management). From the spring of 1956, working-class pressure made itself felt in the following ways: rescinding of disciplinary work conditions; wage guarantees; participation in plant management and profits.

At the height of the October wave that carried him to power, Gomulka solemnly recognized the right to strike. Soon after came repeal of the hated law on "socialist labor discipline," that is, the semislave-labor type of law which imposed fines and prison terms for any infraction of the forced labor discipline.

At the same time, the working-class vanguard is seeing to it that wages are guaranteed, stabilized and even increased. Many production bonuses (which sometimes went as high as 100 to 200 percent of the base wage) are being integrated into wages. Wages are to be fixed independently of the work norms. Part of the profits (17 percent) are to be allotted to the plant personnel. As the chains of the working conditions are broken, the former economic system is put under attack at every point.

That system was based on a bureaucratic direction of the economy, which determined the plan and then had it executed at all costs; at the cost, that is, of total coercion, of passive obedience, and of incredible wastage of what is man's "most precious capital," initiative. The gigantic body was walking on its head. The working-class vanguard, breaking the drive-shaft of that system, is projecting another system, the system of Workers Councils and collective self-government in the plants.

#### **The Management Councils**

This is clearly the heart of the problem of Polish socialism. The new system implies not only emancipation of the working class from the semislave-labor yoke, but also its active participation in the life of the enterprise and the economy of the country.

The idea of workers management was in the air by the spring of 1956. It arose spontaneously, since it corresponded to the official ideology which asserted that the workers were the owners of their plants. The influence of ideas from Yugoslavia, previously tabooed but now permissible, played an important catalytic role. These ideas boiled over at the Seventh and Eighth Plenums. Projects were discussed in the vanguard plants and occasionally carried out, as, it seems, in northern Warsaw.

To what extent was there con-

fusion between the workers committees born spontaneously in October, and the management councils that were later to crystallize? In going over my notes, I find that many points are unclear to me, and some of the statements of various Polish comrades seem contradictory, not through any fault of these comrades but because we ourselves were thinking at that time in terms of comparing the councils with the Soviets of the 1905 and 1917 type, that is, with plant councils which had not only economic but also political power. But the fact is that the management councils movement reappeared in November-December, after the political powers of the workers committees had been abolished.

What is involved? Basically, management of the enterprise by a council elected by the entire personnel. The pattern ranges from a largely consultative council to an organ of management empowered to make final decisions for the entire enterprise. At Zeran and WFM, for example, the council expresses its opinion on the projected plan and makes corrections, adopts the annual production plan and establishes the monthly quotas within it, sets up the organizational structure of the enterprise as well as the broad lines of technical development and productivity. At Zeran the council, elected December 4, 1956, has since then remodeled the organizational framework of the plant, established a new wage structure through the integration of bonuses and a new distribution of total payments; it checks the relationship of work norms to wages; it meets regularly to take up the customary tasks of management. After a period of intensive activity in getting started, the council now meets regularly once a month. At Zeran the council constitutes genuine self-government of the plant, since it confirms the nomination of the director proposed by the Ministry, and the nomination of the department heads proposed



by the director. (The council refused, for example, to confirm the head of a trade department who had been proposed.) Certain plants in the provinces, which have established similar regulations, have even opened up, through the press, competitive bidding for the post of director. Other councils, like the one at WFM, do not control the nomination of the director. Thus the rules of the plant councils are adopted according to local conditions and discussions, without, it seems, any standard statutes.

The essential thing is that the council is elected by the entire personnel, each department choosing its own representatives, with the method of balloting established by a full meeting of all the workers. The candidates (three for each position, at Zeran) are nominated by a hand vote; and the election is by secret ballot. The candidates do not announce their political affiliation (though one notes that on the Zeran council 50 percent are party members).

Another feature: 50 percent of the members of the Zeran council come from the technical personnel. This seems to confirm the fact that there is a close understanding in this plant between the cadres and the workers, an understanding that was manifest before October. It seems that almost everywhere a large number of technicians are elected to the councils, which could mean either lack of confidence on the part of the workers in handling the tasks of management, or else their desire to prove that the system of workers' control is not in conflict with the necessities of technical efficiency.

At the beginning of February how widespread were the councils? It seems that 70 percent of heavy industry was already converted to the new system of management, that the electrical industry was entirely won over, and that the movement was spreading rapidly in certain provinces; but also, that

obstacles of all sorts were being encountered.

### For or Against the Councils

The councils of an enterprise tend to develop both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, the councils are inclined to federate into industrial combinations which would come to replace the Central Offices of the Ministries, that is, the bureaucratic state organisms at the summit of each branch of industry.

Horizontally, the councils tend to federate on every level. The eventual logic of this is to constitute an assembly of producers, a body paralleling the political parliament.

This dual movement, horizontal and vertical, tends toward a new economic structure, more flexible than the old one, where the incentive of competition between enterprises would play a role (thanks to the workers sharing in the profits), where the producers themselves would participate in the economic direction of the country, where planned cooperation would replace dictatorial planning.

The fiercest enemies of the councils are obviously to be found in the state bureaucracy, the Central Offices, the party apparatus that remains Stalinist. On the other side the councils are defended and praised by a section of the intellectual left of the party, notably the paper "Po Prostu," as well as by technicians and directors (though unfortunately I do not know how many). The problem is to determine to what extent the working masses, and not only an important vanguard section, are pushing and spreading the councils; and I regret not having verifiable information on the subject.

The position of Gomulka himself and of his closest associates seemed to be one of caution during January, and one of uncertainty at the time of our departure early in February. It seems that the leading circles are skeptical about the immediate effectiveness

of the proposed system. Under the present conditions of economic chaos, they think, the problems are above all technical ones, and technicians above all are in a position to solve them most efficiently. It is a matter of transforming or reconverting industries, of modernizing and rationalizing them, of resorting sometimes to large-scale layoffs, of opening up new profitable opportunities, etc. Do the councils have the maturity and authority necessary for such steps? Will the individual enterprises be able to raise themselves to the general level on which every solution depends? Is there not, on the contrary, the risk of increasing the disorder and anarchy? And thereby, of playing into the hands of the Stalinist bureaucrats who are banking on and encouraging the disorder? And by the same token, without deriving any real social benefits, does it not cause a new and fruitless point of friction with the Soviet Union, which is hostile to the "Titoist" system of workers' control?

Actually, we were told at the WFM plant, profitable operation increased after the establishment of the council. At Zeran and at WFM the councils did not interfere with necessary reductions in personnel. On the contrary, the workers preferred that a smaller number should share in the same wage fund. Finally, the technicians and the directors believe that the councils can play a progressive role in the question of output and rationalization. The technicians, far from being eliminated from management, participate in it even more actively within the council, while at the same time being under control of the collective. In short, in these pilot enterprises no danger of stagnation or regression has been manifest.

If these experiences seem encouraging, is it nevertheless necessary to generalize from them in order to see further?

(Continued on page 71)

# Anthropology Today

by Evelyn Reed

**W**HAT is the state of anthropology and the main direction of its development in the English-speaking world? How and why have the predominant contemporary schools diverged from the methods used by such pioneers as Lewis Morgan in the United States and Edward B. Tylor in England who were instrumental in establishing the science of anthropology in the second half of the nineteenth century and inspired its first brilliant achievements? Have the modern academic anthropologists advanced beyond the Morgan-Tylor school, as they claim, rendering the earlier procedures and findings obsolete? Have the Marxist analyses and conclusions regarding ancient society, which relied upon materials provided by these nineteenth century originators of scientific anthropology, thereby become invalidated?

These questions have been posed with special force in a volume of about 1,000 pages called *Anthropology Today*. This "encyclopedic inventory," published in 1953 by the University of Chicago Press and already in its third printing, resulted from a conference sponsored by the Wenner-Gren Foundation of Anthropological Research, Inc. Prepared under the supervision of A. L. Kroeber, dean of the modern American school, it contains 50 inventory papers by "eminent scholars from every continent in the world" and represents "the first great stocktaking of the whole of our knowledge of man as it is embodied in the work of modern anthropologists." It has

been supplemented by a second volume, *An Appraisal of Anthropology Today*, which contains critical comments by 80 scholars on the problems posed in these papers and by the state of their science.

The compilation surveys and summarizes such diverse yet related branches of social science as biology, archaeology, anthropology, genetics, linguistics, art, folklore, psychology, and includes techniques of field study and applied anthropology in medicine, government, etc. It is undeniably a useful source and reference book. But it is most instructive and important as the current methodological guide of the professional anthropologists, disclosing in detail how these scholars systematically approach the basic problems in the study of ancient society and primitive life.

These contributors display a wide variety of nuances in their specific procedures and have many unresolved differences among themselves on this or that aspect of their specialties. This is normal and fruitful. But, with rare exceptions, they resist any consistently evolutionary method of thought or materialist interpretation of history. This throws them into opposition not only to Marxist historical materialism but to the founders of their own science, the classical school of the nineteenth century.

This represents a profound theoretical reversal in the historical development of anthropology and therefore merits serious examination. One virtue of the Wenner-Gren compilation is that it

provides in a single volume abundant materials for such a study. It makes clear how sharp is the break between the nineteenth century and twentieth century schools of anthropology, in that the second stage stands today in avowed opposition to the premises of the first. It further illustrates the specific nature of the differences separating them.

Since we are dealing with the history of this branch of science over the past 100 years, it is necessary to go back to its beginnings to get at the roots and reasons for this sharp division and reversal.

## Birth Pangs

Anthropology, like everything else in this world, was born in and through struggle. It emerged as a branch of science about 100 years ago through a series of colossal battles fought to a finish against religious dogmas and petrified ideas.

The first major dispute centered around the antiquity of mankind. Theologians had established the duration of humanity in accord with the Bible at some 6,000 years. Even the great French biologist Cuvier adhered to this orthodox view and argued that fossilized bones of men antedating this time did not exist. However, another Frenchman, Boucher de Perthes, exploded this prejudice by his discoveries of ancient stone axes in French deposits which paleontological evidence proved to be much older. His book, however, published in 1846, demonstrating that fossil men and their tools dated back tens of thousands of years, was greeted with skepticism and scorn.

Continued discoveries of ancient human fossils and tools soon settled this question beyond dispute. Today, through the findings of paleontology and archaeology, such relics of ancient humanity have been chronologically arranged in time sequences which thrust back

the age of mankind to a million years or more. Mysticism in this field was figuratively crushed by the material weight of the bones and stones of ancient humanity.

The second great battle was waged around the animal origin of mankind. It began with the publication in 1859 of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, followed in 1871 by his *Descent of Man*. Darwin's proof that humanity arose out of the animal world, more specifically out of the anthropoid species, was a direct blow to the Adam and Eve myth. This was a more serious challenge to the divine origin of humanity than simply pushing the birth of mankind farther back in time. Yet, despite the hostility it encountered, Darwin's view became the point of departure for the first scientific study of the formation of humanity. A biologist, applying materialist methods, had cleared the road for linking anthropology to natural science.

Darwin confined his studies primarily to the biological preconditions for the emergence of mankind. The study of human-kind, however, is predominantly a social study. The science of anthropology therefore began at a much higher rung in the ladder of evolution, with the investigation of primitive peoples in areas remote from civilized centers. Through examinations of these living survivals of primitive society, early anthropologists sought to single out the distinctive features which marked off ancient society from our own and came up with some very surprising conclusions.

The third major struggle unfolded over two interrelated basic distinctions between the institutions of modern and primitive society: the question of the matriarchy versus the patriarchy, and the question of the clan versus the family. In his book *Das Mutterrecht*, published in 1861, Bachofen, using literary sources as evidence, set forth the proposition that an epoch of matriarchy had preceded the patriarchal form with which we are so familiar. Bach-

ofen noted that one of the most striking features of primitive life was the high social status and exceptional authority enjoyed by primitive women in contrast to their inferior status in the subsequent patriarchal epoch. He believed that this epoch of "mother-right" which preceded "father-right" resulted from the fact that fathers were unknown and the primitive group identified themselves exclusively through the maternal line.

The question of matriarchy was inextricably linked with the clan group of primitive times as contrasted with the individual family of modern times. Lewis Morgan, in his book *Ancient Society*, published in 1877, disclosed that the unit of primitive society was not the individual family but the *gens* or clan.

Engels equated Morgan's discovery in importance with the discovery of the cell in biology and the concept of surplus value by Marx in economics. Given the unit of the *gens* or clan, the road was opened for anthropologists to investigate and reconstruct the formation and organization of tribal life. As a result of his pioneer work, Morgan is hailed as the founder of American anthropology.

Morgan believed that the family, as it is constituted today, did not exist in ancient society and is essentially a product of civilized conditions. Before the family came the clan, which was composed not of fathers and mothers but of kinsmen and kinswomen, or clan "brothers and sisters." Morgan also indicated that the clan structure was matriarchal. Thus the dispute around the historical priority of the matriarchy over the patriarchy became inseparable from the correlative controversy around the historical priority of the clan over the individual family.

The fourth and most persistent struggle unfolded around the sharp contrast between the basic economic and social relations of primitive and civilized society. Morgan

demonstrated that modern society, founded upon the private ownership of the means of production and divided by class antagonisms between the propertied and propertyless, is totally different from and even opposite to primitive society. In the primitive community, the means of production were communally owned and the fruits of their labor equally shared. The clan was a genuine collective in which every individual was provided for and protected by the entire community from the cradle to the grave.

It was unavoidable that this most basic feature of primitive life should become known for what it was — primitive communism — and it was thus characterized by Morgan and Engels. But it was equally unavoidable that the communistic as well as the matriarchal aspects of primitive society should be discounted by those who wished to perpetuate the dogma that the modern system of private property and class distinctions have persisted without essential change throughout the whole history of mankind.

The struggles around these four major issues, which brought the science of anthropology to birth, arose through the researches of the nineteenth century pioneer thinkers. Although many questions remained unanswered, the classical school of anthropologists provided the keys for opening a series of hitherto closed doors into the recesses of ancient society. They were founders of the scientific investigation into prehistory.

### The Classical School

The twin stars of anthropology in the English-speaking world in the latter part of the nineteenth century were Morgan in the United States and Tylor in England. Alongside these and around them was a galaxy of brilliant scholars and field workers who made noteworthy contributions to various aspects of this science. Their work was, of course, supplemented by equally able workers on the Euro-

pean continent and other countries.

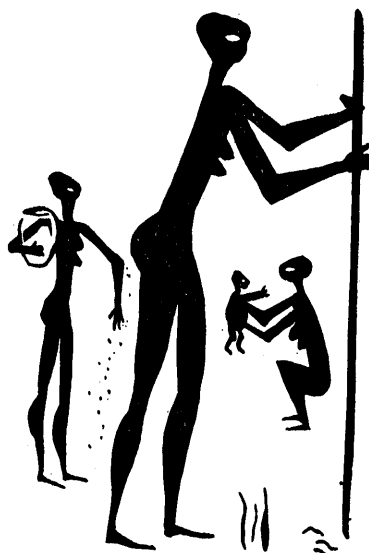
The work of this pioneer school was marked by the following traits. It was, first of all, evolutionary in its approach to the problems of precivilized humanity. These anthropologists extended Darwinism into the social world. They proceeded on the premise that in its march from animality to civilization, mankind had passed through a sequence of distinct, materially conditioned stages. They believed that it was both possible and necessary to distinguish the lower stages from the higher ones which grew out of them and to trace the interconnections between them.

Secondly, this school was substantially materialist. Its members laid great stress upon the activities of human beings in procuring the necessities of life as the foundation for explaining all other social phenomena, institutions and culture. They sought to correlate natural conditions, technology and economics with the beliefs, practices, ideas and institutions of primitive peoples. They probed for the material factors at work within society to explain the succession and connection of different levels of social organization. The most successful exponent of this evolutionary and materialist method was Morgan, who used it to delineate the three main epochs of human advancement from savagery through barbarism to civilization.

Although these scholars applied the materialist method to the extent of their ability, their materialism was in many instances crude, inconsistent and incomplete. This was true even of Morgan who, as Engels wrote, had rediscovered in his own way the materialist interpretation of history that Engels and Marx had elaborated 40 years previously. For example, while Morgan classified the main epochs of social development according to the progress made in producing the means of subsistence, in certain

places he ascribes the development of institutions and culture to the unfolding of mental seeds: "... social and civil institutions, in view of their connection with perpetual human wants, have been developed from a few primary germs of thought." (Ancient Society, preface vi.)

Despite their deficiencies, however, the aims and methods of the classical nineteenth century school were fundamentally correct and bore rich fruit. Their weaknesses



have been picked out and exaggerated by their opponents today, not in order to correct them and then probe deeper into the evolution of mankind, but to exploit them as a means for discrediting the positive achievements as well as the essentially correct method of the classical anthropologists.

#### The Reaction

Around the turn of the century new tendencies began to assert themselves in the field of anthropology. These were marked by a growing aversion to the main ideas and methods of the classical school and by a consequent regression in the theoretical level of the science itself. In the past 50 years the representatives of these reactionary tendencies have acquired an almost undisputed ascendancy in academic circles, crowding out the doctrines of their predecessors.

Two of the principal currents of

thought in this sweeping reaction are the "diffusionist" and the "descriptionist" or "functional" schools. Disciples and students of these two tendencies, or combinations of them, furnish the bulk of the contributors to the Wenner-Gren compilation.

The diffusionists focus their attention upon the beginnings of civilization. Sir G. Elliot Smith, anatomist and leading figure of this school, asserts that "Egypt was the cradle, not only of agriculture, metallurgy, architecture, shipbuilding, weaving and clothing, alcoholic drinks and religious ritual, the kingship and statecraft, but of civilization in its widest sense." (*In the Beginning*, p. 26.) From that innovating center the fundamental institutions of civilization spread, with minor accretions and modifications, throughout the world.

Whether or not Egypt was the sole source of all the inventions, as claimed by Smith, the transmission or diffusion of achievements from one people to another is an undeniable factor in the historical process. However, the study of diffusion is no substitute for the analysis of the entire range of social evolution, which covers a far broader field in time and space than this school is willing to survey. Anthropology is, in fact, primarily concerned not with civilized, but with savage or precivilized society before agriculture, metallurgy, etc., were born. The diffusionists skip over the most decisive epoch of social evolution, that period from the origin of human society to the threshold of civilization. They shrink from examining the evolution of precivilized life or arranging these stages in any definite historical order.

The pure descriptionists, who dignify their position with the name of "functionalism," proceed without any unified theory of the historical process whatsoever. Their writings have little more theoretical foundation or historical framework than a Boy Scout manual on how to make Indian

objects and imitate their dances. Many of them deny that it is necessary, useful or possible to arrive at any over-all view of the course of social development.

This descriptionist school is best represented by the Franz Boas school in the United States and the Radcliffe-Brown school in England. Having rejected any general view of social evolution, they limit themselves to the study of the cultures and customs of separate peoples and groups. They describe their characteristics, and occasionally compare or contrast them with one another or with civilized society.

A number of these twentieth century field investigators have, it is true, brought forth additional important findings which have contributed to the stockpile of materials regarding primitive life. But they view this material in a disconnected way and leave it in an uncoordinated condition. They restrict their views to the framework of each given fragment, and the farthest they go in theoretical interpretation is to try to classify these diverse segments of society into different categories.

Their sole aim is to demonstrate that a variety or diversity of cultures exists and has always existed. They do not even approach the problem — much less answer it — of the specific place these diverse developments occupy and have occupied in the march of human history. They deny that any institution or feature of society is inherently more primitive or advanced than any others. They provide no unifying thread, no guiding line, no definitive acquisitions and advances from one stage to the next in a progressive process of evolution. Nor do they investigate what forces brought about the particular characteristics of each successive level of social development.

By casting aside the theoretical heritage of the classical school, these anthropologists have reduced their science to a patchwork of unrelated facts and data. In place

of the genetic-historical method and dynamic view of the whole compass of social development, they have substituted a static and purely descriptive approach. This has not only retarded the growth of the science but thrown it back to an infantile theoretical level.

Scientific knowledge progresses from the elementary stage of description and classification of separated phenomena to the more advanced stage of uncovering their organic affiliations and historical interconnections. To the measure of their ability, the pioneer school of anthropologists, employing the evolutionary method, had already proceeded to this higher theoretical stage. But the academic schools which arose in reaction against them, reversed this progressive course and slid back to a more primitive level.

#### Materialism Abandoned

This retrogression arose directly out of the abandonment of the materialist outlook and aims of the classical school. The twentieth century academicians are unwilling and unable to relate the social and cultural institutions of primitive peoples with the economic base upon which they are founded. They deny that the productive forces and activities are decisive in shaping these cultural features. They proceed as though the cultural superstructure developed apart from, and even in opposition to, the technological and productive foundations.

In thus divorcing culture from its economic roots, some of these anthropologists come to the most absurd conclusions. Elliot Smith, for example, locates the key to human progress not in the advancements made in producing the means of life, but in a particular mode of preserving corpses:

"It is no exaggeration to claim that the ideas associated with the practice of the embalmer's art have been the most potent influence in building up both the material and spiritual elements of civilization." (Op. cit., p. 51.)

The end product of this retro-

gressive movement is the fashionable psychological and psychiatric approach — latest offspring of the functional school. Margaret Mead, E. Sapir, Ruth Benedict and other students of Boas are the principal representatives of this new current. In place of the objective material forces and factors which determine the structure and evolution of society, they put forward superficial and arbitrary observations on the different psychological reactions and behaviors of primitive groups. In place of the historical interactions between the developing productive forces and the cultural institutions which spring from them, they substitute the peculiarities of the individual personality.

Margaret Mead, who is given an honored place in the Wenner-Gren compilation, locates the key to the differences among cultures not in their different productive and social forces, but in the different kinds of weaning and toilet training given to children. Why and how these secondary cultural features arose and evolved she does not explain. The whole functionalist school, including its psychological branch, regards "culture" as something disembodied and dematerialized, plucked at will by men out of thin air through inexplicable impulse or caprice.

Leslie A. White, chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan, one of the few contemporary scholars who have stubbornly refused to abandon the materialist procedures of the Morgan-Tyler school, is the most vigorous American critic of the Boas-Brown tendencies. He describes their anti-materialism as follows:

"A few decades ago culture was very real, tangible and observable to anthropologists. They went out to preliterate peoples, saw and collected tools, clothing, ceremonial paraphernalia, utensils and ornaments; they observed people doing things — grinding seeds, practicing circumcision, burying prayer-sticks, chewing betel; they observed expressions of conventional sentiments — a loathing for milk, respect for the

mother's brother, a fear of ghosts; they discovered the knowledge and belief of the people. All of this was once as real and tangible to the ethnologist as to the native himself. In recent years, however. . . culture has become an abstraction, intangible, imperceptible, and all but unreal to many anthropologists . . . . What was once a distinct class of real, observable, tangible phenomena, the subject matter of a special science, has now been conjured almost out of existence!" (*Philosophy for the Future*, edited by Sellars, McGill and Farber, pp. 359-360.)

### Flight from Evolutionism

The anti-materialism of the reactionary school is accompanied by their anti-evolutionism. It is so obvious that stone tools preceded metal tools and food-gathering preceded agriculture and stock-breeding that it is difficult to disclaim evolution altogether. The anti-evolutionists are obliged to admit that there has been some evolution in technology. But this is as far as they will go in admitting the reality of historical evolution.

Above all they deny that social institutions and culture are progressively transformed along with the economic bases of society. They expressly or implicitly deny that the successive social epochs can be delineated through the growth and development of the material forces of production. As a result they not only divorce the cultural superstructure from its material base but flee altogether from any unified and comprehensive conception of historical evolution.

Their chief target for attack is Morgan's projection of the three main ethnic periods of social evolution: from savagery through barbarism to civilization. Morgan had derived from the changing productive forces at each successive level the changes in the social institutions which flowed from them. He had demonstrated that such fundamental features of civilization as private property and the state did not exist in savagery and only emerged in undeveloped form in barbarism. By the same token, the modern cultural institutions of marriage, the individual family and the subjugation of

women, are also less developed the farther back we probe into history. In the epoch of savagery they virtually vanish into non-existence.

The reactionary anthropologists today ridicule and reject these findings of Morgan together with his materialist and evolutionist method. In the Wenner-Gren compilation, Morgan's sequence of ethnic stages in social advancement is relegated to the scrap heap as "out of date," and "mid-Victorian." According to J. Grahame D. Clark, the English archaeologist, Morgan's scheme of determinate ethnic stages is no longer even "respectable." He writes:

"Now it would be ridiculous at this time of day to apportion praise or blame to Morgan, Tylor and the rest; the mid-Victorian anthropologists were confronted by an immense void. . . they merely did what any other scientists would have done under similar circumstances — they plugged the gap with hypotheses. . . their stages were hypothetical. . . One may legitimately insist, though, that hypothetical prehistory, useful as it may have been 70 or 80 years ago, has long ceased to be respectable." (*Anthropology Today*, p. 345.)

It is significant, however, that although the "immense void" has been filled to the brim with further data and documentation during the past 70-80 years, Morgan's opponents have never presented any replacement for his discarded theory of ethnic evolution. Having annihilated the positive framework of social evolution developed by the nineteenth century school, and unable to provide any alternative of their own, the modern schools are manifestly bankrupt in theory and in method. Leslie White has aptly summarized them as follows:

"In addition to being anti-materialist, they are anti-intellectualistic or anti-philosophic — regarding theorizing with contempt — and anti-evolutionist. It has been their mission to demonstrate that there are no laws or significance in ethnology, that there is no rhyme or reason in cultural phenomena, that civilization is — in the words of R. H. Lowie, the foremost exponent of this philosophy — merely a 'planless hodge-

podge,' a 'chaotic jumble.'" (*Philosophy for the Future*, pp. 367-368.)

In truth, the hodge-podge and jumble exist not in the social and cultural phenomena but in the minds and methods of Lowie and his school. Whereas the pioneer anthropologists had sought, and succeeded to a large degree, in making order out of chaos, the modern academicians have introduced chaos into the historical order previously established. The more materials they accumulate, the more narrow their views have become. The study of anthropology has today become disjointed and jumbled in their hands—and in their students' heads.

### Piecemeal Evolutionists

Some contributors to the Wenner-Gren symposium display considerable uneasiness about the absence of any general line of development in primitive history and try to find one. Julian H. Steward, who was assigned the theme of "Evolution and Process," speaks for this group which seeks some middle ground between the classical evolutionists and the modern unabashed anti-evolutionists. In a subsequent publication which fully develops the ideas in his contribution to the Wenner-Gren book, Steward exposes the unscientific procedures of the "particularists":

"Reaction to evolutionism and scientific functionalism has very nearly amounted to a denial that regularities exist. . . It is considered somewhat rash to mention causality, let alone 'law,' in specific cases. Attention is centered on cultural differences, particulars, and peculiarities, and culture is often treated as if it developed quixotically, without determinable causes, or else appeared full-blown." (*Theory of Culture Change*, p. 179.)

At the same time Steward ranges himself with the particularists against the advocates of universal evolution, on the specious ground that their generalizations fail to explain particular phenomena:

"Universal evolution has yet to provide any very new formulations that

will explain any and all cultures. The most fruitful course of investigation would seem to be the search for laws which formulate particular phenomena with reference to particular circumstances." (*Anthropology Today*, p. 325.)

What Steward is saying in effect is: "To be sure, the world is not flat. However, neither is it quite as round as most people think. Therefore, let us regard it as a flat world with some rounded portions."

According to his own statement, Steward restricts his historical search to "parallels of limited occurrence instead of universals." For example, he and some other American anthropologists sketch out a series of stages in the development of societies on the threshold of civilization, such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, China, Middle America and the Central Andes. But these parallel lines are never brought together as aspects of a continuous process of social evolution from the lowest stage of savagery up to the threshold of civilization. The particular segments remain disconnected fragments without essential relationship to a general historical framework. Leslie White describes this as piecemeal evolution:

"Dr. Steward wants his evolution piecemeal. He wants evolution in restricted areas and in restricted segments. If, however, evolutionist processes and evolutionist generalizations can be made in a number of independent situations and regions, why cannot generalizations be made for evolution as a whole? . . . I notice a rather curious conflict or contradiction of motives in Dr. Steward's scientific work. On the one hand, he seems to be very much interested in generalizations and strives to reach them. On the other hand, he anchors himself to the particular, to the local, or to the restricted, which, of course, tends to inhibit the formulation of broad generalizations." (*Op. cit.*, p. 71.)

Steward accepts the epoch of civilization as involving "a less sweeping generalization," but rejects the two earlier epochs of social development because "they fail to recognize the many varieties of local trends." He then pin-

points the issue upon which he bases his rejection: the proposition that the matriarchy preceded the patriarchy represents a definite stage in social evolution:

"The inadequacy of unilinear evolution lies largely in the postulated priority of matriarchal patterns over other kinship patterns and in the indiscriminate effort to force the data of all precivilized groups of mankind, which included most of the primitive world, into the categories of 'savagery' and 'barbarism.'" (*Anthropology Today*, p. 316.)

But the issue goes even deeper than the historical priority of the matriarchy. Morgan and others of the classical school observed that wherever matriarchal vestiges were found, there also were found clear evidence of primitive communism in productive and social relations. It is this which lies at the bottom of the stampede from evolutionism and the reason why the piecemeal evolutionists, who try to draw back from this flight are, in the final analysis dragged along with it.

#### Fear of Marxism

In the field of anthropology, as in other fields, a consistently evolutionist and materialist method of thought has revolutionary implications. Unwittingly, the classical anthropologists had brought verification and support to Marxism as the most scientific system of thought. The science of anthropology did not originate with the historical materialists, but the creators of Marxism drew upon the materials provided by the nineteenth century anthropologists to extend their own historical reach and substantiate their materialist interpretation of history. They drew out to their logical conclusions the sharp contrasts between capitalism, highest form of class society, and primitive or pre-class society. These conclusions are set forth in the renowned work by Engels, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, which appeared in 1884.

The reactionary flight from ma-

terialism and evolutionism arose out of the effort to counter this challenge of Marxism. But in the process, of disowning the views of the Marxists, they were obliged to also turn against the pioneers in their own field of science.

The repudiation by these modern anthropologists of the principles and methods of their pioneer predecessors had its precedent and parallel in the rejection by academic economists of their classical bourgeois predecessors from Smith to Ricardo. The labor theory of value, which was taken over from the classical economists and systematically developed by the Marxists, produced the revolutionary conclusions of *Capital*. Subsequent bourgeois economists, recoiling from these conclusions, found it expedient to dump, along with them, the positive achievements of their own predecessors. The same thing has happened in anthropology. The Marxists connected Morgan's findings with the conclusion that just as primitive communism had been destroyed by class society, so, in turn, would class society be replaced by the new higher stage of socialism. The modern reactionary school, in flight from this conclusion, was obliged not only to oppose the Marxists, but to reject their own predecessors whose findings substantiated this view.

There is no ambiguity on this score in the Wenner-Gren compilation. Grahame Clark explains why the Morgan-Tylor school must be cast out, along with the Marxists:

" . . . Marxists find in archaeology a means of recovering what they hold to be tangible evidence for the validity of the dogma of the materialist interpretation of history. . . What is quite sure is that Marxist dogma is no more valid as a substitute for archaeological research than were the speculations of Victorian ethnologists. Both are equally out of date." (*Anthropology Today*, p. 346.)

Julian Steward likewise explains why a consistently evolutionist position is intolerable:

"The Marxist and Communist adoption of the 19th century evolutionism, especially of L. H. Morgan's scheme, as official dogma (Tolstoy 1952) has certainly not favored the acceptability of scientists of the Western nations of anything labeled 'evolution.'" (Ibid, p. 315.)

Here is the real reason for the anti-materialism and anti-evolutionism of contemporary anthropologists. The reactionary school has become predominant because it has accommodated itself to ruling class prejudices and dogmas and assumed the obligation of stamping out the spread of revolutionary conclusions.

### The Road Ahead

Darwin provided a solid foundation for biology and directed it along correct lines by explaining how animal species originated and evolved from one order to another. Until the science of anthropology likewise discovers the secrets of the social cradle of humanity, it lacks such a solid foundation. The road ahead for anthropology today lies precisely in this deeper penetration into our most remote past, above all at that critical juncture where the first social horde emerged from the animal world.

This central problem was not neglected by the nineteenth century pioneer school. On the contrary, their serious and systematic research provided a sound point of departure. Morgan had detected that, while the gens or clan system arose as the universal and fundamental form of primitive organization, it had been preceded by a cruder, unfinished form based upon "male and female classes." This "classificatory system" was subsequently subsumed into the gens system. The Scotsman J. L. McLennan called attention to the importance of strange code of social and sexual rules which have been voluminously discussed under the various headings of totemism, taboo and exogamy. W. H. R. Rivers understood that decisive clues were contained in that peculiarity of the gens system called "dual organization."

Sir James Frazer and others assembled monumental researches on these and other bewildering phenomena, but their meaning in the formation and rise of the primitive gens system remained enigmatic. The principal merit of these pioneers did not consist in the answers they could provide, but rather in the materials they assembled, in their penetrating observations, and in the questions they posed. Their work was and still remains the precondition for the solution today of the problem of social origins.

Despite this wealth of material and the crucial importance of the subject, the question of social origins is completely neglected in the Wenner-Gren inventory. Not only have they ceased to follow the trail begun by the 19th century investigators but they ignore the key theoretical contributions to this study already available.

In the nineteenth century Engels sought for the decisive social factor which had lifted humanity out of the animal world. The Marxists had already established that all society from lower to higher stages moved forward with the advances made in labor techniques and production. From this Engels called attention to the fact that labor was the key to human beginnings and the birth of labor was simultaneously the birth of humanity. This labor theory of social origins is set forth in Engels' essay, *The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man*.

Some 50 years later in 1927, with the publication of his work *The Mothers*, Robert Briffault provided the biological link to this proposition. He demonstrated that maternal functions and relations were the indispensable biological basis for the first laboring activities and social cooperation. Earlier investigators had established that the matriarchy represented a definite stage in social evolution. Briffault went a step further than this and showed why the matriarchal form was the necessary and unavoidable first form of society.

He called this the matriarchal theory of social origins.

The theories of Engels and Briffault dovetail. If, as Engels explained, labor was the central factor in transforming our branch of the anthropoid species into humanity, and if, as Briffault has shown, the females were the pioneers and leaders in labor, it follows that women-as-laborers provided the main living force in developing the first social horde.

At all stages, Marxists have pointed out, society is founded upon the twin pillars of production and reproduction. In civilized society these two functions have been divided between the sexes. The production of new life remains the sphere of the women, while the production of the means of life is primarily in the hands of the men. But at the beginning of human time, and for more than ninety percent of subsequent history, women were not only the *procreators* but also the *principal producers* of the means of subsistence. What Briffault brought forward was the fact that because of their production and care of new life, women became the first producers of the means of life.

Thus the historical primacy of the matriarchy, which is rejected by the academic school today, is actually the key to solving the basic question of social origins. There are still many unanswered questions: among them the question of why the first society was not only matriarchal, but communistic in productive and social relations. But the solution to all the problems connected with social beginnings must have as their starting point the indispensable guiding lines provided by Engels and Briffault. Equally decisive, the materialist and evolutionist methods of the nineteenth century classical school must be restored. Anthropology today, enriched by the more extensive data available and aided by Marxist historical materialism, can not only be brought out of its stagnation and sterility but elevated to a new and far higher level.



# Early Years Of the American Communist Movement

by James P. Cannon

At the Sixth World Congress

February 1, 1956

Dear Sir:

There is very little I can add to what I have already written about the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern (1928) in the *History of American Trotskyism*. That report on the Congress as a whole is meager enough, and the reason for it is frankly explained there. The simple truth is that in the first period after our arrival in Moscow, I, like all the other American delegates, was far more concerned about the fight over the American question than the work of the Congress in general. Then, after I got hold of a copy of Trotsky's *Criticism of the Draft Program*, my interest and attention was concentrated on that and what I would do about it after I got back home.

Maurice Spector, a top leader of the Canadian party, read the *Criticism* at the same time and his reaction to it was the same as mine. Thereafter we lost interest in the official proceedings. We made a compact to fight for Trotsky's cause, but we knew that it would be futile and tactically unwise to begin our fight in Moscow. We held a continuous "Congress" of our own about Trotsky's great document and its implications. As I said in the *History*, "We let the caucus meetings and the Congress sessions go to the devil while we studied this document."

I realize that this puts me down as a poor reporter and convicts me of one-sidedness. This quality,

A student who is doing research work on the history of early American communism asked James P. Cannon, as well as other participants, a number of questions about the events and prominent figures of the pioneer movement. Cannon's answers, which began in the summer 1954 of *Fourth International*, are concluded with this installment in the *International Socialist Review*.

however, is sometimes useful in a political worker. It certainly was so in this case; the "one side" represented by Trotsky's criticism of the draft program was far more important than all the rest of the Congress put together.

\* \* \*

My *History of American Trotskyism* will have to stand as my recollection of that time. Everything was fresher in my mind when it was written 14 years ago, and I can't think of anything important to add to it. This book had a curious history. Like practically all my writing, it happened more or less by chance, incident to other work in the movement. It was not planned at all. In the winter of 1942 the comrades in charge of the party school in New York asked me to give a couple of lectures on party history to fill out some open dates on their forum schedule. I thought that would be a small chore and I agreed rather light-mindedly, having nothing more in mind than to relate a few reminiscences about the main points.

Then, when I sat down to make the notes for the first lecture, it

occurred to me that I should explain how our movement originated in the Communist Party. But the story of this experience in the CP also required some explanatory background. Before I fully realized what I was undertaking to do I was back in the beginning, making notes about the early days of American communism. I got so bogged down in notes about that period that it took me three lectures to get out of the Communist Party, before I could start on the subject of our independent activities after our expulsion. The interest of the attending audience stimulated me to keep going along that line until the course was strung out to 12 lectures. The lectures were not written, but spoken free-style, from notes usually made on the day of the lecture. The only research I did was to leaf through the bound volumes of *The Militant* to fix the various events in their proper order of continuity. All the rest came from my memory at the time.

The eventual publication of the lectures also happened without prior design on my part. Sylvia Caldwell, who was my secretary at that time, took the lectures down in shorthand on her own initiative, and later transcribed her notes. There was some casual talk among us of publishing the lectures some time, but I did nothing about it and left the typescripts sleeping in the file for another year and a half. They would still be there, probably, except for another incident over which I had no control. In November, 1943, we got notice that our appeal from our conviction in the 1941 trial at Minneapolis had been denied by the Supreme Court, and that we would have about a month to get ready to go to Sandstone Prison. Then, under pressure of time, I hastily corrected some of the grammatical mistakes in the typescripts of the lectures and handed them over to Pioneer Publishers

just under the deadline. The accidental book was finally published the following spring. Others have to judge what the book is worth. All I know for sure is that it is all true.

\* \* \*

My comment on Stalin's policy at the time of the Sixth World Congress must be qualified by the observation that I know more now about what was going on in the Russian party and the Comintern, than I did then. Consequently I have to be on guard against coloring my recollections of various incidents by interpretations I arrived at later.

It is safe to say that all of us in the American opposition were aware of the muted struggle going on against the right wing in the Russian party; and that we drew the conclusion that in one way or another this would be advantageous to us in the factional struggle at home. I don't think we realized at that time how deep the cleavage had become between Stalin and Bukharin. This was obscured by the fact that Bukharin was put forward as the leader of the Congress to make the chief political report.

There was a great deal of speculation as to what was really going on in the Russian party, but no one seemed to know. I personally got a good deal of information from Hathaway, a member of our faction, who had just finished a three-year term in Moscow as a student in the Lenin School. Hathaway, like all the other students of this misnamed institution, had been trained to scent the wind in the Russian party, and he was a fully indoctrinated Stalinist. He parroted the official line against Rykov, Tomsky and a number of others whom he designated as right-wingers in the Russian party, but I can't recall that he was very definite about Bukharin.

Stalin evidently wanted to utilize the Congress as a final mopping up operation against the Left Opposition before bringing the fight against Bukharin into the open. The American opposition

delegates were cagey about getting out on a limb in connection with the internal affairs of the Russian party. They denounced the Lovestoneites as representatives of the right-wing tendency in the International without specifying who were the Russian leaders in this right wing. I cannot recall that Bittelman or any other member of the American opposition attacked Bukharin openly. I am pretty sure it didn't happen.

\* \* \*

We were told that rumors of the fight in the Russian party had been taken up in the Seniorenen Konvent, but I do not recall any report that Lovestone had raised the question. (This Seniorenen Konvent was a sort of advisory body made up of the heads of delegations. I think it also included some other especially prominent delegates. If I am not mistaken Foster was also a member of the Seniorenen Konvent. It was translated as "Council of Elders.")

What sticks in my mind is the report that Stalin, at a special session of the Seniorenen Konvent, had denied any conflict in the Russian leadership, and that this had a restraining influence on any delegates in the Congress who might have been inclined to press the question.

The Congress was buzzing all the time with rumors about the differences in the Russian party; but I heard nothing about any organized or semi-organized movement that could be considered a "Corridor Congress." I am inclined to think this expression was manufactured by the Lovestoneites after their expulsion, when they no longer had anything to lose. My personal testimony, of course, is not conclusive; my standing in Moscow was such that I could not have been invited into such a cabal.

But Foster would have been considered eligible; and I never heard anything from Foster to indicate that he was part of any "Corridor Congress." If he had been so connected, it seems almost certain that he would have reported it. He

reported the even more confidential matter of his personal talk with Stalin, on the latter's invitation, in which Stalin told him that he did not trust Lovestone, as I related in a previous letter.

\* \* \*

As far as I know, Stalin's devious method of political manipulation was absolutely unique. There was no criterion by which to estimate what he was driving at at any particular moment. In one of his comments about the early days of the struggle of the Left Opposition in the Russian party—perhaps it was in his autobiography—Trotsky said the party functionaries were kept in the dark as to what the majority faction intended by this or that action. They were required to "guess" what it meant and to adapt themselves in time. Selections of people and promotions were made by the accuracy of their guesses at each stage of development in the factional struggle. Those who guessed wrong or didn't guess at all were discarded. This guessing game was played to perfection in the period of Stalin's preparation to dump Bukharin. I don't think many people knew what was really going on and what was already planned at the time of the Sixth Congress. Everybody was guessing, and it is quite evident that the Lovestoneites guessed wrong.

Here an interesting speculation arises. If Lovestone and Wolfe had *known* about the so-called "Corridor Congress," and had also known that Stalin was behind it—would they still have clung to Bukharin as the representative of an obviously losing cause? Permit me to doubt it—or rather, permit me to say categorically, No.

The main concern of Lovestone and Wolfe was not the general direction of policy in the Russian party and the Comintern, but their own stake in the leadership of the American party. When the showdown came at the party convention the following year, their attempt to propitiate Stalin by proposing the expulsion of Bukharin,

was a revealing gesture. Their failure to cut loose from Bukharin at the time of the Sixth Congress really doesn't deserve to be considered as a sign of their quixotic devotion to Bukharin's cause. It was just a bad guess.

\* \* \*

As I have previously reported, I do remember the meeting during the Sixth Congress referred to in Lovestone's cable to his factional supporters in America, submitted by Gitlow to one of the hearings of the Un-American Activities Committees. I recall it rather as a meeting of the American Commission than as a joint meeting of the American and Russian delegations. However that may be, I definitely do not remember Stalin being present and speaking. It is highly doubtful that I could have forgotten that, because Stalin's personal appearance at such gatherings were rare events, and were apt to be remembered. What fixes the memory of this meeting in my mind was Lovestone's unprecedented action in making a rude and angry attack on Losovsky, and his remark in obvious reference to Losovsky's differences with Lenin in the October days: "Nobody in our party ever fought Lenin."

It could be that the Lovestone faction had private meetings with Stalin and Bukharin and that Stalin at such a meeting gave them some grounds to think they could count on his support. That could have been part of his devious game of putting Bukharin off guard until he was ready to cut his throat. But that, of course, is speculation. Nothing was clear to anybody then. And all that's clear now is that Stalin at the time of the Sixth Congress, was planning to open fire on Bukharin and to finish off his supporters in the International in the process, but that he wasn't ready to disclose his whole plan at that time.

\* \* \*

The opposition platform entitled "The Right Danger in the American Party" was submitted to

the American Commission by the official Congress delegates of the opposition bloc. The signatures—J. J. Johnstone, M. Gomez, W. F. Dunne, J. P. Cannon, Wm. Z. Foster, Alex Bittelman and G. Siskind—were apparently the signatures of the regularly designated delegates. (A number of other oppositionists such as Browder, Hathaway and others, present at the Congress, were evidently not regular delegates.) The document was presented in the name of the opposition delegation as a whole. As far as I know there were no dissenters. The chief author of the document was Bittelman. The order of the signatures had no significance.

I do not remember the American oppositionists' protest against Paragraph 49 of the Theses on the ground that it failed to emphasize sufficiently the "growing contradictions confronting American imperialism, etc." In any case, it could not be considered as a serious conflict but rather as an attempt to put a little pressure to have the American resolution brought into line more precisely with the new orientation of the Comintern and, to help the opposition in its fight in the American party. It was a custom in these faction fights in the Comintern for every faction to demand a little more than it expected to get in the hope that it would get something by way of compromise.

\* \* \*

At the time we submitted the platform of the opposition on "The Right Danger" everything was still more or less normal in the opposition bloc. There was not the slightest sign of objection by the Fosterites to my participation, since there could be no hope of winning a majority in the party unless the bloc held together. The objection to me, rather, was that I was not sufficiently active and aggressive in the struggle before the American Commission. This discontent with my conduct became accentuated after I read Trotsky's *Criticism of the Draft*

*Program*. Then I began to slow down and lose interest in the faction fight altogether. The others may have known, or suspected the reasons, but I am sure they could not bring themselves to believe that I would do anything foolishly impractical about it. They didn't care what anyone's secret thoughts might be as long as they were not compromised by some overt action.

The delegates of the "Cannon group" were especially discontented with my increasing indifference to the factional struggle in Moscow and what it might portend; their own positions in the party stood to be affected adversely by my default. They started a pressure campaign to induce me to snap out of it and get back into the fight in earnest. The repudiation of Foster by his own faction had created a sort of vacuum in the leadership of the combined opposition and they felt, not without some justification, as things were at that time, that I was far better qualified to fill it than any of the other members of the Foster group. All this led to an incident which is perhaps worth reporting, since it compelled me to make the decision which was to have far-reaching consequences.

A meeting was called of all the members and sympathizers of our faction in Moscow. About a dozen, all told, were there, including our Congress delegates, the students in the Lenin School and a number of others. Spector was also present. There the proposition was flatly put to me—that if I would quit dragging my feet and go all-out in the factional struggle, they would pledge me their support all the way to the end as the logical candidate for the central position of leadership in the party when the Lovestone regime was overthrown.

I did not give a definite answer at the meeting. Spector and I held our own caucus on the question for a couple of days. We discussed it solely from the point of view of how best to serve the cause of Trotsky, to which we were by then

fully committed. The proposal had an attractive glitter. In the first place, even though we were less optimistic than the others, we recognized that the objective outlined in the meeting was not unrealistic. If the indications of a Comintern swing to the left were fully developed there was good ground to think that the opposition's chances for gaining the majority in the party would steadily improve.

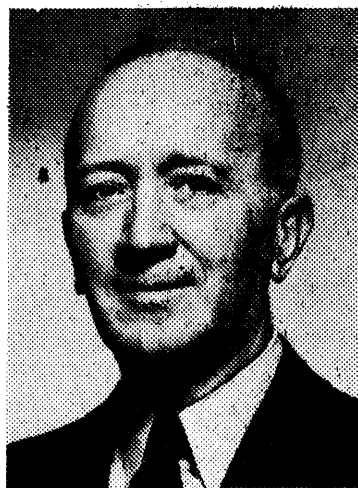
Secondly, with Foster discredited and repudiated by his own former supporters, it was obvious that my claim to a more important role as the central leader of the opposition, and eventually of the party, was far stronger than that of Bittelman or any of the others in the Foster faction. Bittelman suffered from a number of disqualifications, which he himself was well aware of. He was distinctively an internal party man, not a mass worker and orator suited to the role of public leader. Browder had no standing as a political leader and was not even thought of in that connection. The other people of the Foster group were of even lesser caliber.

We speculated that if I could secure the central position in the official apparatus of the party, I would be in a position to swing far more substantial support for the International Left Opposition when the time came to make a decisive open break. The fly in the ointment was that in order to carry out such a maneuver I would have to adapt myself to the official Comintern line against Trotskyism, and even make up for previous derelictions by excessive zeal in this respect. I would, in effect, be winning the party for the program of Stalinism.

Could I then, at some indefinite future time, reveal my own secret program and overcome the effect of the miseducation which I had helped to disseminate? Was there not a danger that I myself would become compromised and corrupted in the process and find it impossible to extricate myself at some future time?

I must state frankly that Spector and I discussed the proposition between ourselves very seriously before deciding against it. Only after thorough consideration of the maneuver from all sides, did we finally decide to reject the proposition: We came to the conclusion that the cause of Trotskyism would be served better in the long run if we frankly proclaimed his program and started the education of a new cadre on that basis, even though it was certain to mean our own expulsion and virtual isolation at the start of the new fight.

This choice of alternatives would present no difficulties to people



FOSTER

who have been raised and educated in the Trotskyist school of principled politics, which our movement has consistently represented since 1928. The decision we made at that time would seem to be an easy one, to be made out of hand. It was not so easy for us in those days. Since the death of Lenin, the politics of the Comintern had become a school of maneuverism, and we ourselves had been affected by it. Trotsky's document on the Draft Program was a great revelation of the meaning of principled politics. But for us at that time it was a new revelation. We were profoundly influenced by it, but we were only beginning to assimilate its full significance.

That accounts for our hesitation,

for our toying for a day or two with the possibility of a self-deceiving maneuver which might well have gravely injured the cause of genuine communism in this country. And not only in this country, for the expelled and slandered defenders of the banner everywhere were then in their darkest hour. They needed to hear an American voice in their support. Our demonstrative action in publicly unfurling the banner of Trotsky in 1928 — at a time when he was exiled and isolated in Alma Ata — greatly encouraged the scattered forces of the International Left Opposition throughout the world.

\* \* \*

The Fosterites had never talked to us about their own family affairs. Consequently, the big explosion at the joint caucus of the delegates of the two groups in Moscow came as somewhat of a surprise to us. To judge from the intensity of the feelings expressed, the revolt against Foster must have been brewing for a long time; it could hardly have been caused by the difference on trade-union tactics alone. It is more likely that the trade-union dispute, in which Bittelman and Browder could draw courage from being on Losovsky's side, triggered an explosion built up out of many accumulated grievances.

One of Foster's traits which I especially detested, after I got to know him well, was his different manner and attitude in dealing with different people. To those whom he thought he needed, such as Bittelman and myself, he was always careful and at times even a bit deferential. To those who needed him, such as Browder and Johnstone, he was brusque and dictatorial. They must have stored up many resentments against that.

I remember one rather dramatic incident during the discussion. Foster stood over Johnstone threateningly, with his fist clenched, and tried his old trick of intimidation with the snarling remark: "You're getting pretty bold!"

Johnstone, almost hysterical, answered: "You have been trampling on me for years, but you're not going to trample on me any more." Johnstone and Browder gave the impression at this meeting of people who had broken out of long confinement and were running wild.

Bittelman's conduct was more difficult for me to understand. During all the time that we had been together in one group, and I had known everything that was going on with respect to personal relations, Foster had never presumed to bulldoze Bittelman. Yet at this meeting Bittelman's tone and language seemed to be that of a man who was out to settle personal scores long overdue. He was absolutely ruthless in his attack on Foster, and even contemptuous of his arguments.

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It was remarkable that not a single person in the meeting spoke up in defense of Foster. The whole faction was in revolt against him, with Bittelman in the lead and Browder and Johnstone close behind him. The funny thing about the whole business was that this fight, of almost unprecedented violence, which ordinarily would signify a complete break of personal and political relations between the participants, was apparently carried on with no thought of such consequences.

The Fosterites in revolt were still dependent on Foster's name and prestige whether they liked it or not. At that time they had no prospect of playing a big role in the party without him. Foster, for his part, had nowhere else to go except to become a captive of the Lovestoneites, and that was impossible for him. So the whole stew blew up violently and then receded and continued to simmer and sizzle in the same pot. We, the "Cannonites" stood aside and let the Fosterites fight it out among themselves. From a personal standpoint I felt a certain sympathy for the slaves in hysterical rebellion. But from a political standpoint I

couldn't see any sense whatever in encouraging a split with a view to realignment in the form of a bloc between our faction and the Fosterites, minus Foster.

Foster's name and prestige, and his dogged persistence and outstanding ability as a mass worker, were always the bigger half of the assets of the Foster group, and remained so even after he had been defeated and isolated within the group. This was shown quite conclusively a short time later. When Stalin wanted to convey a message — with more than a hint of future support — to the American opposition, he sent for Foster and gave it to him personally.

It is quite possible that Browder and Johnstone could have had illusions of going on without Foster as if nothing had happened, for they were notorious for their political unrealism and ineptitude. But I could not imagine Bittelman entertaining such illusions. He had always been pretty realistic in his estimate of the forces in the party and of his own impediments. He knew that he had to be allied with others who had what he lacked, and he relied on combinations in which he could play a strategic part. The original Foster-Bittelman-Cannon combination was made to order for him to play a role in the party that he never could have played by himself. His importance declined when one-third of the combination broke off. And he cannot have failed to un-

derstand that it would decline still more if he came to an open break with Foster.

I had known Bittelman as a man of reserve, who kept his personal feelings under control far better than most — a quality which I admired; and to this day I can't understand what drove him to such violence in the attack on Foster as to risk the danger of an irreparable split. That he had any idea of fighting for the leadership of the party in his own name, is in my opinion the one hypothesis that has to be excluded.

\* \* \*

There is one small postscript to my recollections of this family fight among the Fosterites, which was soon swallowed up in my preoccupation with the immeasurably larger subject of Trotsky's *Criticism of the Draft Program*, and all that it implied for my own future course.

After the meeting, in a personal conversation with Bill Dunne and me, Foster complained of the treatment he had received and intimated — without saying so directly — that he would like to have better personal relations with us for collaboration in the future. But my own mind was already turning to far bigger things than the old factions and faction squabbles in the American party, and I couldn't get up any interest in them any more.

Yours truly,

James P. Cannon

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# The Evolution Of Randolph Bourne

by William F. Warde

*The History of a Literary Radical & Other Papers*, by Randolph Bourne. S. A. Russell, Publishers, N.Y. 1957. 309 pp. \$3.75.

S. A. Russell has performed a service by republishing this out-of-print selection of Randolph Bourne's essays. Bourne was one of the most penetrating and incorruptible critics of American life during the First World War period. He was an ardent spokesman for the most sensitive, dissatisfied intellectuals of the younger generation who were in revolt against plutocratic rule and groping toward a better America.

Bourne's disillusioning experiences with the Progressive movement and especially his awakening to the defects of its major philosophic expression—the pragmatism of John Dewey—led to his transition from liberalism to radicalism. His development contains instructive lessons for the youth of our own day.

Bourne was born in New Jersey and graduated from Columbia in 1913. He spent a year in prewar Europe, observing the most advanced intellectual and political tendencies and meeting some of their leading figures. Upon his return to this country, he earned a precarious livelihood as free-lance journalist in New York City. Gifted and enthusias-

tic, he dove into the swirling currents of the lively Progressive circles which were seeking to renovate American literature and culture as well as American politics. Unfortunately, Bourne's life was short; he died in 1918 at the age of 32.

Randolph Bourne's strong ties with the working people were best expressed in a defense of the striking miners of the Mesabi range in Minnesota and their IWW leadership, which is reprinted in this volume. Here is how he described his own first contact with exploitation:

"The experience was leaving school to work for a musician who had an ingenious little machine on which he cut perforated music-rolls for the players which were just then becoming popular. His control of the means of production consisted in having the machine in his house, to which I went every morning at eight and stayed till five. He provided the paper and the music and the electric power; I worked as a wage-earner, serving his skill and enterprise. I was on piece-work, and everything suggested to my youthful self that it depended only upon my skill and industry how prosperous I should become.

"But what startled me was my employer's lack of care to conceal from me the fact that for every foot of paper which I made he received 15 cents from the manufacturer with whom he had his contract. He paid me five, and while I worked, spent his time composing symphonies in the next room. As long as I was learning the craft, I had no more feeling about our relation than that there was a vague injustice in the air. But when I began to be dangerously clever and my weekly earnings mounted beyond the sum proper for a young person of 18 who was living at home, I felt the hand of economic power. My piece-rate was reduced to four and a half cents.

"My innocence blazed forth in rebellion. If I was worth five cents

a foot while I was learning, I was worth more, not less, after I had learned. My master folded his arms. I could stay or go. I was perfectly free. And then fear smote me. This was my only skill, and my timorous experience filled the outside world with horrors.

"I returned cravenly to my bench, and when my employer, flushed with his capitalistic ardor, built another machine and looked about for a young musician to work it, I weakly suggested to an old playmate of mine that he apply for the position."

This experience with a pigmy employer indelibly stamped the pattern of exploitation by the whole employing class upon Bourne's consciousness. As a middle-class intellectual, however, he first fixed his hopes for a regenerated America upon education.

John Dewey's proposed reforms and experiments in progressive education seemed at that time to be the sovereign remedy for social evils. Dewey's philosophy, he wrote, was regarded "almost as our American religion." Under this influence, Bourne made his field the social side of literature and his instrument the written word. He sketched portraits of typical personalities and wrote essays on topics of the times for the advanced magazines and literary periodicals. He aimed to become the herald and creator of a liberalized culture freed from conformity to the moneyed powers.

Although Bourne's drive to stimulate new beginnings in literature, education, politics and sociology was strong and sustained, it was limited to the framework of the Progressive movement. He and his associates looked upon John Dewey as the incarnation of enlightenment and the guardian of democracy, whose ideas and methods were the sole alternative to conservatism. Their trust in his pragmatic philosophy and progressive program was naive and boundless.

With the advent of the First World War, followed by the Russian Revolution, Deweyism and the

Progressive movement were put to the supreme test. These two major events shook Bourne's faith in pragmatism and marked the turning point in his intellectual evolution. From a liberal, he became a radical.

When war engulfed Europe in 1914 and threatened to draw the United States into it, liberal intellectuals and pacifist-minded youth looked to Dewey for leadership. Instead of resisting the war hysteria, however, Dewey began as early as 1916 to adjust himself to its approach. Jingo propaganda, spurred from behind the scenes by the House of Morgan and briefed by the *New York Times* and other Big Business voices, beat the drums for military preparedness. A training camp to convert business men into big brass was set up at Plattsburgh, New York. Dewey hailed these volunteer officers' camps as a beneficial form of contemporary education!

This theoretical justification for capitalist military training, in preparation for conscripting the youth, shocked and disgusted the consistent socialists and pacifists, Randolph Bourne among them. Then came the intervention of the United States into the war. This confronted the Progressives with a major decision. In the ensuing struggle, the ranks of the pragmatists split. The majority of Dewey's followers, having learned the virtues of middle-class instrumentalism, speedily converted themselves into instruments of the warmakers—with Dewey himself at their head.

Bourne refused to go along. In a famous philippic on *War and the Intellectuals*, published in June 1917, he flayed the "war-liberals" for this betrayal of their own ideals and of his own generation. "The war sentiment," he wrote, "began so gradually but so perseveringly by the preparedness advocates who came from the ranks of big business, caught hold of one after another of the intellectual groups . . . The intellectuals, in other words, have identified themselves with the least demo-

cratic forces in American life. They have assumed the leadership for war of those very classes whom the American democracy has been immemorably fighting. Only in a world where irony was dead could an intellectual class enter war at the head of such illiberal cohorts in the avowed cause of world liberalism and world democracy."

The pro-war liberals, along with ex-Socialists, argued that a democratic world and a lasting peace would come out of American participation in the war, provided the intellectuals did not stay on the side lines but flung their full forces into the dogfight. Bourne asked Dewey this pertinent question: "If the war was too strong for you to prevent, how is it going to be weak enough for you to control and mould to your liberal purposes?" Indeed, as history demonstrated, the war and its aftermath abruptly ended the liberal movements in economics and politics which had prevailed prior to the war.

Bourne foresaw and feared this outcome. He also saw that Dewey's surrender to the "illiberal cohorts" and his abandonment under stress of the struggle for peace and democracy was not a mere personal dereliction nor an accidental deviation. It was a political conclusion implicit in the theoretical premises and social outlook of the pragmatic position.

Pragmatism, Bourne pointed out, assumed that all people of good will, regardless of their class interests, could work together for the common welfare. But he saw that in the showdown, the predatory aims of the ruling plutocracy overrode the needs and desires of the American people. Profit-making, and war-making to defend the institutions of profit-making, took precedence over the recommendations of the liberals and shoved them aside. "What concerns us here is the relative ease with which the pragmatic intellectuals, with Professor Dewey at the head, have moved out their philosophy, bag and baggage, from education to war," Bourne exclaimed.

Challenging Dewey and the other prophets of instrumentalism, Bourne demanded that they be precise in their definition of "democracy." "Is it the political democracy of a plutocratic America that we are fighting for, or is it the social democracy of the new Russia? Which do our rulers fear more, the menace of Imperial Germany, or the liberating influence of a socialist Russia? In the application of their philosophy and politics, our pragmatists are sliding over the crucial question of ends."

The prostration of Deweyism before the plutocracy exposed to full view the hitherto concealed weaknesses in the instrumentalist method and views. "What I came to," Bourne wrote in *Twilight of Idols*, "is a sense of suddenly finding a philosophy upon which I had relied to carry us through no longer works." Like do-goodism, pragmatism "cooled off rapidly before it reached the boiling point" in the struggle against capitalist reaction.

Bourne reasoned correctly that there could not be any more definitive condemnation of pragmatism. This philosophy had won so many adherents on the ground that it worked — and worked better — than any other mode of thought available to intelligent Americans. Yet in the life and death questions of imperialist war and social revolution, pragmatism proved itself to be bankrupt. Bourne concluded it had to be repudiated because it failed to pass its own supreme test of application in practice. It stood condemned by its own highest criteria.

Why did Deweyism turn out to be so worthless a pilot in stormy weather — when reliable pilots were most urgently needed? — The answer is that pragmatism slides over the surface of things, ignoring their profound inner contradictions. It is a philosophy that lives from day to day and from hand to mouth. It prospers so long as social conditions change little or only little by little; so long as class relations are in a temporary

equilibrium; so long as the political skies are clear and shining.

But when underlying class antagonisms erupt and upset the balance of social forces and conflicts rage, then pragmatism, which bases itself upon social calm and class cooperation, becomes weak and helpless. In the decisive question of war, its proponents are compelled to choose between contending and irreconcilable interests. When the chips are down, the organic conservatism of the middle-class elements displaces its fair-weather liberal mask and draws them into reconciliation with other defenders of the status quo.

Thus, in the hour of supreme danger, instrumentalism discloses its real class character as a liberal extension of bourgeois ideology, just as progressivism turns out to be but a left shadow of capitalist politics. Step by step, the bulk of the pragmatists became willing or unwilling dupes and defenders of the lies and pretensions of the most reactionary forces in American life.

This was the lesson that Randolph Bourne learned, and he learned it the hard way. Once having learned it, however, he felt the need for a more profound and correct philosophical doctrine and for a more realistic program which took into account the real relations of social forces and their movement in modern life. He looked from imperialist United States to revolutionary Russia, from liberalism to socialism, from Dewey to Marx and Lenin. Against Dewey's call for continued confidence in the democratic aims of America's plutocracy, enunciated by Woodrow Wilson, he counterposed the accomplishments of the young Russian Revolution:

"(The) young pacifists do not see that democratic peace can come out of the war. They are skeptical of the war professedly for political democracy, because at home they have seen so little democracy where industrial slaves are rampant. They see the inspiring struggle in the international class strug-

gle, not in the struggles of imperialist nations. To Russia, the socialist state, not to America, who has taken a place on the old ground — do they look for realization of their ideal."

\* \* \*

The problem of the relationship of the writer-intellectual to the socialist movement of the working class is as old as the movement itself. It must be worked out afresh in every country and for every generation, but upon the basis of the experiences of the past. Randolph Bourne was a social critic who used literary criticism as his main vehicle of expression. He sought to inspire a new and better social life for all Americans, first through Progressivism, then through radical socialist ideas. He did not remain aloof from social struggles or political battles but placed his intelligence at the service of the most advanced sector of

the labor movement. He gave all he could to promote the cooperation of the two.

Although Bourne, who died young, was unable to continue along his new path, his importance lies in the fact that he turned in the right direction at the right time. Others who came after were to move faster and farther along the road he indicated.

Both his negative conclusion — that Dewey's instrumentalism and its reliance upon class collaboration as the method of social progress had proved its bankruptcy in practice — and his positive proposal — that the philosophy of socialism and the program of the international class struggle must replace it — should be engraved upon the minds of the present generation. For all this, Randolph Bourne deserves to be remembered with gratitude and his writings to be re-read with care.

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## "Hands Off" Except For —

by John Liang

*A History of the Monroe Doctrine*, by Dexter Perkins. Little, Brown and Co., Boston. 1955. 462 pp. \$5.

Diplomacy is more than a game of ambassadors. It represents the interplay of material interests as reflected in the rivalry of national states. Back of the gentlemen in striped pants lurk the greed and the ambitions of propertied classes. Therefore the history of the Monroe Doctrine, a major pronouncement of U.S. foreign policy and a hinge of American diplomacy for about a century, can be an exceedingly valuable political study.

Professor Perkins' book was first published in 1941 under the title *Hands Off: A History of the Monroe Doctrine*. Its revision fourteen years later appears to have been occasioned as much by the author's desire to parade his anti-Communism as by the need to bring the narrative up to date, for he speaks darkly in his forward of "the appearance of a new philosophy, perhaps a conquering philosophy, alien to the thought and interests of the New World," as the prelude to a more explicit anti-Soviet stand in the obviously revamped closing chapters of the book.

The pronouncement that came to be known as the Monroe Doctrine was con-

tained in a message to Congress by President James Monroe on December 2, 1823, less than fifty years after the American colonies had asserted their independence from Great Britain. Its heart was the assertion "that the American continent, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers." Here was a distinct and unequivocal "Hands Off" edict. Yet viewed in historical retrospect, as Professor Perkins shows, the interdiction had no reference to any real threat to the New World by the Old, even if President Monroe believed such a threat existed, as appeared to be the case. To be sure, there were the machinations of the Holy Alliance. This notwithstanding, none of the European powers seemed to possess the ability, or the inclination, to reconquer former colonies or stake out new ones in the Western world.

Portugal, having lost its place in the Americas when Brazil asserted its independence, showed no disposition to attempt the reclamation of that country. Spain exercised a precarious tenure in Cuba and retained Puerto Rico. Mexico



had freed itself from Spanish domination. The questionable glories of the days of the Spanish Main were over and the government in Madrid seemed to be aware of it. France and Holland, together with Great Britain, held on to their Latin American and Caribbean colonies but did not appear bent on adding to them. The Germanic states had not yet coalesced into the Empire, nor had Italy won her independence, so these countries certainly posed no threat to the New World. Czarist Russia, not a maritime power, was busy with expansionist projects on the periphery of the Muscovite empire.

Of all the countries mentioned, Great Britain alone possessed the ability to pursue the course of empire in the Americas in defiance of the Monroe Doctrine. Britain had, however, after the War of Independence, developed close and profitable commercial ties with her former American colonies and large capital investments were beginning to bring in lucrative returns. In the circumstances, Britain was content, more or less, with the status quo. Certainly there was no compelling urge to upset it by any challenge to Monroe's hands-off doctrine.

Still another factor must be considered. As the nineteenth century advanced, the European powers found themselves largely occupied with the carving-up of virgin Africa and the seizure of colonies in the Far East. This left the New World relatively free of pressures from the Old.

The enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine by no means passed unnoticed, however. On the contrary, the Yankee pretensions that it embodied evoked resentment and derision. Lord Clarendon, the British Foreign Secretary, declared icily that Monroe's pronouncement "could be viewed only as the dictum of the distinguished personage who announced it, and not as an international axiom which ought to regulate the conduct of European states." This theme was soon chorused by chancelleries on the continent. A unilateral doctrine such as Monroe's, they held, found no sanction in international law and could not be enforced.

Dissent is one thing, however. Action is something else. The only substantial challenges to the Monroe Doctrine came forty years after its promulgation. These were the brief and costly Spanish reoccupation of Santo Domingo and the tragic-comic though more important episode of the Emperor Maximilian in Mexico. France under Louis Napoleon sought to establish a European-type monarchy upon the ancient throne of the Aztecs and the hapless Hapsburg Prince Maximilian became the chosen instrument of this ridiculous adventure,

The Mexican people had not battled for their freedom from imperial Spain in order to surrender it to monarchical France. Popular resurgence soon demonstrated the hopelessness of the enterprise. The thousands of French bayonets supporting the puppet monarch were withdrawn and Maximilian abandoned to his fate before a firing squad. Both the Spanish incursion into Santo Domingo and the French adventure in Mexico were watched with anxiety in Washington, but there were no moves toward counter-intervention — probably because the United States at that time was in the throes of the Civil War.

If, as the record shows, there was no European threat to the New World, no clear and present danger, at the time the Monroe Doctrine was formulated, how is one to assess the Doctrine's significance? A reasonable appraisal can be made only in the light of further history. In this broader context, the Doctrine seems to anticipate, as it were, the road the U.S. was destined to travel. President Monroe seemed to be giving due notice, so to speak, that this country was on the march toward the goal of hegemony in the West and would brook no interference in reaching it.

This is not the view of Professor Perkins. He seems to prefer a much narrower interpretation of the historic motive for the Doctrine, regarding it as little more than a warning against largely illusory dangers and conditioned upon the right of self-defense. This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that the author rejects any consistent view of the United States as an imperialist power.

Monroe's dictum was reiterated by President Polk in his annual message of December 2, 1845, twenty-two years after its original enunciation, and by President Theodore Roosevelt in his annual message of 1901. To Roosevelt, however, belongs the distinction of authoring a noteworthy development or amplification of the dogma, as the Monroe Doctrine came to be known. It was the year 1905. Chaos reigned in the affairs of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, especially in fiscal matters. Here was a situation which appeared to invite active intervention by European creditor states. Wherefore, declared the Rough-Rider Roosevelt:

"On the one hand, this country would certainly decline to go to war to prevent a foreign government from collecting a just debt; on the other hand, it is very inadvisable to permit any foreign power to take possession, even temporarily, of the custom houses of an American republic in order to enforce the payment of its obligations; for such temporary occupation might

turn into permanent occupation. The only escape from these alternatives may at any time be that we must ourselves undertake to bring about some arrangement by which so much as possible of a just obligation shall be paid. It is far better that this country should put through such an arrangement, rather than allow any foreign country to undertake it. To do so insures the defaulting republic from having to pay debt of an improper character under duress, while it also insures honest creditors of the republic from being passed by in the interest of dishonest or grasping creditors. Moreover, for the United States to take such a position offers the only possible way of insuring us against a clash with some foreign power."

This remarkable pronouncement came to be known as the "Roosevelt corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine. It marked a new stage in American history. As Professor Perkins says, "one of the most extraordinary and interesting objects of study must be the evolution of a theorem intended for the protection of the Latin American states by the United States into one that justified and even sanctified American interference in and control of the affairs of the independent republics of this continent."

The Roosevelt corollary set the diplomatic stage for the veritable orgy of interventionist actions that followed. For the next three decades, the Latin American countries and the island republics of the Caribbean felt the iron heel of the Yankee "Colossus of the North." Already at the time of the war with Spain, armed forces of the United States had intervened in Cuba and snatched Puerto Rico. Now came the turn of such countries as Haiti, Santo Domingo, Nicaragua and Mexico. Back of the Marines and soldiers stood the Wall Street bankers, the big oil interests — and, lest we forget, the United Fruit Company. Monroe-ism with its Roosevelt corollary had become a synonym for dollar diplomacy and Yankee domination. The drawn-out character of this chapter in the story of U.S. imperialism is indicated by the fact that it was not until 1934, during the first administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, that U.S. troops were pulled out of Haiti to end an occupation that had lasted nineteen years.

The growing hatred of the Latin American and Caribbean countries for Yankee imperialism finally caused it to dawn on the policy-makers in Washington that the method of outright domination by brute force had reached the limits of its usefulness. During the Hoover administration, the Monroe Doctrine was laid aside. Pan-Americanism and the "Good Neighbor" policy

took its place. Subversion and intrigue, carried forward in league with reactionary native groups willing to serve Wall Street's interests, became the order of the day.

The most graphic example of the new technique was the Guatemala affair of 1954. The people of this small Central American country had placed in office the government of Jacobo Arbenz, which proceeded to lay hands on holdings of the United Fruit Company in order to carry through a program of land reform. This was not at all to the liking of the powerful U.S. corporation and its State Department representatives. Backing in money and weapons was given to the puppet Armas. With this aid he was able to assemble a nondescript army and overthrow the Arbenz regime. Thus the Yankee imperialists, without sending in a soldier or firing a shot, were able to shore up the threatened interests of American big business in this Central American republic.

In the Guatemala affair, rather surprisingly, the Monroe Doctrine was brought out and dusted off by Secretary of State Dulles. He declared the activities of the Arbenz regime to be "a direct challenge to the Monroe Doctrine." His reasoning, apparently, was that since the Arbenz regime was (allegedly) under Communist influence, and the Communists under the direction of the Kremlin, the mere existence of the Arbenz regime constituted intervention by a European power in the affairs of this hemisphere.

It is the opinion of Professor Perkins that Dulles' allusion to the Monroe Doctrine was "unfortunate." For was not Monroe-ism, with its corollaries of dollar diplomacy and military intervention, supposed to have been superseded by the policy of the Good Neighbor? Yet here it was, coming once again to the fore. In truth, however, the professor's lament over what he regards as a "slip" by Dulles is rather pointless. Long and painful experience has enabled the Latin American peoples to recognize Yankee imperialism either in the undisguised form of Monroe-ism or when wearing the mask of the Good Neighbor.

It is perhaps worth while to note that the Monroe Doctrine was not the only "Hands Off" warning that signified America's march to its imperialist destiny. There was also the "Open Door" doctrine enunciated by Secretary of State John Hay at the turn of the century. Professor Perkins mentions it in passing and without elaboration. The new doctrine, in reality the Asian counterpart of the old, was embodied in notes which Hay addressed to the gov-

ernments of Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan in September 1899, less than eight months after the Philippines had been transferred to the United States by a defeated Spain. The grab of the Philippines, following shortly after the annexation of Hawaii, signaled the entry of American imperialism into a new sphere of activity in the Far East.

In one important respect, however, the situation looked anything but promising. The ancient Chinese Empire, suffering the last stages of decay, was staggering to its doom in the revolution of 1911. In the chaos attendant upon the impending collapse of a corrupt and impotent monarchy it began to look as if the European powers and Japan might seize the opportunity to partition China into spheres of interest from which American competition would be virtually excluded. Thus on the very morrow of America's entry into the Far East there seemed to loom the possibility that the new imperialists would be shut off from the lush prospects of vast China. By means of the Open Door notes, demanding respect for the territorial and administrative integrity of China, Yankee imperialism interposed an unequivocal veto of any moves toward the gobbling-up of that country by the European powers or Japan.

The doctrine of the Open Door served developing American interests in the Far East, just as the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt corollary had served them in the West — but with an interesting difference. Where Monroe sought to exclude the European powers from the Western hemisphere, John Hay, in the doctrine of the Open Door, served notice on these same powers, and on Japan, that the United States would not tolerate any move that might tend to exclude it from participation in the exploitation of China. Also interesting is the alacrity with which the recipients of the Hay notes concurred in the Open Door doctrine. Within six months Secretary Hay was able to announce that satisfactory replies had been received from all six powers. Where the Monroe Doctrine had been greeted with dissent, the Hay doctrine won quick compliance. The explanation for this is simple. In the intervening seventy-seven years the United States had grown to the stature of a world power whose voice could be disregarded only at the risk of serious consequences.

In summation, it should be said that Professor Perkins' book is valuable only as a record of the facts relating to the history of the Monroe Doctrine. Where the author essays interpretations he frequently falls into error and even writes patent absurdities. This may be attributed to the fact that he is not of

the school of historical materialism. He does, indeed, make perfunctory and occasional acknowledgment of the potency of material factors as historical determinants, but this proves only his eclecticism. In place of political logic the reader all too often encounters idealistic claptrap — for example, the nonsensical assertion that "the Pan-American spirit is the spirit of equality and friendly understanding."

The professor speaks more than once of the desirability of detachment in the historian. Yet his own class bias leaps from almost every chapter of his book. He writes with condescension of the Marxists and seems to identify their views with those of the narrow school of economic determinism. He believes that while the United States did occasionally lapse into some of the sins of imperialism, it is not an imperialist power. U.S. occupation of backward countries, he also believes, was not without its blessings, for American military forces in such countries as Haiti and Cuba did carry through public health and sanitation measures. They built roads, bridges, schools and hospitals. Professor Perkins appears to be unaware that these incidental benefits of imperialist freebooting improved very little the lives of the masses. What's more, they were entirely canceled out by American bolstering of backward economic and social forms (particularly the plantation system) of which reactionary native ruling classes were, and are, the beneficiaries and which condemn the people to abysmal poverty without end.

This seems to be beyond the comprehension of the author. But then one should not expect too much of a bourgeois professor.

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## ... Soviet Challenge

(Continued from page 48)

Improvements in material conditions already won by the toiling masses do not reconcile them to the bureaucratic regime, but on the contrary, prepare the conditions for open conflict. The social forces which have been set into motion by recent events in the Soviet Union, and which have extended into Eastern Europe, must inexorably tend, as already indicated, to resolve the contradictory tendencies through the overthrow

of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In other words, through political revolution. Restoration of workers rule and a corresponding high order of Soviet democracy will bring the political superstructure into harmony with its historically progressive foundation.

The crisis of Stalinism unfolds parallel to the crisis of world capitalism. But the latter grows out of an entirely different material foundation; it is an expression of the process of decomposition that has become part of the system. Capitalist decay derives not from a lack of productive forces but

from the fact that its productive forces have outgrown private property relations and the barriers of artificial national boundaries. Concurrently with the decline and decay of the capitalist system, the conditions mature for the socialist revolution. But the growing world interdependence of nations is reflected also in the living social forces. The rebirth of Soviet democracy will tumble the barriers between the Soviet masses and the Western workers and fuse the delayed proletarian revolution in the West with its beginning in the Soviet Union.

## ... Workers Councils

(Continued from page 53)

From now on the question is posed on the political plane. The apparatus Stalinists and the state bureaucracy have not come out openly against the councils, but pretend to hold to the experimentalist position which seems up to now to be Gomulka's. In contrast, the activists of the councils are unanimous in believing that the councils will die of suffocation if they remain isolated and circumscribed in an experimental status. They can be effective only if they are called upon to rebuild the economic structure of the country. A cartoon in a left newspaper shows a whole population walking on its head, except for two people who are on their feet and carry a placard labeled "Experimental Section."

Moreover, at the present time the councils movement does not enjoy full freedom of expansion. It is noteworthy that the relationship between the councils in different industries is entirely empirical. There is no federation organ, no liaison bulletin, no joint secretariat. It even seems that there is a party veto on this essential point. This does not prevent spontaneous contacts, visits, delegations, etc., but it obviously lessens the effectiveness of the movement.

The movement develops more freely within a trade (which caused one of the people to whom we talked to remark skeptically, "We are returning to the trade-guilds of the Middle Ages.") The councils in each branch of industry get together, and then come up against the Central Offices. In some cases the Central Office seems to stand aside; in others, sharp resistance is put up. Anyhow there is intense administrative persecution, and information piles up in the files of the party leaders as to who are supporters and who opponents of the councils.

Is the situation changing? The Economic Council that was established at the beginning of February is half made up, we were told, of members who support extension of the councils. In any case — with due regard for the immediate economic difficulties, the balance which must be found between centralism and decentralization, and the huge problems presented by the autonomy of enterprises of such varying degrees of profitability — the choice today seems to be posed very clearly between the road toward a neo-bureaucratism, non-parasitic but technical, and the road toward what is, in the last analysis, the essence of socialism, that is, economic democracy.

The outcome, if today's conditions do not change, will depend

on the strength of the working-class current in favor of the new system. It will be an important test, demonstrating the ability of the working class as a whole, and not merely its vanguard, to take its destiny in its own hands.

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