

*The*

**NEW**

**INTERNATIONAL**

**CITY MACHINES  
AND LABOR POLITICS**

by William Barton

**A Debate**

**MARXISM vs. CATHOLICISM**

***Max Shachtman vs. Father Charles Owen Rice***

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***Is France Recovering?***

by Henry Judd

***On the Psychology of Stalinism***

by Juan Andrade

***"Left Communism" in 1918***

by Victor Serge

**JANUARY 1949**

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**BOOKS IN REVIEW...CORRESPONDENCE**

# MEMO

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## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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As Father Rice points out in his presentation (see debate in this issue), a long time has gone by since Marxism and Catholicism have been set up against each other in a debate between authoritative and recognized spokesmen for each... We understand that back in the 1930s Father Rice also tilted with Clarence Hathaway, then editor of the *Daily Worker*, but from reports we gather it was not much of a debate: the Stalinists were then in the midst of their People's-Front period of the outstretched-hand-to-the-Catholic-Church, and Hathaway gave a good imitation of a salesman trying to avoid a difference of opinion with a customer...

We suggest to our readers that their Catholic friends (and especially members of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists) would probably be interested to read the debate for themselves. Just to underline that there is no merely commercial motive in this suggestion (though what's wrong with that?) we would add that it would even be a good thing to lend them the copy...

As anyone can see, we've skipped the December issue, but as usual this does not affect the number of issues that subscribers receive.

The MEMO in the last issue referred to the discussion bulletins now being published by the Workers Party in preparation for its coming national convention... For interested readers, here are the leading contents of the Convention Discussion Bulletins so far issued (seven to date with more to come)...

No. 1: National Committee statements on the party's policy in the national election, on the Italian election, and on the Palestine war; article by Max Shachtman on "'Party' or 'Propaganda Group?'"...

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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VOL. XV

JANUARY 1949

NO. 1

## A DEBATE ON THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF

# Marxism Vs. Catholicism

*The following debate on the Catholic versus the Marxist social philosophy was held on November 12, 1948 in the auditorium of the North Side Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh, under the auspices of the Citizens Forum of that city.*

*Representing the Catholic point of view was Father Charles Owen Rice, leader of the Pittsburgh branch of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, director of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), and well known for his activities in political and charitable movements.*

*Representing the socialist point of view was Max Shachtman, the national chairman of the Workers Party.*

*Acting as moderator in the debate was Dr. Robert W. Lawson, of the Citizens Forum and the North Side Unitarian Church.*

*Arrangements for the debate were as follows:*

*Father Rice presented his point of view for thirty-five minutes, followed by a presentation of equal length by Comrade Shachtman. Members of the audience then addressed questions to either or both of the speakers for a period of time. Fifteen-minute summaries were then made by each of the speakers, Comrade Shachtman speaking first and Father Rice last. The meeting was adjourned with a standing vote of thanks to the speakers by the audience of 250.*

*The entire debate was recorded on wire through the courtesy of Dr. Lawson. The question period, however, was only partially recorded, and of those questions and answers which were recorded, parts of some of the questions and parts of some of the answers appear to have been*

*chopped off or recorded indistinctly. We publish below the two presentations and summaries.*

*The transcription from the wire-recording was made by the office of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, and carefully checked several times for verbatim accuracy. (In this connection, the Editors wish to extend their thanks to Comrade Macy for his services in performing this job.) Both presentations and summaries are presented complete. Besides punctuation, paragraphing, etc., the literal transcript was slightly edited only in a few cases where the speaker himself clearly went back over and changed a word or phrase or sentence and where in such case the literally recorded words might prove confusing.*

*We take great pleasure in presenting both sides of this debate.*

—THE EDITORS.

## PRESENTATION BY FATHER RICE

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I am happy to be here tonight and taking part in this program, though I hate to start out by something of a disagreement with our worthy moderator. The Catholic Church is not out to capture the world in the sense in which that phrase is used.

We would be out to capture, perhaps, the souls and hearts of all the people in the world if they want to embrace the true religion. But we are not setting out any revolutionary procedure such as the Marxists have entered upon, or such as the fascists have entered upon.

When I hear my church referred to as the most powerful institution, it send shudders down my spine; and I am afraid it sends shudders down the spines of many good sincere Protestants.

The Catholic Church is a church. We conceive ourselves to be the true religion. We invite all who believe in that true religion to become Catholics. The Catholic Church is not an institution engaging in machinations, or anything of the sort.

I am a Catholic priest, but I am not here as a representative of my church. I don't know whether the bishop knows I am here or not, but I am rather certain that His Holiness in the Vatican hasn't heard of the debate tonight.

Now with these preliminaries, maybe I can get into the main tenor of the debate. I might tell you first of all that I am surprised to see so many of you here. I did not expect so many people to come to attend the debate between myself and anybody else. I am afraid that I myself wouldn't go across the street to hear anybody debate, and I congratulate you upon your energy on this more or less balmy evening in November. I'll try not to disappoint you.

This is a terrible subject for a debate—a very hard subject to get into. But I have nobody to blame but myself because, when Dr. Lawson first called me, he had in mind a debate on some such subject as the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. I couldn't see where I would care to make that the subject of a full-dress debate, although there is nothing in particular in our record that we are ashamed of. I didn't think it needs any particular defending and I, unfortunately, suggested this alternate subject.

### **Varieties of Socialism**

And I have been wrestling intermittently for the past few days with the subject, wondering what in the world to do with it. The reason is, you see, it's quite difficult to debate somebody when you have difficulty finding him or distinguishing him. First you have to find your opponent. And there are many varieties of Marxian socialists. Well, which one am I debating against?

Am I debating against the particular variety of Marxian socialism that Mr. Shachtman represents? Or am I debating against all manner of Marxian socialism? I'm not sure, and maybe when we're finished you won't be sure either.

This thing was done very well—I think it must have been thirty years ago. I don't know how many of you heard of the famous debate between the great Mgr. Ryan, a Catholic priest, pioneer in social action in this country, a man who supported the New Deal, many of whose suggestions foretold the New Deal, a man who was behind the bishops' program of 1919, which was the document that read almost like the things that Roosevelt began to adopt in 1933 after he was inaugurated. The debate was between him and another great man, a great socialist, called Morris Hillquit.

It was a famous debate; it was carried on by correspondence in the pages of a magazine called *Everyman's Magazine*. It ran for a year, conducted very formally; all the aspects of socialism were examined. I didn't consult that debate before coming here, although there would be much in there that would be worthwhile today. After two world wars and all that has happened between them and after them, whatever was said in that debate or much of it is outmoded today.

There are various branches of socialism—that is, of Marxian socialism—and in one way or another the Catholic Church disagrees with them all. The Catholic Church disagrees only slightly with the economic program of your moderate socialists. It disagrees almost entirely with the entire program of the Communists, who are or assert that they are revolutionary socialists.

And I am sure Catholic doctrine disagrees greatly with the beliefs of the gentleman with whom I am debating tonight, Mr. Max Shachtman of New York

City, because he too represents a revolutionary Marxism, which bears, as I get it, great similarities to the program of the Bolsheviks. It is greatly similar to the original program of Lenin. These gentlemen, understand, have no more love for Joseph Stalin than I have.

Now for the unsophisticated members of my audience I might say that I wish to start out by decrying the indiscriminate condemnation of certain proposals. Almost any liberal or progressive proposal, when first brought forth, is sure to be tagged by somebody as communistic; or if they get a little milder they say it is socialistic.

I am very much against that for two reasons. For one reason, in the first place, it will discredit many perfectly harmless, honorable and desirable proposals. In the second place it results in giving the Communists entirely too much credit, when they are the ones whose name is tagged to the proposed reform. And in the same way it results in giving the Socialists more exclusive credit than they deserve.

It's strange that we're having this debate on—I guess it's the one hundredth anniversary of great things from Marxian socialists and the one hundredth anniversary of the Communist Manifesto. Marxian socialism, I often think, did for general socialist thought what Calvin did for the Protestant Reformation. It whipped the thing into logical form. Now, you may not agree with socialism, as I disagree with it—most of it anyhow—but there is logic there, however mistaken the logic may be.

### **Basis for Disagreement**

There are other things concerning socialism that you must remember before you want to discuss it. Socialism has served as a dynamic explosive. It has focused the attention of the world on grave and real evils—real evils in the capitalist system that something needed to be done about. Socialism, from some of its advocates, has constructive achievements to its credit.

However, I disagree with the socialists, Marxian socialists. I disagree with many of the things that they believe in. You see, it isn't the incidental reforms that occasional socialists advocate that I disagree with. It's the deep philosophy.

Socialism is not just a mere reform movement. It is a whole philosophy of life for those who accept it. It certainly is that for the Communists, who are a variety of socialists. I imagine it is that for the Trotskyites and for the splinter group to which Mr. Shachtman belongs. It's a philosophy of life.

There are other socialists of moderate stamp who are just half-hearted socialists. To them socialism may be just a fad; it's nicer perhaps or more daring to say that you are a socialist than a Republican or a Democrat. . . . Well, I will not say that there are some people who would say almost anything is nicer

than to say one is a Republican after what happened, but we will not engage in that type of talk.

I would say that I disagree with socialism because of its basic philosophical beliefs. I disagree with its materialism. I disagree with the atheism that is half the content of scientific socialism certainly. There may be those who call themselves socialists who are not non-believers, but they are not very good socialists; they are not very good Marxian socialists.

I disagree thoroughly with some of the basic economic ideas—I can't see the economic interpretation of history. It has a grain of truth in it, but when it's carried to its logical extreme—as you sometimes see it done in book reviews, for instance—it verges definitely on the ridiculous. I can't see the socialist idea of the labor theory of value no matter how it's modified or watered down; basically to me it's a false idea.

I disagree very thoroughly with those socialists—and it's most of them—who, according to their philosophy, deny the right of ownership of private property. I have a basic strong economic disagreement with them on that, because I say that the ownership of private property gives a man security and gives a man stability; that it does not inevitably lead to exploitation. I say that man's right to the ownership of private property is something that should at all times be regulated. I say that ownership of property may be private but its use is always social.

#### **Private Property a Natural Right**

The doctrine of private-property ownership that has been current in the United States, certainly up until very recently, to my way of thinking is an absolute travesty on private property—on the right of private property. I disown and denounce as materialistic and false the idea that if you own something it is yours to do with absolutely as you want regardless of your neighbors. The idea that ownership of a factory, for instance, would give a man the right to conduct his affairs as he wants himself without regard to his workers or without regard to anybody else—I would thoroughly disagree with that right of private ownership.

But I say you cannot take away the right of private ownership, because it's a natural right. The state cannot take away that right because the state did not *give* that right. That right is in man because of his very nature as a man. If you trace the source of that right ultimately, you trace it to Almighty God, to the Creator.

It's very dangerous to say that our rights come from the state; and that is a danger that I am afraid our Marxian socialists get into. The over-all danger of statism, I think, is inherent in the Marxian philosophy. Although they say they want to see the day when the state will wither away, and although they say that this is just a stage on the road to socialism

when the proletariat will take over, whether it will be a dictatorship of the proletariat or whether they insist that the proletariat will conduct the state, I say that in their doctrine you have inherently the danger that you will deify the state.

You may say that it is merely a temporary deification; but deification of the state by those who possess the machinery of the state leads to corruption by them; leads to power-seeking, as we've seen in Soviet Russia; leads to brutal dictatorship. It leads to the faceless leadership of faceless multitudes such as we see in Russia today. That, to an extent, is the basis—not all the basis but some of the basis—of my rejection of Marxism.

#### **Marxism and the Nature of Man**

You might put it this way: I reject Marxianism, Marxian socialism, because it does not agree with the true nature of man. The Marxist misunderstands man. Marx himself in some places—I think it was in *Das Kapital* where he said that when this happy state of affairs comes men will then like to work. I wouldn't want to be hung for getting the quotation wrong or I'd be strung from the rafters; it's something of the sort—I know I haven't got it exactly.

I conceive that the Marxists think that human nature is perfectible. In this scientific Marxism they seem to have an idea that we will evolve into a perfect society of some sort. Very mechanistic and horrible thing to me! But in their regard that human nature is perfectible, they're wrong. What we're looking for is not a system that will work with perfect men or perfectible men. What we want is a system that will work somehow with the very miserable, dishonest sinners that we are. That's what we're looking for.

Now, one final word before I leave this subject of Marxism. This does not mean that we Catholics oppose Marxists at every turn, that we oppose all Marxists. In the labor unions, for instance, you will find socialists working side by side with us to rid a union of racketeers or of Communists, and working with some harmony just to build a union, just to make a good union that will serve the people. Our Holy Father, the Pope, after this last war, made it very definite that he wanted the Christian parties of Europe to cooperate with all men of good will.

And even in the great encyclical written in 1891 there was a discussion of the moderate form of socialism that came pretty much to the conclusion that if the socialists would drop some of their philosophical points, particularly their atheism, and some of the points that went against the nature of man, there would be no barrier to collaboration between the two even at that date. And there would be no barrier, no barrier whatever, if there was this moderation in socialism, to Catholics becoming socialists and socialists being Catholics. But for the atheistic turn there and

those philosophical points which are basically materialistic—those particular ones—if there were a change in some of those, the prohibition that exists would be lifted.

The prohibition as it now stands has to be because of the atheistic content of virtually all Marxian socialism that I've ever run into, whether it's latent or whether it's on the surface.

I, in this debate, will not attempt to get into a discussion. . . . (I want you to know my time is running out; and I was the one who told Dr. Lawson that it would be difficult for me to talk for a half hour: it will be difficult for me to shut up at the end of a half hour; I hope somebody rings the bell.)

I will not get into the type of wrangle we could easily get into: the inconsistencies of Marxian socialism. If you follow true scientific Marxian socialism you would wait around for the capitalist system to fall apart. It didn't fall apart after the First World War. And I conceive, if I were a scientific Marxian socialist, I don't know how I could have kept on believing in it after I saw the victory of socialism only in the most backward country in Europe; and when I saw that in the great capitalistic nations capitalism did not wither; and that the only hope of socialists was to take it over by parliamentary means. Or else perhaps by violence from without—not by uprisings of the workers. I don't know how I as a socialist could have reconciled that with my point of view.

Communism, for instance: where is it having its inroads chiefly, and its successes? In some European countries devastated by war, to be sure. Where it's really successful it has been imposed from without; and in China, which can hardly be called an industrial, capitalistic country; and in South America, where industrial capitalism certainly hasn't gone through its stages and come to any sort of rot, as it seems to me the scientific Marxist expected it to.

### **Catholic Social Philosophy**

Now I have only a few brief minutes to outline the Catholic social philosophy. It was my intention to spend most of my time talking about that and not to be negative at all—the Catholic social philosophy, as expressed in the encyclicals of the Popes: *De Rerum Novarum*, on *The Condition of Labor*, written or published in 1891; *Quadragesimo Anno*, written forty years after; and *Atheistic Communism*, published in 1938. Some authoritative lights on Catholic doctrine come from other allocutions of the Popes. One of his Christmas allocutions during the war—I believe it was in '44—was a beautiful Catholic document calling for social reconstruction. You may find a somewhat authoritative statement of the Catholic position in America in that program of the bishops that was printed in 1919 and that I told you was a forerunner of the New Deal.

The Catholic social position can be expressed by saying that it calls for respect for human dignity and human personality. It excoriates the evils of capitalism, monopoly, control of credit, misuse of large industries by their owners, absentee ownership, and all the evils that are apparent in our capitalistic system. Catholic social philosophy calls for strong labor unions and the Pope definitely has instructed his priests to assist labor unions and to assist the worker.

You might say that basically—basically—in the Catholic social philosophy there is a resounding rejection of the capitalistic doctrine of *laissez faire*, the doctrine that business is business. There is a tremendous effort on the part of Catholic social moralists to bring morals into the marketplace, to make business subject to ethical and to moral considerations. There is a terrific emphasis on the necessity of justice being taken into account in all business transactions, particularly where the worker is concerned.

There is place in the Catholic philosophy for the state to step in and take over industries, and take over sociological matters, where the masters of those industries have failed to do their duty. Where private authority, for instance, will not take care of such matters as housing and medicine, there is a clear position in Catholic social doctrine for the state to step in and take care of those matters.

### **Against Classical Liberalism**

The Catholic Church, in its doctrine, stands opposed to socialism and communism because of the atheistic content and the denial of the nature of man. The church also stands with its face very strong against classical liberalism—classical liberalism being that *laissez faire* business that the least government is the best government, and that if you let everything alone survival of the fittest will determine who is going to get on top, and that if everybody is selfish let us all be enlightenedly selfish, and so on and so on. One man referred to that as the doctrine of the policeman, as it's been called—the church is definitely against the policeman theory of the state.

That type of classical liberalism—which we don't recognize by that name in the United States of America, incidentally; we call liberalism something entirely different; we call liberalism something that is the negation of classical liberalism; we think of that as liberalism. In that sense I wouldn't mind myself being called a liberal. We use it almost synonymously with progressive—I don't know what we're going to do for words now that the Communists have taken that word progressive and made it their own. We'll just have to get hold of it and give it a good dry-cleaning so that we can still use the word, because with our uncertainty of the use of the word liberalism and the trouble with the word progressivism we are in a bad state.

Let me conclude my remarks by saying definitely that we of the Catholic Church realize the sins that



have been committed by many religious people in the name of religion against the workers and against the poor. We recognize all that ocean of hypocrisy that is still not dried out. I recognize that the church works slowly in coming to grips with the horrible evil of industrial capitalism. But I give you as extenuating circumstances the fact that capitalism is not the child of the Catholic Church. It first grew and flourished in those countries which had repudiated the mother church.

I want to emphasize that there is no desire for any taking control of states or unions or any institutions of power so far as the Catholic Church is concerned. We would like the leaven of true Christianity to grow throughout the entire world. We would like a reform that would start with the hearts of men. We believe that the reform ideas that we have are such that without a revolution (other than that peaceful one in the hearts of men), without a revolution our country and our system can be reformed and cleaned and purified so that it will give justice instead of injustice; that the worker will get his fair share of not only the financial gains of industry but his fair share of responsibility and his fair share of ownership—not the phony ownership without any control which comes from the ownership of stock, but a real sharing in ownership.

And we are very glad to see that modern students of this subject, your great teachers of today, men like Elton Mayo and Clinton Golden, are advocating reforms that fit right in with the Pope's encyclicals, and that men like Golden speak with respect and knowledge of the papal encyclicals and the reforms that they suggest. We believe that within them there is worked out not a blueprint—not a blueprint, but a philosophical system and a moral system under which men may work out their destinies with justice and with charity. Justice has to come first.

### **World in a Mess**

The world today is in a sorry mess. It is in its mess because of the evil that men have done, and because of the stupidity of men. It will not be righted by any quasi- or reputed-to-be-scientific system. It will be renovated and cleared and reformed by a human system, a system that recognizes the true destiny of men. We must reform the world for men and not be thinking of perfecting men so that they will fit into systems and machines. That way we can save ourselves, and that way we can save civilization.

That is the way of Christianity, and that is the way of democracy. The other ways appear to be easier; they are easier on paper. The way of democracy is a hard way; it is a very difficult way. The way to do it is through the people, for the people, and of the people: that's the hard way. And it's the way that doesn't show you any quick or immediate benefits but that's the only way.

We either do it that way, or we face an unbelievable terror of inhuman regimentation and destruction of the human spirit; and, speaking in purely human terms, we face the destruction of ourselves and of civilization. Being a believer in Almighty God, I believe that that day will not come, that even the stupidity of man cannot destroy himself. But let us not fall for the simple-sounding panaceas. Let us not fall for mere hatred, of class against class. We have to do it in the infinitely harder way of cooperation, love of our fellow man even when he is in the wrong, and a truly Christian religious passion for justice and charity.

## **PRESENTATION BY MAX SHACHTMAN**

MR. CHAIRMAN, FATHER RICE, AND FRIENDS:

I hope there has not been a misunderstanding about the subject of this evening's debate. I am prepared to debate the theology of the Catholic Church, but not tonight and not under this heading.

I understood that the debate was to be not on the theology of the Catholic Church but on the social philosophy of the Catholic Church, and that I'm prepared to discuss tonight. It's not possible to have a fruitful disagreement between two people, and to discuss it intelligently, without first finding a point on which the two agree, and which can be used as a point of contact (so to speak) and a common point of departure.

In seeking such a point for this debate between Marxism and Catholicism, the closest I've been able to come is in the profession by the authoritative spokesmen of the Catholic Church that its social philosophy of today is summed up in the words "social justice" and that the object of social justice is the common good. Marxism in its own way professes such a reformation of human society as will serve the common good by assuring the economic, social and cultural welfare of all the people. If we can assume for the moment that this is more or less our common point of departure, the debate can have a meaningful and fruitful character.

It will then center around this concrete question: Which road should we follow in order to achieve the goal, on this earth at least, which we seem to have in common—the road of the Catholic Church, the Roman Church, or the road of Marxism, that is, the road to socialism?

We start a second time with a point of agreement: Capitalist society, which today dominates the world, is divided primarily into two classes. This old truism of Karl Marx and all his followers is fully recognized by the church itself.

In the *De Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII, in 1891, we have it recognized as follows: Toward the

close of the nineteenth century (reads the encyclical) the new economic methods and the new developments in industry had spread among most of the nations to such an extent that human society manifestly became divided more and more into two classes. Of these the first, small in numbers, enjoyed all the comforts so plentifully supplied by modern invention. The second class, comprising the immense multitude of the workmen, was oppressed by dire poverty, and struggled in vain to escape from the straits which encompassed them. Furthermore, this division into classes has hardened and become more intolerable, by the monopolistic degeneration of capitalist society, and its fusion with the political machinery of the capitalist state, which is the servant of monopoly.

### **Pope Recognized Evils**

This viewpoint of Marxism, this development forecast by Marxism, was finally acknowledged forty years after the encyclical of Leo XIII by Pope Pius XI in his equally well-known encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*. There he declares free competition has put an end to itself; economic dictatorship has supplanted free trade; unbridled domination has succeeded the desire for gain. The whole economic life has become hard, cruel and relentless in a ghastly measure.

To this must be added the crying evils that have risen from the intermingling and scandalous confusion of the duties and offices of civil powers and of economics. Such as, to mention but one out of many: the degrading of the majesty of the state. The state which should sit on high, the supreme arbiter ruling in royal fashion free from all party-serving and intent only upon justice and the common good, has become a slave given over and bound to the service of human passion and greed.

To which the Pope added in the same encyclical: the immense number of the proletariat on the one hand and the enormous riches of some very wealthy men on the other are an unanswerable argument that the earthly goods so abundantly produced in our so-called industrial age are far from rightly distributed and equitably shared among the various classes of men.

The intervention of forty years, four decades, required on the part of the Pope an explanation of the state of affairs in capitalist society which closely approximated but was not identical with that which was explained by the Marxists and that which was foretold by the Marxists.

We now can see that capitalism has degenerated to the point where it threatens us all with barbarism and destruction. And when Father Rice said that to follow the Marxists one must wait indefinitely for the collapse of capitalism, that capitalism has not collapsed as the Marxists foretold, then I am absolutely convinced of one thing: that Father Rice lives in the United States but not in the United States as part of

the world which is before our eyes. Because if you do not think that capitalism in its birthplace, Europe, has collapsed just about completely, then I wonder to myself: what in your view will capitalism look like when it does collapse?

Capitalism in Europe is in a state of complete collapse; it cannot feed the people—I don't say give them luxuries and comforts—it cannot *feed* them, it cannot house them. It can destroy people—it did that with magnificent efficiency during the war! It can destroy homes—it does that remarkably well! It destroys homes—it does that with remarkable efficiency!

To be sure, the efficiency of the Second World War was as nothing compared to the efficiency and preparations for us in the Third World War, where you destroy not just one village, and not just one town, but with one single highly efficient atomic bomb we can destroy a whole county—just with one bomb. That's the efficiency and strength of capitalism today. Otherwise, throughout the world, with the single possible exception of the United States, capitalism is in utter collapse.

### **Capitalism Degenerating**

Now we have in capitalism, in the best of the countries, in the United States, a colossal concentration of wealth on the one side and poverty on the other side. We have in a country of stupendous riches unknown in all history: no abundance, no peace, no security, no full employment anywhere. What we have in the United States, for example, today is a pseudo-full employment. Stop producing the weapons of destruction in the United States now, stop producing the weapons to wipe out the world in the United States right now, and see how much full employment there is even in this country! We have a vast capacity under capitalism, instead, if not for construction, then for destruction. We have on all hands the growth—inexorable—of regimentation, of militarism, of totalitarianism, and a clear threat in the Third World War even of complete physical extinction of the human race in an atomic-bomb assault upon each other.

Now we Marxists say: This is the direction society will inevitably take so long as capitalism exists. These social evils are not bred in the heart of man; they are bred by capitalism, and by nothing else.

Capitalism is based on capitalist private property—not on private property in general, but on capitalist private property. Capitalist private property constantly expropriates what might be called true private property, or private property in general. That is the way in which capitalism came into existence—by expropriating the private property of the individual and converting it into capitalist private property.

What is that? Capitalist private property—and that is what *we* mean when we assail private property; that's all Marxists have ever meant by assailing private property, and nobody can demonstrate



otherwise from the writings of Marxism—it means the monopolistic ownership by a minority of the population of the means of production and exchange. And when we say *expropriate private property* we mean nothing else but that.

### Meaning of Private Property

We do not mean that socialism proposes to take your tie from you, that socialism proposes to take your underwear from you (if it has not already been taken by capitalism itself), that socialism proposes to take away the piano in your house or the automobile in your garage (if you have a garage or if you have an automobile), that it proposes to take away any of your belongings, in any sense whatsoever, which are not used for the purpose of exploiting others. A capitalist who has a piano in his house can retain it, even though he never uses it to play on, to his heart's content under socialism. He does not use the piano for the purpose of exploiting people. He cannot, however, retain ownership of a steel mill or a coal mine, the ownership of which makes it possible for him to exploit people. That's what we mean by private property, that and nothing else.

The capitalist class is defined in no other way—and maintained in no other way—except by the ownership of the means of production and exchange. This ownership is what gives the capitalist class power of life or death over the working class and over society as a whole. To live, you, the workingmen, must not only work for the owners of the means of production and exchange—you must guarantee them a profit. Working for them is not enough; a profit is absolutely required for you to get your job; and that profit can be obtained in no other wise except by exploiting that which is your only real possession—namely your physical or mental capacity to work. That is all the workingman has.

Ownership on the one hand, non-ownership of the means of production on the other hand, determine and fix the limits of existence of the two hostile classes which the Pope was compelled to recognize as existing.

Now why are they hostile? Because there is sinfulness in the hearts of men? I have no doubt that there is some. But that's not what creates the hostility among these two classes. That might create my hostility toward a friend of mine—my sinfulness, my immorality, my lack of the true religion; that might create hostility between you and your cousin; that might create hostility between him and some distant friends; but what explains the hostility between classes is not sinfulness.

To live economically, the capitalist *must* accumulate; not that he wants to or doesn't—he must accumulate in order to live. To accumulate, he must be assured profit. To profit, he must exploit labor. There is no other way. No one, no genius, not the greatest, has discovered another way.

Capital always seeks to intensify exploitation; labor always and necessarily seeks to resist exploitation. Capitalism seeks what is rightfully its own, from its point of view: the maximum that it can get out of the worker. Labor seeks what is rightfully *its* own: that's why it forms, for example, class organizations, labor unions. Now what is rightfully labor's own, at least from our point of view?

Before we state our point of view, let us inquire into the Pope's point of view. Leo XIII, in the encyclical I quoted, *De Rerum Novarum*, says: "The wealth of states"—listen carefully, this is not Marx, this is Leo XIII—"The wealth of states is produced in no other way than by the labor of workingmen."

Now if the wealth of states is produced in no other way than by the labor of workingmen, then the wealth of the nation belongs rightfully to the workingmen. Now how can it get what is its right—a right recognized, it would seem, by the encyclical of 1891? By taking over the wealth which it has created, and which it alone has created. That's all. That is, by the collective ownership of the means of production and exchange.

How? Its right cannot be asserted—the right of labor—by argument, by debate, by pleading, not even by the most passionate appeals to the morality of the capitalist class. That has been tried, without much success. Its right can only be enforced by the independence of its organization, of its consciousness, of its strength, and of its struggle—no other way for the workingman.

### Catholic Principles and Revolution

Now that's what we mean, and that's all we really need to mean by revolution. I hope that I have not uttered a profane word here—but that's all we mean by revolution. A revolution of workingmen who have nothing, against capitalists who have everything in superabundance, is sacred to us. It is not sinful, it is not illegal, it is not immoral.

That's why we supported the great Russian Revolution of 1917. I'm not speaking of the Stalinist counter-revolution which suppressed it finally, but of the great Russian Revolution of 1917 where the workers took the factories and the peasants took the land. That's all there was to the revolution.

Now is there anything sinful about that? I cannot for the life of me understand Father Rice's opposition to the Russian Revolution of 1917, and to what the people did. If I understand Catholic doctrine—it is possible that I don't and perhaps I'll be corrected—but if I understand it, the Russian Revolution of 1917 took place in strict accordance with Christian moral teaching and Christian principle: One who has not and needs takes from one who has and doesn't need. Now isn't that good Catholic doctrine?

Why should the church oppose the Russian Revolution? I hope that Father Rice will not deny that

this is recognized as Catholic doctrine.

Now briefly these are the principles of socialist ownership of the means of production, ownership and control of the means of production and exchange by the whole people, by the producers. This is for us the fullest achievement of democracy: the assurance of a material abundance for all by wiping out classes, by banishing all social fears which upset and haunt us so that man, indeed with a new dignity and a new freedom, can devote himself to his free intellectual, cultural, and spiritual development on this earth—the earth on which we *know* we live, and suffer, and struggle, and aspire to liberty.

This does not speak anything at all about the perfectibility of man. Man will perfect himself as much as he can, when he has the freedom to do it; and I contend that under capitalism he does not have the freedom even to approach the problem. It seems to me that it is under the Catholic dogma that we speak about the perfectibility of man—his being so free from sinfulness that he will be received into a heaven where all is, I am sure, for the best. We don't believe in the perfectibility of man, but we believe in creating those social conditions which allow for his free intellectual, cultural, and (if you wish) moral development.

### **Cops and Sinners**

Now we hold that the Catholic Church cannot achieve the common good. Here let there be not the slightest misunderstanding. Let me underline twenty times that anything I say about the Catholic Church refers to its dogma, its doctrine in the social field, and its actions in the social field, and does not in any sense relate to something that I'm not even discussing because I consider it beyond discussion for a Marxist; namely, the complete, unreserved, unqualified right and freedom of the Catholic, or any other congregation, to worship God in any way he sees fit.

Now I say again, we hold that the church cannot achieve this common good that we will assume is our common aim.

The church first of all preaches the preparation of man for another world, not for this one. It emphasizes that. This can only serve, and has only served basically, to help reconcile people to the earthly misery.

That's why you so often hear among the very devout and pious: We are sinners, to sin is our nature, to sin is in the nature of man. Or as the American bishops said recently in a statement: Man has inborn inclination to evil. Consequently, those who sin against us are doing it only because they in turn have an inborn inclination to evil. How can you effectively resist an evil which is inborn? And if the cop, while you are on strike, very firmly assaults you with his baton, that is undoubtedly due to the fact that he has an inborn inclination to evil. I hope that you in turn have enough of something inborn to teach him that

that inborn inclination should not be exercised against your efforts to get a higher wage.

There is not much that can be done—something, yes, but not much, until we get our heavenly reward. That's why Pope Leo says that he is opposed to—I quote: "Excessive concern for the transitory things of life is the source of all vices."

The transitory things of life—that is, life on this wretched pinhead of a planet. I think that what the trouble with the working class is, is not that it has an excessive concern with its life here, but not a sufficiently clear concern, and that that's as much a source of evil and vice as any.

And finally the church alone—to continue with the quotation from Leo—"alone can draw away the fascinated eye of man firmly fixed upon the changing things of earth and direct it to heaven." I do not mean, I assure you in the sincerest way I can, to be in any sense impious, but if your eyes are fixed on heaven, that is a blessing to the capitalist pickpocket.

### **Catholicism's Reactionary Role**

The church, further, is for the perpetuation of classes. There is no other result possible from its theory that social problems can best be solved by cooperation between classes. We are opposed to the cooperation between the capitalist class and the working class; we are for such a struggle against the capitalist class that we wipe out all classes, that there are no class divisions in society. Cooperation between these two hostile classes, whose basic interests are irreconcilable, means—implies—necessitates—the perpetuation of class divisions.

We say: Do not cooperate with the capitalist class, because the only basis upon which you can cooperate is to your disadvantage. Fight the capitalist class for the essential necessary rights of labor! On what basis can you cooperate with the capitalist class? By preserving intact the foundation of private property; on that, church doctrine insists.

I contend that private property, in this case private ownership of the means of production and exchange, is the only basis—the only and the sufficient basis—for the strength and power of monopoly capitalism. And so long as this basis remains fundamentally intact, its power and strength and consequently its destructive power remain intact. It is the only basis—this monopolistic power over the means of production and exchange—for competition leading to crises, depression and war. And of course the capitalist class is always ready to cooperate with labor, provided that the foundation of its power remains intact, which is what the Catholic Church dogma demands.

I go further and say: The church plays, willy-nilly, regardless of the opinion or the individual action of any of its servants, of any of its priests, of any of the members of its hierarchy—I am speaking

now of the Catholic Church as it is authoritatively represented by its spokesmen—plays a reactionary role in the ranks of labor itself.

First, because it insists upon the primary principle of the preservation of private property. Insofar as it insists upon the preservation of private property in the form of my tie or yours, my piano at home or yours, my shoes or yours, my lathe in the basement or yours, my automobile or yours, there is no possibility even of a dispute between us—that's not involved. I repeat that my ownership of a piano makes it impossible for me to exploit anybody, if I were the most evil man in the world. But my ownership of a factory not only makes it possible but makes it necessary for me to exploit people, even if I were the most moral person in the world. And that's the kind of private property (bear in mind) that we are speaking of, and that is what the preservation of private property must necessarily mean.

Secondly, because of its struggle against socialism in the labor movement and in the working class, which we conceive of as the only road out of the bloody chaos and agony into which capitalist society has dragged humanity.

#### **What's Wrong with ACTU?**

And thirdly, because it divides workers along religious lines—which is utterly fatal to the labor movement. In Europe it has for decades had, in one country after another, Catholic trade unions as against the large, big representative free trade-union movement. In the U. S. with that skill for adaptation that has always characterized the Church of Rome it has organized inside the existing labor movement an Association of Catholic Trade Unionists.

Now, as Father Rice has already pointed out, we of the Workers Party and others cooperate with members of the ACTU, have done so in the past and undoubtedly will do so in the future, on practical questions before the trade unions. That does not change our fundamental attitude toward a movement like the ACTU to the slightest degree.

The ACTU organizes labor-unionists along religious lines. If tomorrow the Baptists were to organize an association of Baptist trade-unionists and the Methodists an association of Methodist trade-unionists and the Mohammedans an association of Mohammedan trade-unionists and the Jews an association of Jewish trade-unionists, and every other denomination, plus the various groups of agnostics and atheists, were to organize their groups in the labor movement—what would happen to the unity and coherence, what would happen to the cohesiveness and strength, to the solidarity and the fighting power of the labor movement? It would be divided into a whole multitude of contending religious sections, each attempting necessarily to prevent the others from gaining domination or to have domination itself.

If the ACTU is organized for the purpose of bringing the principles of Catholic social justice to the workingmen, I say: Start not with the workingmen, who are not so failing in the ideas of social justice! Start with the big capitalists and bankers! And I ask myself why it is that the church to this day has not founded in the United States, so far as I know, an Association of Catholic Bankers and Businessmen, to teach them a little bit about social justice so they can inflict a little bit of it on the working class. Why do they concentrate upon those in whom the spirit of social justice is far from lacking, instead of trying to organize those in whom the spirit of social justice of any kind is prominent by its absence?

#### **Catholic Church and Totalitarianism**

Finally, the church compromises with or supports outright reactionary regimes which destroy democracy. And democracy is essential not only for us of the socialist movement—it is an absolute lifeblood for the working-class movement. Show me a labor movement of any kind that can exist without democracy—show me a labor movement that exists in those countries where a regime of totalitarianism or authoritarianism has been installed!

Show me a free labor movement under Mussolini in Italy, with whom the papacy completed a concordat and the Lateran Treaty. Show me a free labor movement in Germany, after Hitler took power and the Pope completed a concordat with Von Papen and Hitler. Show me a free labor movement in the Austria of Dolfuss, that model Catholic statesman, who massacred the socialist workers in Vienna in 1934. Or show me a free labor movement in countries like Portugal, a model Catholic state more or less; or in Spain, a model Catholic state more or less!

In all the countries of Europe and America where the Catholic Church has dominance or predominant social and political influence, there the conditions of the workingman and the peasant are of the lowest. Isn't that a fact?

Finally—again, I must rush through to the end—the church is itself anti-democratic, and seeks a monopolistic position of political power in every country. In the church, there is no such thing as an election. The only thing that approaches an election, that could in the remotest sense of the term be called democratic, is the election of the Pope himself by the College of Cardinals. Otherwise, the cardinals are appointed; every bishop is appointed by the Pope; the priests in the parishes are selected by the bishops. Everything is hierarchical *downward*; nothing is, so to speak, hierarchical *upward*. The communicants of the Catholic Church do not rule in the church, and they do not decide in the church.

The church doctrine denies what it calls the "natural right" of existence of other religious beliefs and groups. It alone, it contends, has a "natural right" to

exist and to propagate its faith. It seeks to be the state church and the only state church, with suppression or restriction of all other religious institutions and of all democratic political institutions except those which agree socially or philosophically with its aims.

### "Moral Law"

It declares, to be sure, in its doctrine that the state and church are two different powers, and that each has fixed limits for the exercise of these powers. But it adds to that: the basis of the state is moral law. Now what is moral law? The church, the Roman Apostolic Church, is the only true and reliable interpreter and judge of what moral law is, and if there is a conflict in jurisdiction between the power of the state and the power of the church, Catholic doctrine reserves the decision for itself and for its institution, the church. It proclaims that the jurisdiction of the church must prevail, and that of the state be excluded.

Hence the Catholic Church, far from contributing to the common good, is a replica in ecclesiastical garb of the reactionary, authoritarian, totalitarian and other anti-democratic states which everybody knows it has so often helped to form, and with which it has always been prepared to collaborate. In this, it is faithful, not, to be sure, to the preachings of him they call the Savior, but to its own long history of obscurantism, bigotry and reaction.

Seldom in history was it the vehicle of social welfare, of historic advancement. Almost always and ever it was a prop, often the decisive one, of the slaveholders against the slaves in history, of the feudal lords against the serfs, of the status quo against social progress, of darkness against light.

Yet slavery died; serfdom died. Left today is capitalist wage slavery, and this too shall pass, despite the always stubborn, always skillful, but in the end futile resistance that the church offers to socialist freedom.

Without going back too far into ancient history, we know the answer for ourselves to this illuminating question: When and where did the Church of Rome initiate or foster a great movement of the people for economic, political, social or cultural reform? When and where did the church initiate or foster a great struggle for democracy or democratic rights? When and where did the Church of Rome proclaim and conduct without equivocation or letup a holy war against fascism, as it has so often conducted against socialism?

Ask these questions of the church, and the answer must in the last instance be: nowhere and never. Ask these questions of the Marxists, the socialists, and the answer is: everywhere and always. There is a difference between the social philosophy of the Catholic Church and Marxism, a living movement of the work-

ers everywhere for socialist freedom, peace, abundance and universal progress.

## SUMMARY BY MAX SHACHTMAN

I wish to thank Dr. Lawson and the forum here for their kindness in inviting me to present the point of view of socialism and Marxism as supported by our party, the Workers Party. In recapitulating our position, let me state it briefly again as follows:

Socialism demands the collective ownership and democratic control and management of the means of production and exchange for the benefit and welfare of the people as a whole. That is an adequate statement of the socialist objective; nothing less than that suffices.

We base that upon the fact that capitalism, which is founded upon and cannot exist without the monopolistic ownership and control of the means of production and exchange, has brought society almost literally to the edge of a precipice, where it cannot guarantee security to the people, cannot guarantee peace to the people, cannot guarantee brotherhood to the people, cannot guarantee abundance to the people. Any social system which cannot guarantee those to the masses of the people stands condemned. The only way to replace capitalism, the only thing short of its development to barbarism by itself, is socialism.

If we cannot point to Russia as a democratic socialist state, a democratic socialist society, that's not because *we* do not have the power there—that's because the *workers* do not have the power there. Trotsky and Stalin were not fighting a fight for personal power; and it would take a journalist of the Hearst school to sum up so historically important a social conflict in those terms. What was being fought was a struggle between a reactionary bureaucracy on the one side and a working class in a backward country on the other side. The Marxists, including Lenin, including Trotsky, from 1917 onward repeated that the Russian working class by itself can take power, but the Russian working class by itself cannot establish a socialist society. That's a task for the workers of more than one country, a number of countries, and above all the workers of the most advanced countries of Europe.

That is the reason we do not have socialism in Russia today. Socialism demands not only the collective ownership of the means of production and exchange but the control of the working class. I say again: anything less than that may be—anything you want; it is not and never will be socialism.

Now what about the other views of socialism?

Among other things—I don't say exclusively on this—we base that on the clear, unmistakable, unambiguous declaration of Pope Leo XIII: The wealth

of the nation is produced *only* by the labor of workmen. Now you can twist that all you want. You can twist that out of shape. But if you let it spring back into its original shape, that's all it can be made to say. That's why to all of labor belongs all the wealth of the country, primarily and above all the means of production and exchange which are used to enslave the millions.

Do not be tickled under the chin by the idea that socialism has an absolutely fierce and murderous objective—against whom? a corner grocery? or a peanut stand? Are the corner grocers and the peanut stands ruining civilization? Are those the ones that socialists are set against, or is it the United States Steel Corporation, American Telephone and Telegraph, General Motors, du Pont, and those others which have come to be known in the United States not as the boys in the corner grocery store, but as the Sixty Families which control the economic and political life of this country? That's what we're concerned with primarily.

### **A Challenge**

The Catholic Church as an institution—I'm not at all speaking of it from the standpoint of its communicants; I'm not at all speaking of it from the standpoint of its individual priests. I'm not even speaking of it from the standpoint of its individual prelates and princes. But I'm speaking of the Catholic Church as an institution.

It has been in all decisive events on the side of reaction. How is it—talk all you want—that the Catholic Church has been overwhelmingly on the side—(not this or that priest, I say again, but the church, and everybody knows it, and there's no use trying to blink at it; prominent Catholics have admitted it; and if I had the time I would quote them in sufficient number)—on the side of Hitlerism, on the side of Pilsudski, on the side of Dolfuss in Austria, on the side of Mussolini in Italy, on the side of Franco in Spain, on the side of Peron in the Argentine, on the side of Salazar in Portugal, on the side of all the totalitarian and fascist regimes. Isn't that a fact? Doesn't every child know it?

The Pope in the *Quadragesimo Anno*, the encyclical of 1931, says: No sincere Catholic may be a true socialist. Clear enough, isn't it? Show me one declaration that's just as clear on the part of the Pope or the arbiters of the Holy Congregation—excuse me, I've got the name wrong: the Congregation of the Holy Office who interpret and hand down Catholic law in Rome—one clear statement which says in just the same words except for one: No sincere Catholic may be a fascist or Nazi! Show me one!

There isn't one. There isn't one because the Catholic Church, even when it has not shared the view of reaction—and in many cases it has not—has always managed to work with reaction, has always managed

to cooperate with reaction. Therein lies the fundamental basis for its opposition to socialism and on no other grounds.

## **SUMMARY BY FATHER RICE**

I'd like to call your attention to the fact that I attempted here tonight a serious discussion of socialist panaceas. I disagreed with them, but I discussed them seriously. If you will remember in my first discussion, there was no abuse of socialism.

Now you will remember that what you heard when I had concluded was a harangue something like the old Wobbly out in the Middle West, something like the village atheist—throwing out at least a hundred various smears and catchwords that I couldn't possibly all answer in one evening, if we all stayed here until I don't know when—we could stay here many, many evenings.

Typical of them was the assertion that the church supported Hitler. That is not true; it is a complete untruth. The signing of the concordat with Hitler was an attempt to protect the Catholics, millions of whom lived in the Third Reich. It was an unsuccessful attempt, and the Pope came out against Hitler, and clearly showed the side on which he stood, coming out against the dogmas of Hitler.

Pope Leo said no sincere Catholic can be a socialist; he did not say no sincere Catholic can be a fascist. No wonder—he was dead about thirty or forty years when the fascists started.

That there have been Catholics, and in some countries the majority of Catholics, who cooperated with reaction, and who instead of defending the workers defended their oppressors, is true. It is not a matter of dispute. But the Catholic Church, age-old, contained within herself the seeds of the right attitude, because the truth is there, and the truth is on the other side, and the truth impelled the Pope to speak out as he did. And the Catholics are following the Pope today more and more. The fact that everybody, when the Pope spoke in 1891, didn't immediately turn around and start to parrot his words shows you very definitely and very clearly that there is not in the Catholic Church the discipline, the automatonism that the Ku Klux Klan and the Workers Party would want you to believe in.

Any defense of the Catholic Church I give you can be summed up in a nutshell. The Catholic Church came into a pagan world, where justice was unknown, where slavery was the rule. Slavery ended; injustice was fought against. No Catholic ever claimed that the acts of all his fellow Catholics and even of the leaders are acts in perfect accord with the Divine Master. We leave claims to blameless life, blameless lives and untarnished conduct, to those who say that



they don't believe in God or justice. We do not claim that perfect record, of perfect human conduct, for ourselves, except for our saints, who have been regrettably few. The Catholic Church is a church of sinners. It's human and it's divine: because it's divine, there is mystery; because it is human, there is scandal.

### "Only by the Workers"?

As for some more of the matters at issue, our Holy Father the Pope—I couldn't find it in the quotation there exactly where he said that the wealth of the nations is produced only by the workers. I couldn't find the exact context, but I do know that the whole paragraph runs to the effect that each class . . . I don't say that Mr. Shachtman made that quotation up; I merely say I couldn't dig it up in these few minutes here. I know the encyclical but I don't know it letter perfect.

The context of that is<sup>1</sup> — Oh, yes: "Human labor of every kind is the general source of the increase in wealth in this world. Pope Pius IX quotes Leo to the effect that the wealth of states is produced in no other way than by the labor of workingmen." That is the quotation. That is exact.

The context in which it is, is a discussion of the functions of the two classes. Our Holy Father the Pope points out that both the managing or the employing class and the working class perform a function. Management performs a function. There will be a management class in your socialist utopia or your United States Steel plant won't run. There will be a supply of capital in some way. Perhaps you can get out of it by the state. But Leo points out that there is a function.

In no place does he say that the workers are entitled to all the profits, that they give the only thing of value; because management is not a thing of wealth, but it is a thing of definite value. If you put six guys digging a sewer, you'll get more out of them if you put one of the six to manage them. There isn't any doubt about that. Those are your principles of efficiency. Try it some time.

The stand of the church on the classes is that both classes are necessary, both classes perform a function. The stand on the capitalist system is that there are great evils and great corruptions in it, that there are great corruptions connected with the ownership of private property; but definitely private property is such a bulwark of the liberties of man that you can-

1. It should be explained that at this point Comrade Shachtman handed Father Rice a copy of the Catholic pamphlet from which the encyclical had been quoted. The immediately ensuing quotation read by Father Rice is from this pamphlet: **Christian Social Reconstruction**, by Dom Virgil Michel, dean of College of Arts and Sciences, St. John's University; published 1937, imprimatur of Archbishop Stritch of Milwaukee, by Bruce Publishing Company.

not permit it to be taken away from people and put in the state, because the thing you don't like about capitalism is that not enough men have shares in productive ownership.

If more men had a share, a true share, in the responsibility and earnings and wealth of productive ownership, we'd have more freedom, and more strength, but if you take it away so that no man owns this share. . . . We can talk about how all the workers will have it; it'll belong to all the workers; somebody has to run it; somebody has to manage it, and you're responsible to that individual.

Now the only place where they got a chance to really put that in force and to really build from nothing is in Russia. True, this little group—it's a very small group, I assure you—disowns the Russian experiment. And other socialists also disown it, except when they're in a country which the Russians are running, and then generally a majority agree with them that Russia is all right. The socialists do this. It's happened in the Balkans. Wherever the countries are that the Russians come in and run, a strong group of socialists will always go and amalgamate with the Communists, and be eaten up, and enable them to eat the country up, just like they ate up Czechoslovakia. It's happened in every single case, where these men will amalgamate with these tyrants of the Kremlin.

### Tyranny of Left and Right

Tyranny of the left is just as evil as tyranny of the right, and we've got to be against both. If we give our destinies into the hands of the state, as this little group proposes, absolutely—now socialists like Dr. Van Essen don't propose that particular thing, they want a gradual business about it—but if, as this little group proposes, we turn our entire destinies and put them in the hands of the state, you can call it anything you want, you can call it anything you want, it will be dictatorship. And maybe some little group in Siberia will say: No, that isn't true socialism; it was bureaucracy, or something else that horsed up the United States experiment, but that won't do us a bit of good. We'll be in it. That is the thing that stands out.

And as for the Catholic Church against socialism: the Catholic Church is against all statism and all totalitarianism. There's a place for the state and a place for the church. There are moral laws and there is justice that always, always, must be observed. And if you get away from your moral concepts, and if you think that any vast nation can live by a system akin to that of village atheism, you're crazy. Wherever it's been tried, you've had the madhouse of Hitler, an ex-socialist, Mussolini, an ex-socialist, and Stalin, who is now—at least he claims today that he still is—a socialist.



# City Machines and Labor Politics

## The Trend in Municipal Politics

Charles Edison, former Democratic governor of New Jersey and secretary of the navy, recently broadcast his reasons for supporting Dewey. In his half-hour radio address, hardly a word was about policies or programs; virtually every expensive minute was utilized in denouncing Truman for his association with the "corrupt Pendergast and Hague machines." A few days later, O. John Rogge, Wallaceite candidate for New York surrogate, delivered a major public campaign speech in which foreign and national politics were largely absent as he indignantly and vehemently charged the previous Democratic holder of that important judgeship with using his office for patronage disposal.

It would seem that the old symbol of the iniquitous political machine still looms large in American politics. But if these politicians think it has anything like the weight of old, they are lagging behind the times. The machine operators themselves no longer believe that their swarms of ambitious wardheelers can still automatically get out the desired vote in traditional style.

The spotlight still focuses on the figure of Boston Mayor James Curley maintaining his post while in jail and being received with fanfare by his constituents on his homecoming; on the new Pendergast reviving his uncle's might; on slot-machine king Frank Costello "making" judgeships for loyal Tammanyites; the good old American paradox of regularly denouncing the "machine" and voting for its candidates except in special circumstances may still be with us. *But it is on its way out.*

It was part of the specific pattern of American society for a long time. As the social order has changed, so has this important feature of it; and the metamorphosis of both is likely to continue.

By "machine" we have been referring to a very specific type of political apparatus. Stripped of all derogatory connotations, a political machine is any organized body of politicians and political workers. In traditional American political culture, however, it has been used more often to designate the particular type of political grouping characterized by a well-knit collection of self-seeking predatory individuals, interested primarily in getting and maintaining political power in order to secure for themselves appropriate rewards by getting lucrative spots on the public payroll, raiding the treasury, and receiving payoffs from "interests," often illegal and semi-legal.

It was part of the "American Way" from the time Aaron Burr got Tammany Hall started in the early days. It became more prominent with the development of great economic expansion and rapid

urbanization. The former provided the means for sufficient returns for the best party workers. The accompanying psychology of "wealth *über alles*" provided the appropriate moral atmosphere. For, despite the official ethics, the actually accepted standards verified the seemingly cynical contention of one pair of social scientists that "political corruption is [an] inevitable product of the mores of an acquisitive society."

The rapid urbanization provided the arena of manipulation for the machine's operation. The new city dweller, a recent immigrant to the country or just off the farm, found himself in an unfriendly, impersonal environment. There were few humanizing, solid-arizing institutions in that hostile, atomistic social world. Most noticeably absent were suitable opportunities for friendly face-to-face relations, what sociologists call the "primary groups." Whatever group could present a warm, personalized, solidarizing appeal would have a following. Whoever could intervene with or against the powers that ran their world would find adherents.

### The Machine and the Capitalists

The political machine was admirably suited to fulfill that function. In the beginning, it had few rivals. Trade unions were few. Lodges and such were nowhere near their present number, and whatever existed was under the conspicuous domination of the political leaders.

The methods used to satisfy the constituents are fairly well known. Long-time Boston boss Lomasny explained his boys' role thus:

I think there's got to be in every ward somebody that any bloke can come to—no matter what he's done—and get help. Help, you understand, none of your law and your justice, but help.

Tom Pendergast summarized in his own fashion:

When a poor man comes to old Tom's boys for help we don't make one of those damn-fool investigations like the city charities. No, by God, we fill his belly and warm his back and vote him our way.

Neither the capitalists of the country nor their direct political associates planned or chose this setup. It contained much that they did not like. They would have preferred to avoid its wastefulness, inefficiencies and expense. Wall Street usually supported "reform" movements against Tammany Hall. But they knew they had to accept whatever political apparatus existed on bottom in order to keep their parties flourishing on top.

Steffens received this explanatory comment from William Herrin, attorney for the Southern Pacific

Railroad and Republican leader in California, in response to an inquiry about his attitude towards the exposed "corrupt" machine in San Francisco:

We have got to let those little skates get theirs. . . . We can't help it. . . . The Southern Pacific Railroad and all the companies and interests associated with us are not rich enough to pay all that politics costs.

While the reference to the poverty of the SP line is open to question, a better statement of the feudal relations between the different rungs of the American political ladder could not be found.

But whether its many participants were aware or not, the American city political machine did an even more important job for the top rulers of the nation. Without its existence, the resentment and antagonism of the working-class urbanite to his life situation might have taken a more serious turn.

This was clearly noted and best expressed, not by any political radical or Marxist, but by the conservative British commentator on American politics, James Bryce. He called the machines

buffers between the rich and the poor; buffers who taxed the one to keep the other in good humor. The political levies and sometimes the flagrant corruptions to which party managers resorted were chiefly for acquiring funds necessary to "take care of the boys." . . . Naturally, there were broker's charges on the collections, but these were small as compared with the cost of riots and revolutions.

Sometimes the machine's abuses, especially the occasional blatant tie-ups with criminal elements, have become so unbearable that "reform" movements have been able to "throw the rascals out." But, as everyone knows, it generally was not for long.

These movements have been composed of morally-motivated citizens and politicians often out to make a big splurge as a steppingstone to something higher, but their decision-making base has been among "economy"-minded business men. This group of "outsiders," cutting off expenditures which were deemed necessary, quickly produced strong resentment among working-class urbanites. Solid businessmen also tired early of the reform administration—when, for example, its sometimes zealous crackdown on illegal activities lowered real-estate values. Reformers rarely lasted more than one term.

### Something New

Nevertheless there was nothing eternal about the machine's position. As far back as the nineties, new trends and new ideas appeared on the American scene; among other things, they seriously threatened the machine's hold on city politics.

First of all, urban life became more stable and institutionalized. New organizations upset the almost exclusive monopoly of the machine and its adjuncts. Most important of these was the beginning of a powerful labor movement.

Secondly, although the economy continued its over-all boom, it now showed itself honeycombed with

gross evils and shortcomings and directly upset even the modest aspirations of the working-class city dweller. These began to demand more than the typical wardheeler or reform politician could give. Concrete *political programs* began to offer a significant rival to the machine's appeal.

The examples of this multiplied. In Cleveland, a new type of "reform" movement, under the leadership of Mayor Tom Johnson, became an object of study all over the country. Johnson's administration emphasized lower traction fares and utility rates. For a time, it received such popular support that it was able to contend successfully with Republican boss Mark Hanna. That it did not last as long as some of its adherents hoped was due mostly to the limited character of its program.

The city of New York witnessed a more dramatic evidence of this "something new" in the municipal campaign of 1896. Single-tax economist Henry George ran for mayor with the backing of the labor movement and a wide range of political radicals. Although he was opposed by several candidates with good machines behind them, he was conceded to be the leading candidate right through the campaign. Whatever the worth of his economic theories, *he had a program*. But this experiment in municipal politics was cut short; George did not live to election day. (His son's name was hastily substituted, receiving 21,000 votes, while the victorious Tammany man, Van Wyck, got 234,000.)

### Labor Enters the Lists

A short time later, the Socialist Party was organized. Nationally and locally, this new political force, basing itself almost entirely on its program and the political workers adhering to that program, soon elected mayors in Milwaukee, Reading, Schenectady, and other cities. Incidentally, the "Socialist" administration in Milwaukee lasted for some thirty years, and became the envy of all dabblers in "good municipal government." Though its socialism became more and more pink-tea, and though its long-time mayor, Dan Hoan, later entered the Democratic Party, it seemed to give both voters and political activists an inkling of a political program, enough to keep the typical machine out.

World War I, the post-war anti-red drive, and the ensuing boom of the Twenties reintroduced the old schema almost in toto. Broad political opposition to any phase of capitalist society was largely absent. But the depression brought the old resentments back with renewed strength. Immediately, many of the country's most powerful city machines were turned out of office in a trend that stemmed from the antagonism of the voters towards anything directly identified with the old order. The major capitalists were not entirely unhappy about this: in such times, the drain of supporting wardheelers could not be afforded.

Tammany in New York, Thompson in Chicago,

the entrenched Republican outfit in Pittsburgh—all were tossed out; even in Philadelphia, classic home of successful machine politics, the Republican organization, which had scarcely lost an election since the Civil War, was compelled to make deals with Democrats in order to stay in office. That many of these returned to power or were replaced by similar groupings (Kelly-Nash in Chicago) showed that the opposition of the electorate to the “old bunch” was still immature.

The late Thirties and the Forties, with a war intervening, was the period of the last great growth of the labor movement, of growing widespread anti-capitalist attitudes, however unclear their expression and resultant action. The America of McKinley and Coolidge, of Boss Vare of Philadelphia and Charlie Murphy of Tammany was no more. Voters were compelled to ask more of their local politicians, as they were compelled to ask more of their federal government.

### **Signboards to the Future**

The old political machines and political symbols may still be around, but their power is steadily shrinking. Following are some of the indexes:

(1) National issues formerly played little part in local elections, even in elections for local representatives to Congress. The smartest city bosses have known for a decade and a half that this is no longer true. Hague has gone out to garner working-class votes on the record of his congresswoman, Mary Norton, in drafting and pushing New Deal labor legislation. Tammany has relied much on the name of Senator Robert Wagner, its famed graduate, and the association of his name with pro-labor legislation, plus the similar work of its congressmen Celler, Somers, etc. And so on with the national legislative contingent of Kelly, Pendergast and Curley.

During the New York municipal election in 1933, 1937, and 1941, the rival candidates offered an unusual spectacle: each one tried to identify himself more closely than the other with the national administration; in '41, there was a particularly notable attempt by both the La Guardia and O'Dwyer camps to advertise their allegiance to Roosevelt's foreign policy. Making such broad national policies a major issue in local elections is a comparatively new departure for America, though it is an old story in Europe. It is thus part of the tendency toward the “Europeanization of America.”

(2) Not only have the city bosses been forced to try to identify themselves with pro-labor national policies, but they have had to officially recognize their new powerful rival, the organized labor movement, in order to stay in office. Labor elements have been incorporated into an important part of the machine apparatus, as Hague has done with the AFL in his territory, or they may be taken in tow through deals

arranged in elections, as has occurred in just about every city from time to time. The labor officials have usually acted in a subservient manner in these maneuvers, but they have acted as a separate force.

(3) The labor movement, especially the CIO, has set up its own political apparatus. These have been staffed with activists whose zeal and perseverance are beyond the ken of wardheelers. The CIO-PAC is a permanent body that has acted on its own as an effective instrument in every type of election. It is not part of the apparatus of the other parties, even though it has usually supported their candidates. In New York the American Labor Party was the “balance of power” in both the '37 and '41 elections. It was the reason why the typical La Guardia reform administration lasted three terms, whereas the previous reform administrations in the city were unable to succeed themselves.

(4) There are too many cities in the country to detail the recent political history of each. A few illustrative cases should suffice.

In Minneapolis, the labor movement took a great spurt following the great 1934 teamsters' strike. Working both through and outside of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party it was soon able to elect its candidate for mayor. Like so many labor-backed people, Mayor Latimer turned out to be definitely anti-labor in his policies. But our subject here is not the immaturity of labor politics but the way in which it is cutting into the power of city machine politics in spite of its immaturity.

It should be added that, after several Republican administrations, the labor movement was again able to achieve victory for someone it considered its man, Hubert Humphrey, who on the basis of that victory is now in the Senate.

### **Detroit to Oakland**

(5) In the UAW's hometown of Detroit, UAW Vice-President Frankenstein made a strong run for mayor in 1945. Though he tried to pose as anything but a labor candidate, the bulk of the campaign work was done by the CIO and the campaign symbols were based on pro- and anti-labor issues. The labor movement thus again showed its political potential, which it vitiated in the following election by the CIO's support of Jeffries, the man who had defeated Frankenstein.

A few hundred miles away, a Socialist Party administration was reinstated in Milwaukee. Ironically, the victorious mayoralty candidate was the brother of the man who had previously upset the long string of Socialist Party administrations.

(6) A most dramatic illustration of the new way of urban politics occurred in the boom city of Oakland in the spring of 1947. This town had long been a stepsister of San Francisco across the bay. The war brought a grandiose expansion, and it became a full-

*(Continued on last page)*

# Is France Recovering?

## Social Crisis: An Economic Analysis

No nation has passed through so many grave social crises as France; no nation has gone so often or so deeply through the cycle of strikes, mounting into mass political and social movements, bringing into existence pre-revolutionary situations, and then passing to defeat and withdrawal. Every conceivable type of crisis is known to the French people, a battle-hardened and politically sophisticated nationality if one has ever existed.

Particularly since the conclusion of the last war, a series of social and political disturbances have occurred, all of which have their origin in the national soil of the country, but their fate has been determined by international factors more than anything else. Have the French people some national predilection that drives them toward social-revolutionary action, but which dooms them to frustration and defeat?

Our purpose is to examine the national origins of France's social problems, their roots in its economic structure, and to suggest the reasons why there has yet to be a resolution of its crisis despite the many attempts.

After a sharp decline in his fortunes and influence, Europe's leading contender for Bonapartist-militarist-dictatorial power — General Charles de Gaulle—has suddenly catapulted back into prominence.

The French bourgeoisie, after encouraging his decline, has now openly and fairly decisively shifted to his favor and greeted with acclaim his recent important victory in gaining an almost absolute majority in the upper house of the French National Assembly. The general is riding high and fast and preparing his organization for the taking-over of political power. Here we are not concerned with political problems and events, nor are we predicting the approaching victory of Gaullism. While the *tendency* is certainly strongly in his favor, many factors stand between De Gaulle and his goal.

What concerns us is the question: *why* has the bourgeoisie shifted to the Gaullist solution, with all its entailed anxieties, costs and uncertainties? To state the problem in other terms: Why has a middle-of-the-road stability and prosperity failed to develop in France despite the amazing economic recovery in productivity and the uplifting of French economy as a whole?

The decline of Gaullism corresponded with the dramatic upsurge of French productivity and—so it was believed—the ushering in of a period of relative

capitalist stability and relative social prosperity. The new rise of Gaullism likewise corresponds with the dashing of these hopes and illusions and the opening up of a new phase of economic and social difficulties for French economy.

"Three years ago," writes E. Germain in the November 1948 *Fourth International*, "the French economic crisis was a function of extreme underproduction, acute scarcity of consumer goods and a chronic lack of raw materials. Today the self-same basic illness—the senility of the capitalist order in France—assumes new forms." What are these new forms? But first let us examine the contention that French productivity has made major strides forward.

### The Question of Productivity

According to the Paris *Herald Tribune's* index (which is based upon official government reports) French industrial productivity as a whole stood at 112 in July 1948 as compared with the 1938 monthly base figure average of 100. Breaking this down in various fields, we get the following—all by comparison with the 1938 average of 100:

Coal production .....	102
Electric power .....	149
Iron ore .....	75
Heavy industry .....	124
Auto production .....	111
Textiles .....	115
Building materials .....	128
Basic chemicals .....	128

Although coal imports from the United States are at record figures, French coal production (until the recent strike) rose steadily, thanks to general recovery and also monopoly acquisition of the Saar coal basin. As we see, electrical power, chemicals, textiles and heavy production were far above 1938. Only iron ore, due to the disorganization of the industry, lagged badly. On the face of things, a rather optimistic picture of economic recovery in the successful fields!

In agriculture, the same general recovery in productivity and farm stock is noticeable although at a slower pace. In general, agricultural production is 10 to 15 per cent behind and below that of the pre-war period. But France has just had her best harvest in ten years; the number of cattle and horses in Normandy (the agricultural heart of France) is back to the pre-war level; and there is certainly no serious hunger. In the same sense, the stores of Paris and the larger cities are filled with all types, qualities and quantities of consumers' goods. In theory, everything is now available.

Yet even in these bare production statistics, certain qualifications enter to dim their cheerful sound. These qualifications, while worth noting, do not negate the undeniable fact that the French agrarian and industrial population has shown its powers of work and productivity to an amazing degree, considering the situation they inherited from Nazi and Allied occupation; the myth of French "inefficiency" and "shirking of work" in the interest of other more pleasurable pursuits ought to be dispelled.

These qualifications form part of the field of productivity itself. First, between 1930 and 1946 there has been a decline of three millions in the number of France's producers. This loss has been to a substantially increased bureaucracy of non-producers, and the return of many foreign workers (Italians, Poles and now Germans) to their homes. This means, of course, that a comparatively smaller group of workers, handicapped by the well-known problems mentioned above by Germain, are required to produce for a population which has remained numerically stationary.

It must also be related to the obvious fact that French productivity has not increased at the same pace as that of more fortunate countries whose general advance in productivity is far above the mere 12 per cent recorded by France over ten years. Yet such qualifications alone could never account for the desperate character of this new French social crisis. We must look elsewhere and deeper.

Unquestionably, the failure of agriculture to regain a productivity equivalent to that of 1938 contributes to a partial continuation of the bitter struggle between countryside and city. The price of agricultural produce is high—very high—and many staple items are still heavily subsidized, but the French peasant is deeply dissatisfied. The price structure of industry is such that what he desires (farm equipment, chemicals, consumers' goods) is beyond reach. His reactions follow familiar patterns such as hoarding, resistance to putting his crops on the market, etc., plus several new forms of economic opposition which seriously affect the national economy as a whole and are related to similar tendencies which we shall describe below. In general, since France is still predominantly an agricultural nation, its lack of balance between the recovery in industry and that in farming forms a general background to the disturbances of its economic life. Yet even this would be insufficient to explain all that has occurred.

Before attempting such an explanation, it is necessary to wade through statistics which, in reality, indicate the origin of the disturbances themselves. These statistics deal with such matters as prices, wages and their relationship to prices, export-import trade, currency and finances, etc. They serve, furthermore, to give us a skeletal description of the actual state of French economy in terms not merely of pro-

duction, but the more important social relationships between the various aspects of the economy.

### Prices and Wages:

If the 1938 annual average equals 100, then the general wholesale index of prices stood at 1698 in July 1948, with wholesale industrial prices at 1743 and raw materials at 1749. The retail price index in Paris was 1716 for foods in July 1948 (it is now over 1800—that is, eighteen times that of 1938), and the general retail index was 1528.

In 1948 alone, a catastrophic price increase took place, *simultaneous with* spurts forward in production. Between January and July 1948, wholesale prices jumped 75 per cent (resale of Marshall Plan material to industry by the government) and the retail index increased 13 per cent.

If we bear in mind that, according to the National Institute of Statistics, food represents 50 to 60 per cent of the French family budget, we will realize the importance of food prices to millions of French people. Its importance is, roughly, in budgetary terms, double that of an American family. Consider then the following table:

<i>Cost-of-food index in 1938.....</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Cost-of-food index in July 1948.....</i>	<i>1559</i>
<i>Cost-of-food index in August 1948.....</i>	<i>1716</i>
<i>Cost-of-food index in September 1948....</i>	<i>1819</i>

That is, food costs now more than eighteen times what it did ten years ago! The steady rise in 1948 was largely due to the fact that the government withdrew its subsidies on grain crops, with corresponding effects on prices. Stated most simply, this means that the average French worker, functionary and middle-class professional works simply in order to purchase the food necessary for him to work again. The remainder of his income not represented by food purchases is spent on rent and other living necessities. The margin left for savings, purchase of clothing and other commodities is small indeed.

The price-wage spiral was illustrated in classic fashion during the month of October 1948. A united front of the three trade unions (Stalinist, Socialist and Christian) had forced from the government a decree raising minimum wages, as well as all wage scales, by 15 per cent. This was exactly and precisely offset during the same month of October by government decrees increasing the price of coal, gas, electricity, gasoline and (as a result) an increased price in manufactured goods. The net result was zero, but this was only the latest and crudest in a whole series of such self-defeating actions.

In general, the wage-price relationship may be summarized as follows. Whereas today's cost of living is seventeen times that of 1938, the wage and salary index is only ten times that of 1938. In other words, real wages, in terms of purchasing power,



have declined by 40 per cent.

The minimum wage demand of all unions in October stood at 13,500 francs *per month* (\$42). Yet the government finds it impossible to meet this modest demand. The wage-price relationship grows steadily worse, to the detriment of the worker, and indicates the inability of French capitalism to stabilize and steady itself. Only one price has declined steadily—French bonds issued by the state are now at their lowest value in history!

#### **Export-Import Trade:**

Like the rest of Europe, France's foreign trade is seriously unbalanced in relation to America and the rest of the world. The dollar shortage is notorious and continues despite some gains which have made it possible to lower imports from the United States and despite a corresponding gain in inter-European trading. But these are small matters compared with the fact that trade is still \$130 million in the red every month; over \$1½ billion annually.

Why cannot France hope to balance this deficit? To a world market demanding raw materials, foods, machines, practical consumers' items, France offers its traditional luxury articles (wines, liqueurs, fine textiles, handicraft products, etc.) and at extremely high prices. A fundamental change in French productivity, aimed at increased output and lowered costs, would be required before the possibility of a favorable trade balance could exist. The loss of colonial and other export markets is well known.

#### **Currency and Finances:**

Note circulation is now the highest in France's history, and steadily mounting despite the various devaluations (such as withdrawal of all 5000 franc notes) that have taken place. In the month of August there was a note increase of 32½ billion francs in circulation, making a total increase of 100 billion francs in a three-month period. In the month of September 1948 there was the fantastic total of 877 billion francs circulating in this inflation-ridden nation whose bankrupt government meets its bills by extra shifts for its printing presses.

The nationalized Bank of France, which handles currency and financial operations for the state, reports the following facts on its condition at the end of July 1948:

*Gold holdings:* 65 billion francs (compared with 87 billion francs in 1938).

*Total advances to the state:* 716 billion francs (compared with 36 billion francs in 1938).

*Banknote circulation:* 837 billion francs (compared with 111 billion francs in 1938).

This is the balance sheet of a financially bankrupt government living on deficit financing. Between January 1945 and May 1948 the state's deficit

amounted to \$6 billion. This was met by a \$2½ billion levy on the public and private holdings (in turn, leading to the liquidation of a large part of France's overseas holdings), and by borrowing \$3½ billion abroad in the form of foreign loans. But an end comes ultimately to such methods, and it is very close at hand.

This brief survey of French economy indicates the structural and functional nature of the French social crisis. Nothing operates properly. Everything—agriculture and industry, export and import life, prices and wages, currency and financing, distribution and consumption, production and consumption, needs and actual resources—everything is fundamentally out of balance. This unbalance in all sectors of the economy naturally prevents its normal functioning.

One section of the country has sufficient bread grains to throw away its ration tickets; another section cannot even honor the tickets. One section (Normandy) has all the meat, milk and dairy products needed, while nearby Paris has little or none. Maldistribution of raw materials forces a greater strain than ever on the robbing of Saarland coal, Lorraine iron ore and Ruhr coke.

It would be possible to extend this list of examples indefinitely. If, immediately after conclusion of the war, one might have described France in terms of a seriously ill patient who lies prostrate in a coma, unable to move and barely alive, it may now be said that the patient—thanks to treatment, normal processes and Marshall Plan injections—has returned to consciousness and is even able to stand on his feet, no matter how shakily. But re-examination by his doctor has revealed a heart condition, nephritis, dropsy and several other organic and functional diseases which now require treatment.

The coma has been overcome, but replaced by a new and just as serious condition.

These organic illnesses of French society, which caused it to be chronically and "fundamentally out of balance," were not properly estimated by many—including Marxist analysts—who expected the return of a fairly stable capitalism accompanied by a temporary revival of democracy (democratic interlude). Perhaps the error consisted in attaching too much importance to the purely productive aspect of the economy, and neglecting the many-sided nature of capitalism which includes the elements of distribution, rate and cost of production, world trade and internal financing.

Actually, the confidence of the French bourgeoisie in its own structure is at a low ebb. We do not refer solely to the recent trend among the peasantry to develop a new type of the traditional hoarding, in the form of buying gold bullion on the open market and



concealing it in the family mattress. This exists on a mass scale and has driven the price of gold to stupendous heights, but the lack of confidence is more profound.

The French bourgeois who has money to invest seeks new sources—gilt-edge values within France itself, wherever possible; if not, international values, or gold like any peasant, or real property. There is a distinct flight of capital from France to Switzerland, or Africa, or South America. There is no real trend to reinvestment in French industry, with the object of modernizing and rationalizing it.

### Capitalism's Dilemma

We might summarize the issue of French capitalism along the following lines: No serious progress has been made toward the solution of its real disturbances. Since only remedial measures have been employed, with the aim of stopgap relief, everything remains substantially as before. That is, an outmoded, worn-out industrial technique and plant equipment; a one-sided productivity based upon the desire for high and quick profits (luxury goods); a senile system of marketing, distribution and transportation; a low rate of productivity, together with a high productivity cost; a leveled-down population mass with a low purchasing power and therefore providing a narrow and stagnant market; a bureaucracy (non-productive) all out of proportion to the producing population; an international situation which prevents dependence upon overseas trade and which further drains away the nation's capital.

In essence, France is now living on its accumulated capital, failing to replace what it uses, and digging itself deeper into deficit and bankruptcy each month.

This, in our opinion, is responsible for the new forward surge of Gaullism, the instability of the middle-of-the-road governments and the apparently concluding period of revived parliamentary democracy. It is against this background that one must understand the three major political movements of the country: Gaullism, with its rightist solution; Stalinism, with its Stalinist-collectivist solution; and the efforts of the center parties (Socialists, MRP and Radical-Socialists) to survive by hanging grimly on to the ropes.

If the French bourgeoisie has now more or less openly swung to support of De Gaulle, this does not mean either that its support is an enthusiastic and unqualified one, or that the discursive and vain general stands at the very door of power. The handing over of power to De Gaulle would be more in the nature of an act of abdication or default on the part of this bourgeoisie than, for example, such action was in the case of pre-Hitler Germany where the Nazis offered a dynamic program of conquest as bait. Many obstacles still stand before De Gaulle (the opposition

of the French working class, the opposition of American imperialism to this bearer of grandiose pretensions, etc.), but none are greater than his own lack of a serious positive program. This, in turn, is due to the same diseases of French economy as affect all parties.

Gaullism is still essentially a *negative* movement—anti-Stalinist, against German revival, against American encroachment upon Europe, anti-British, etc. This is its real weakness and this is why, despite the three-year period of the Fourth Republic's bungling and steady decline, Gaullism has not yet taken over.

### The Rightist Program

Yet the French Right in general has its proposed solution to the difficulties of the nation, and Gaullism tacitly accepts these solutions. The series of cabinet crises and replacements, despite its comic-opera appearance, did mark a political trend; and close examination showed each new cabinet shifted slightly more to the right. That cabinet which included Paul Reynaud must be understood as a preview of a Gaullist government which failed only because it was premature. The trend is steadily towards a bridging of the gap between the post-war period of parliamentary democracy and Gaullist dictatorship.

The rightist program is the following:

(1) Destroy the influence of the Stalinist party (a) either by outright suppression, or (b) by curbing it through legal or other methods.

(2) Prune the many social reforms and labor measures of the government in all aspects and sufficiently to lower the budget deficit considerably.

(3) Weaken the nationalized sectors of the economy (coal mines, airplane building, electrical power, etc.) by permitting private investments in these industries, and eliminating all union influence over their management (the Reynaud Plan).

(4) Balance the budget by method (2), and "soak the workers and middle class" in taxation.

(5) Stimulate capital investment in private industry.

With or without De Gaulle, no group or section of the French bourgeoisie has a more imaginative or practical program than the above to offer. On the "middle-of-the-road" side of the ledger, we find no program whatever. The Socialist Party, the MRP and the Radical Socialists have no hope beyond that of somehow stumbling along, and depending upon the continuity of American financial and economic aid to provide empiric solutions to the day-to-day problems, while the surrounding atmosphere of social disorganization remains untouched.

On the left, only the RDR (Revolutionary Democratic Front) has put forward proposals which bear a relationship to the real problems of French society.

In an analysis of the budgetary and balance-of-payment deficiency problems, the organ of the RDR (*Gauche*, August 1948) proposed the following:

(1) Increased taxation on the higher brackets, and an extension of the taxation coverage to those elements still successful in avoiding taxation.

(2) An increase in the volume of production put out by the nationalized industries by greater capital investments in those already nationalized, and the extension of nationalization to still more sectors of the economy.

(3) An increase in public and social services (already far beyond that known in America, for example) so as to lower general living costs.

(4) Balancing of the budget by a reduction of current military expenses, and the complete withdrawal of the various disastrous colonial expeditions in Indo-China, North Africa and elsewhere.

(5) An ending of subsidies to private industry and the utilization of this money for nationalized industry.

The long-range problem of modernization and rationalization of French economy (the only real solution to the low-productivity and high-cost questions) is something that only a massive capital levy on all forms of wealth and private hoardings could solve. This is why the famous Monnet Plan for modernization exists only as a paper document.

We are now witnessing the profound effects of the inability of French capitalism to stage a sufficient *all-around* recovery, essential for the achievement of even a temporary and mild stability. The possibility of a still greater recovery has long been excluded by the fact that French capitalism, more than any other in Europe, long ago turned in upon itself and began to devour its own vitals. What was expected—and now it appears to have been a false expectation—was the limited recovery we have mentioned.

Perhaps more than any other in importance is the psychological effect this past three-year period has had upon the French people. Much of it is obvious to

even the foreign observer: a rapid disillusionment and an openly cynical attitude toward the Fourth Republic; a belief that pervades all layers of the population that traditional parliamentarism has exhausted itself (and everyone else); a turning away in great masses from Stalinism which has shown it can only launch self-defeating adventures; a reluctant drawing of the middle classes and sections of the workers toward Gaullism. Yet this attraction toward the Peacock General is not a powerful one—it is more negative and despairing than anything else; a longing for some stability accompanied by the concept that perhaps only the general can end the perpetual Stalinist guerrilla warfare.

Most important of all, however, of these mass reactions—and surely the greatest cause for worry—is the loss of self-confidence and initiative that is so noticeable among a great working class which has always distinguished itself particularly by these characteristics of confidence, initiative and boldness. Yet these unbroken series of defeats, false alarms and forays, turnings-back and blind-alley attacks have had their deep effects upon the French proletariat and its traditions of struggle. Apathy, rather than energy; despair, rather than hope; confusion, rather than clarity—these are the real characteristics of the best sections of France's population today.

It will take more than any of us are gifted enough to foresee to reverse this trend, and rouse the French workers from their ideologic slumbers. A boldness of program and approach, an open coming to grips with the issue of Stalinism and its totalitarianism, an exhibition of energy and clarity—these are the real requirements. Much as the RDR marks an advance in this direction, and a break with various sterile pasts such as that of French "Trotskyism" and Socialist Party "Blumism," this new movement of the French people has still much ground to cover before it attains the needed goal. Fortunately, there is still time for it and other political groupings in France to continue along the line of revolutionary progress.

HENRY JUDD

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# The Year One of the Russian Revolution

## VIII—"Left Communism" and Inner-Party Conflict

The Third Soviet Congress was held in Petrograd from the 23rd to the 31st of January. Its composition may be judged from the All-Russian Executive that it elected, which was composed of 160 Communists, 125 S-Rs, 7 Right S-Rs, 7 Maximalist S-Rs, 3 anarchist-communists, 2 Mensheviks, and 2 Menshevik Internationalists.

Trotsky and Kamenev reported on the Brest-Litovsk negotiations. The most important discussions centered around the organization of soviet power. We shall only remark Lenin's speeches, which were the most important, in any case.

He began by praising the activities of the Council of Peoples' Commissars, pointing out that the Soviets had now lasted five days longer than the Paris Commune (which lasted two months and ten days). He emphasized the importance of the collaboration between the proletariat and the poorer peasants, which was reflected in the bloc between the Bolsheviks and the Left S-Rs. He stated once more that they had no idea of imposing socialism on the peasants by force.

He reaffirmed the necessity for violence against the bourgeoisie:

"Never in history has any question relating to the class struggle been solved other than by violence. We are partisans of violence as long as it emanates from the exploited toiling masses and is directed against the exploiters. . . ."

To those who demanded that he make an end of the civil war, he replied: "What about the example of the ruling classes and their pitiless repressions? We had only to confiscate the wealth of the former ruling classes to bring them to their knees."

"The people no longer fear the man with the gun," he said, reporting a chance phrase overheard from an old woman in a station. It makes little difference, after that, that we are labeled "dictators" and "usurpers." He announced the formation of the Red Army, the armed nation.

He denounced two evils: the sabotage of the intellectuals, and the selfish instincts of the backward masses. "The professors, the technicians, and the engineers use their knowledge to exploit labor: 'We want our talents to serve the bourgeoisie,' they say, 'or we won't work.'" But the worst social elements left us by the old order are those who are animated by one desire: to take for themselves, and disappear. They have all the faults of the past; they must be chased out of the factories.

Let us remark this allusion to the rank

individualism of backward elements, so powerful among the petty bourgeoisie, where it is developed and encouraged by the capitalists. Lenin constantly returned to denounce and to combat this immense danger. Against the robbers, the adventurers, the profiteers of the revolution, he called on the initiative of the masses. To the peasants he said: "Dispose of the land according to your own wishes; no doubt you will make mistakes but that is the way to learn." He remarked approvingly to the congress: "In places the proletariat has entered the owners' associations to ensure the direction of whole branches of industry."

**"Russia Has Begun; Germany, France and England Will Finish . . ."**

He concluded with some general observations on the place of the Russian revolution in the world movement:

"Marx and Engels used to say, 'France will begin and Germany will finish the revolution.' They said France would begin the revolution because during decades of struggle she had acquired the devotion and initiative that put her in the vanguard of the socialist movement. We say that the revolution begins more easily in a country where there is no large class of exploiters who are able to corrupt the upper sections of the working class with the loot of colonial exploitation. . . . Russia has begun; Germany, France, and England will finish the revolution; socialism will triumph."

Lenin made several very clear allusions to the suppression of the state: "In our epoch of radical demolition of bourgeois society, anarchist ideas take living forms. But we still need a firm revolutionary working-class power, the power of a revolutionary state, to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The newer anarchist tendencies are lining up beside the Soviets."

Speaking to the agitators who were being sent out to the country several days later, he said—and this is another idea that he constantly emphasized: "Every worker, every peasant, every citizen; must understand that he has to rely entirely on himself, and that he can expect nothing but what he obtains for himself."

Could the Soviet Republic continue under the heavy burden of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk? That was the great problem.

The republic lost 40 per cent of its proletariat when the Germans occupied the Donetz oil basin, 90 per cent of its fuel industry, 90 per cent of its sugar industry, 65 to 70 per cent of its metal industry, 55 per cent of its wheat, the ma-

ior part of its exportable crop. All Russia's external commerce for centuries had depended on the export of grain. Now she found herself cut off from the outside world, facing a future of perpetual poverty. "The Brest-Litovsk peace," it was oftentimes said, "is the slow death of the revolution." (Lozovsky.)

The idea of a revolutionary war was born of this conviction. The debates at the first All-Russian Congress of the People's Economic Councils, from May 26 to June 4, reflected the ideas of the majority of the party.

The reporter on the economic consequences of the treaty, Karl Radek, emphasized that the revolution would henceforth find itself closely dependent upon foreign powers and the world market. He urged a policy of loans and concessions, which today appears pretty utopian. Only new enterprises, constructed outside the principal industrial regions of the Urals, Donetz, Kuznetsk, and Baku were to be subject to concessions. The state was to divide the profits with the capitalist concessionaires and have the right of repurchase after a certain time. There was no other choice; they were forced to accept this hypothetical solution.

It was also decided to develop the Ural industries and Turkestan cotton production. Old Kalinin declared: "It is in the Urals, in the North, and in Siberia that we shall lay the basis of our future power." These were desperate solutions, proposed by revolutionists resolved not to despair. Was such a mutilated Russia, constantly threatened by all-powerful imperialism and prey to growing internal conflicts between town and country, possible? The greatest optimist only thought so out of necessity.

### **The Party Splits: Economic Chaos Grows**

The party divided. The Left Communists, drawing nearer the Left S-Rs, began to consider the peace a greater evil than the worst war. Lenin and the majority of the party heard the European imperialist structure cracking and awaited the collapse of Germany.

The growing conflict between town and country found expression in the inflation and famine. The ruble fell at a dizzy rate. Taxes no longer being collected—and for good reason—the government was reduced to poverty. Industrial production had fallen terribly; whence a rise in the price of manufactured goods. The peasant received paper rubles in exchange for his wheat, rubles with which he could buy increasingly few manufactured goods

with greater and greater difficulty. He had recourse to barter; food for goods. A mob of small speculators intervened between him and the city. There had been famine in the cities before the revolution; now it grew.

Amid this ruin, individualistic instincts had free play; in short, it was as easy to get along alone as it was impossible to get bread for everybody. Nothing less than the magnificent discipline, solidarity, and spirit of the proletariat could combat these conditions with even relative success. Here are some accurate figures on the inflation of 1917-1918: the issues of the State Bank on January 1, 1917 amounted to a little more than nine billion paper rubles. During 1917, fourteen billion seven hundred and twenty-one million more were issued, and twelve billion in the first five months of 1918.

To understand the discussions in the Bolshevik Party, the condition of the country must be kept well in mind.

#### **Moscow Committee in Opposition: "Communists of Misfortune"**

On February 24, the Moscow Regional Committee passed a motion of defiance against the Central Committee of the party and refused to submit to "measures concerning the application of the peace treaty." This motion was followed by an explanatory statement which said:

"The Moscow Regional Bureau considers a split in the party in the near future probable, and aims to rally all true revolutionists, all Communist elements, against the partisans of a separate peace and against the moderate elements of the Communist movement. It would be in conformity with the interests of the international revolution, we believe, to consent to the sacrifice of Soviet power, which is becoming purely formal. As ever, we see our task to be the extension of the idea of socialist revolution into every country, and in Russia to be the energetic application of the dictatorship and the pitiless repression of the bourgeois counter-revolution."

"Strange," Lenin replied, "and foolish." Far from helping the German revolution, his good sense objected, the sacrifice of the Soviets would kill it. Were not the English workers terrified by the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871? The example of France in 1793 and of Prussia, trampled underfoot by Napoleon's armies—did they not show the strength of a tenacious will? "Why cannot such things be repeated in our own history? Why must we fall into despair and pass motions which are more dishonorable—it is the truth!—than the most dishonorable peace—motions about *Soviet power becoming purely formal?*" No foreign invasion can ever render "purely formal" a popular political institution (and soviet power is not merely a popular po-

litical institution; it is an institution far superior to all others known to history.)

"The foreign invasion, on the contrary, will only increase the sympathies of the people for soviet power . . . if only the latter will refrain from falling into adventurism all the time. Russia is on the road to a new national war, a war for the defence and the maintenance of soviet power. It is possible that this epoch, like that of the Napoleonic wars, will become an epoch of wars of liberation (I say wars and not a war) forced on Soviet Russia by the invaders. It is possible. And that is why despair, dishonorable despair, is more dishonorable than a super-oppressive peace imposed on us for lack of an army. The consequences of dozens of super-oppressive peace treaties would not lead to our defeat, if we knew how to consider war and insurrection *seriously*. The invaders will not kill us, unless we kill ourselves with despair and phrasemongering."

The Left Communists—"Communists of misfortune," Lenin called them—at first published a daily paper (from the 5th to the 19th of March). This was the *Communist*, journal of the Petersburg Committee, under the editorship of Bukharin, Radek and Uritsky. Transferred to Moscow, the journal became a weekly, from April 20 until June. Obolensky (Osinsky) and V. M. Smirnov joined the editorial board in this period.

Among the collaborators of this left-wing newspaper we note: Bubnov, Bronsky, Antonov (Lukhin), Lomov (Oppokov), M. Pokrovsky, E. Preobrazhensky, I. Piatakov, Soltz, Unschlicht, Kollontai, V. Kuibishev, E. Yaroslavsky, Sapronov and Safarov. These names give some idea of the strength and quality of the left-wing movement.

#### **Unity Wins Out at Party Congress**

The two tendencies came to grips at the Seventh Party Congress, held in Petrograd, March 6 to 8, a few days before the capital was transferred to Moscow on March 10 under the threat of German occupation. The congress discussed nothing but the peace treaty.

Trotsky, although a partisan of war, rallied to Lenin, on the ground that it was impossible to fight a revolutionary war with the party divided. The threat of a split, which was universally feared, hung over the congress until the very end. But unity won out. The opposition received representation on the Central Committee, as well as on a committee to revise the program.

Among Lenin's speeches at this congress, we quote those of the greatest historical and theoretical interest:

Lenin first remarked that the first months of the Soviet regime had been a triumphal march. After which the inev-

itable difficulties of the socialist revolution had intervened. For:

"One of the essential differences between the bourgeois revolution and the socialist revolution is that the former, born out of the feudal order, builds up its new economic organs little by little in the heart of the old regime, if only by the development of commerce, which gradually modifies the whole appearance of feudal society. The bourgeois revolution has only one task: to sweep away, to destroy, all the foundations of the old order. In accomplishing this task, a bourgeois revolution fulfils its mission, as it ends by creating the regime of commodity production and assuring the growth of capitalism. It is quite otherwise with the socialist revolution. The more backward the country where the zigzags of history begin the socialist revolution, the more difficult is the transition from the old capitalist relations to the new socialist relations. Here we have more than the task of destruction; we have the infinitely more difficult task of organization.

"The Socialist Soviet Republic was so easily born because the masses formed soviets in February 1917 before any party had time to issue the slogan."

Thus the difference between bourgeois and proletarian revolutions is that the former benefits from capitalist forms of organization which are already extant, while the latter has to create its own forms on the spot. "Assault methods" are not applicable to economic and administrative work.

#### **"Our Salvation Lies in the European Revolution . . ."**

The socialist revolution "will be infinitely more difficult to start in Europe than in Russia; infinitely easier to begin in Russia, it will be difficult to carry on; in Europe, on the contrary, it will be easy to continue, once it is started." Confronted with the imperialist beast, "our salvation, I repeat, lies in the European revolution . . . and if you say that the hydra of revolution is hidden in every strike, and that he is not a socialist who does not understand that, you are right. Yes, the socialist revolution is hidden in every strike; but if you say that every strike is a step toward the socialist revolution, you are simply mouthing the emptiest of stupidities."

"It is quite true that without the German revolution we shall perish. Perhaps we shall not perish at Moscow or Petrograd, but at Vladivostok. . . . In any case, we shall perish without the German revolution. But that does not at all diminish our duty to confront the most critical situations without phrasemongering. The German revolution will not come as rapidly as we expected. History has shown that. We must consider it a fact."

We demobilized because the army was a diseased limb of the social organism;

the sooner it was dissolved the sooner the organism would recover. "We must learn how to fight in retreat."

The party split? We shall recover from our crisis, said Lenin, with our historical experience and the aid of the world revolution. He polemized against the fantasies of the *Communist*, which were refuted by facts themselves, and against the absurd attempt to transpose the insurrectional methods of October onto an international plane. *The truce is a fact, he said.* He told the desolating story of the eleven days of revolutionary war; they had believed Petrograd lost; such a desert stretched before the Germans that cities like Yamburg were "retaken" by telegraph operators, who wired their stupefaction at not finding the Germans. "That is the terribly bitter truth, the outrageous, saddening, and humiliating truth, but worth a hundred times more than your *Communist*."

What to do now? We must have order. The workers must drill, if only for one hour a day. That is more difficult than writing the most beautiful stories. "Our peace is another Tilsit"; let us profit by it to prepare for war. "History teaches us that peace is a preparation for war, and war the means of obtaining a slightly more advantageous peace." The whole speech was on this note of realism and tenacity.

"We shall retreat as far as need be," Lenin said. "Perhaps we shall give up Moscow. We shall meet that test. And when the day comes we shall recommence the struggle." After polemizing with Bukharin who reproached the Central Committee with its "demoralizing tactic," and Trotsky who urged a war with the Ukraine, he concluded, "I am willing to yield ground in order to gain time."

#### **The Thesis of Heroic Sacrifice: Arguments of the Left Communists**

The arguments of the Left Communists became the subject of a conscientious analysis, the accuracy of which Bukharin acknowledged in a preface in 1925. Then, as before the signing of the treaty, the arguments of the Left Communists were based upon deep feelings: indignation, sorrow, anger, and above all tragic doubt of the destiny of the revolution, all the more tragic in that it was matched by an almost blinding enthusiasm for the revolution, a willingness to make even the supreme sacrifice.

These feelings were translated into rather surprising statements: "If the Russian Revolution itself does not flinch, no one else can master or break it." "As long as the revolution itself does not capitulate, it need fear no partial defeat, no matter how serious. The great soviet republic can lose Petrograd, Kiev and Moscow; *it cannot perish.*"

Such statements are rather striking. But what to do in reality? We want a

"mobilization of spirits," said Bukharin: "When the masses have seen the German offensive at work . . . a real holy war will begin." There is no army? Then engage in guerrilla warfare. Guerrilla warfare was the white hope of romantic revolutionists all during the revolution. As for the strength of the guerrilla bands, that would be found in the strength of their socialist convictions, as well as in "the social nature of the new army which is being mobilized."

A very accurate idea was here confused with a very false ideal. A new army based upon class interests could and must be formed, and would be filled with revolutionary enthusiasm; but it was none the less puerile to talk of opposing German military technique with socialist convictions.

These theories were justified by a doctrinaire statement and by a distortion of reality. The doctrinaire statement was: No compromise! The revolution must not maneuver, must not fight a retreating battle, must not consent to compromises. There was only one tactic to follow, the tactic of the greatest intransigence. Better die than live at the price of a compromise.

#### **Leftism a Reaction Against Opportunist Dangers**

In the final analysis, this was the basic promise of all Left Communism, and in it must be seen a healthy reaction against opportunism. We have seen how the leftists opposed all relations with capitalist powers.

The distortion of fact, which was certainly unconscious, consisted in denying the truce with German imperialism, or better still contesting its possibility. The perspective of peace, said Bukharin, was "illusory, non-existent." Peace, wrote Kollontai, had become an "impossibility." "This is not a peace," wrote Radek after the peace was signed, "this is a new war."

Strong feelings distorted reality for these impassioned revolutionists. The struggle continued, but the truce, weak and mediocre as it might be, was a fact. "How's this?" asked Lenin, with his customary good sense. "You deny the truce when we have already had five days in which to peacefully evacuate Petrograd?"

The conclusion of the Left Communist thesis sums up in a clear theoretical passage their exaltation, and the curious mélange of optimism—in regard to history—and pessimism—in regard to present reality—which characterized their tendency.

"We do not pretend that the inflexible application, internally as well as externally, of a highly dangerous proletarian policy may not result in momentary collapse, but we believe that it is better for us, in the interests of the international proletarian movement, to go down beaten by external forces but to go down true

proletarians, than to live on by adapting ourselves to circumstances."

In Russia they were accustomed to see a petty-bourgeois deviation in such language. No doubt most deviations from proletarian ideology, no matter how varied they may be, are the work of intellectuals, and reflect to a greater or lesser degree the state of mind of the middle classes, standing between the proletariat and the capitalists. No doubt feelings of insulted honor, of outraged patriotism, of heroic sacrifice—better death than shame—are more compatible with the middle-class mind (with the intellectual mind especially) than with the realistic, utilitarian, dialectic, and deeply revolutionary proletarian mind.

But, in my opinion, this leftist tendency also represented something else: a reaction against the opportunist danger. Lenin did not belong either to the left or to the right wing. He was inflexible, but practically, revolutionary—and without phrasemongering. Until Lenin's time in the history of the international working class, every attempt to "maneuver" in the name of the revolution promptly fell into opportunism. There was another important consideration. Never before had there been a victorious working-class revolution. Some of the best revolutionists must have been inclined to continue the policy of sacrifice, which had proved so fruitful in the history of heroic proletarian defeats. It is another tribute to Lenin that he was able to break with this tradition.

#### **Theory and Action at the Seventh Bolshevik Party Congress**

Even in those difficult times the Seventh Congress considered questions of theory. Lenin finally succeeded in having the name of the party changed from the "Social Democratic Workers Party" to the "Communist (Bolshevik) Party," a change he had urged since the beginning of 1917. He took the occasion to emphasize once more the infinite superiority of the soviet system, modeled on the Paris Commune, over all earlier forms of democracy, and to recall to the congress that socialism aimed at the suppression of *all* governmental restraint, and the application of the rule: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

Attacking the theory, held by all socialist adversaries of the revolution at the time, that "you can't socialize poverty," he quoted several prophetic lines written by Frederick Engels in 1887. Engels foresaw the world conflagration, foresaw the fall of governments, foresaw tremendous devastations, and amid this disaster "the victory of the working class or the creation of conditions favorable for this victory." Lenin reaffirmed the indestructibility of culture, but said that it might nevertheless be difficult to start a renaissance.



Bukharin, Sokolnikov, and Vladimir Smirnov proposed to suppress the theoretical section of the party program, which they thought outmoded, referring to commodity production. They thought it enough to define imperialism and the epoch of socialist revolutions in the program. This proposal was wrong in several respects. Even during the imperialist epoch, commodity production and the simplest forms of capitalism continue to develop in backward countries. But in his reply Lenin took up the question on a higher plane. We must quote an entire page:

"The production of commodities gave birth to capitalism which has now arrived at the imperialist stage. This universal historical perspective, which is the basis of socialism, must not be forgotten. No matter what may be the outward form of the struggle, no matter what zigzags we may encounter (and there will be many, for experience has shown us what vast detours the revolution took in Russia, while in Europe the course will be even more complex and dizzying, the rate of development even more frantic, the turns even sharper)—we must keep the old theoretical part of our program so as not to become lost among these detours, among these historical twists, in order to keep a general perspective, a leading line, which can relate the whole of capitalist development to the whole course toward socialism, which we naturally represent as a straight course—in order thus to be able to see the beginning, the growth, and the end—but which, far from being straight in reality, will on the contrary be infinitely crooked.

#### "How Many More Transition Stages On Road to Socialism?"

"We must keep the old theoretical section of the program so as not to lose ourselves in these detours, in which case history—if not our enemies—would throw us aside, for in Russia we are still in the first transitional phase from capitalism to socialism.

"History has not granted us the peace that we counted on in theory, the peace

that we wanted, the peace that would have allowed us to pass rapidly through the various transition stages. Civil war has almost immediately become an obstacle, and now is joined by other wars. Marxists never forget that violence, which inevitably accompanies the collapse of capitalism, is the midwife of the socialist society. There will be a whole epoch of world history, an epoch of the most varied kinds of war: imperialist wars, internal civil wars, mixtures of the two, national wars, and wars of national liberation from the imperialist oppressors.

"We have made only the first moves toward suppressing capitalism and beginning the transition to socialism. How many more transition stages are there on the road to socialism? We do not know, we cannot know. That depends upon the moment when the European socialist revolution really begins, and upon the speed with which it overcomes its enemies and takes the road of socialist development. We cannot predict; but the program of a Marxist party should proceed from established facts with absolute precision. That is its real strength."

The same leaders urged the abandonment of the minimum program. Lenin had fought this proposal before the October revolution; he no longer saw any reason to oppose it. But he added, "It would be utopian to think we may not be thrown even further back."

He returned to the social-democratic distortion of the Marxist theory of the state, and once more defined the soviet republic:

"It is a new type of state, without a bureaucracy, without police, without a standing army, a state which substitutes for bourgeois democracy a new type of democracy, forces the toiling masses into the vanguard, gives them legislative, executive, and military power, thus creating an apparatus which is destined to re-educate these same masses. We are only beginning our work in Russia, and for the moment we are beginning badly."

"Perhaps we are doing our work badly, but we are pushing the masses in the right direction.

"And may the European workers say, 'What the Russians are doing badly, we shall do better.'"

I shall make only a brief résumé of the tentative program submitted to the Seventh Congress by Lenin. Ten theses defined soviet power. They rank with the best of his thought:

- (1) Union of all poor and exploited masses.
- (2) Union of the intelligent, active minority for the re-education of the masses.
- (3) Abolition of parliamentary government, which separates the executive and legislative powers.

(4) Closer bonds between the masses and the state than under the older forms of democracy.

(5) Arming of the workers and peasants.

(6) More democracy and less formality, greater ease in electing and recalling representatives.

(7) Close connection between state power and production.

(8) Possibility of eliminating all bureaucracy.

(9) Transition from the formal democracy of rich and poor to the real democracy of the workers.

(10) Participation of all members of the soviets in the planning and administration of the state.

The program then presented a certain number of political measures aiming at the "withering away of the state" and economic measures such as the "socialization of production under the administration of workers' organizations, trade unions, factory committees, etc."; the obligatory affiliation of the whole people to consumers' cooperatives; the registration of all commercial operations—money being *not yet suppressed*—by the consumers' and producers' cooperatives; the universal obligation to work, "cautiously applied to farmers, who already live by their own work"; the enforcement of work and consumption accounts from all persons enjoying an income of more than 500 rubles a month, or employing workers or servants; the concentration of all financial operations in the state bank; the control and administration of all production and consumption by workers' organizations at first, later by the entire population; the organization of competition between producers' and consumers' cooperatives to raise the productivity of labor and reduce its hours, etc., etc.; systematic measures to organize collective kitchens by groups of families; the suppression of indirect taxes, to be replaced by a graduated income tax and a percentage of the income from state monopolies.

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# On the Psychology of Stalinism

*This is only a part—the concluding section—of an article by Juan Andrade, one of the leaders of the Spanish POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unity), entitled "The Discipline and Psychology of the Militants in the Labor Movement." It is here translated from the November 6, 1948 issue of the POUM organ, La Batalla.—Ed.*

The old political terms that were formerly used to describe particular errors or philosophies—such as "anarchist," "social-democrat," "sectarian," "vulgar rebel"—today take on actual criminal significance in the discussions and press of the Communist Parties. And the word "provocation" arouses the same reaction in them that it does in the police of a capitalist regime. The purpose for which it is used is also identical: when they state that a member has "deviations," it is the same as when the police term someone a potential criminal; that is, it is a pretext for submitting an individual to intensive surveillance and for bringing him to the attention of all the authorities of the party.

The capitalist police endeavor to condemn an agitator to hunger, hindering his ability to find employment by means of the blacklist. Once a member has disagreed, the CP police exclude him from the least post of responsibility, preventing him from expressing his opinions under threat of expulsion. Since, in the Stalinist movement, the freedom to criticize is not a right—and even less a duty—it is considered a crime. Just like any bourgeois constitution, which recognizes all liberties on paper and denies them in practice, Stalinism looks on any militant who tries to exercise his rights as unorthodox and liable to expulsion. The success of its discipline is found in this intolerance.

The extremely hierarchical regime of Stalinism is a type of "benevolent paternalism." This tradition became entrenched through the practice of idealizing the top leader and attributing all virtues to him.

"Nothing human is alien to him!" said Marx, speaking of the overweening love of life which guided the whole personal conduct of his great friend Engels. We would say the opposite of the top Stalinist leaders, if we are to consider them as their subordinates picture them. They are alien to all humanity, for they are supernatural beings and are represented as absolute.

The simple militant who reads no more than the party press acquires and holds tenaciously to the belief that Stalin is "the father of the peoples" or "the greatest strategist in history"; that La

Pasionaria is the most competent Spanish politician of the twentieth century, and that Maurice Thorez is "the genial leader of the French people." And they celebrate their anniversaries with as much pomp as if they were the centennials of the saints. By means of identical propaganda methods they bestow the title of scholar or friendly writer only upon those teachers or intellectuals who are active in the party or do its work. Thus the militant, innocently and inexorably, comes to believe that only militants of the party have a positive value in our society.

Nothing is so foreign to socialism as this fantastic cult which glorifies human beings. A man reserves his respect and love for those of his comrades who in their epoch have distinguished themselves by their qualities of intelligence and devotion in the fields of moral and material progress. Socialists will always honor the memory of their leaders—Marx, Engels, Lafargue, Bebel, Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky, etc.—because they helped develop the doctrine and tactics which will make possible the realization and development of socialism, because they have devoted themselves to their ideas.

But the socialist movement does not canonize its most prominent leaders, nor does it convert its doctrine into dogma; much less does it grant one man power over lives and thoughts. The liberation of man from all moral and material fetters must be the work of man himself through a struggle against economic compulsion and moral prejudice. The paternalist regime entrusts this great task to the good will and wisdom of a single man, taking away from the producer all confidence in his own free and independent action. In this type of totalitarian paternalist dictatorship, we see also many features of a "pseudo-proletarian" and definitely fascist character.

There are not only simple workers but militants—i.e., "elite" proletarians—who can be bracketed with those workers of feudal times who were convinced of their own inferiority and the superiority of their masters. This explains the unbounded faith that a great number of petty bureaucrats exhibit toward their political leaders. In the main these people are inspired by motives of opportunism with respect to their positions; however, it is no less certain that others come to have a truly sincere attitude of fanaticism for their leaders.

Today in fact, by means of political mystification, the proletariat is subjected to moral slavery by just that party which claims to be the vanguard which will lead it to liberty; for to submit to the worship of myths or human deities is

moral slavery. Hypnotized by a belief in heavenly beings or miracles, it permits itself to be led blindly. It loses its ability to go forward on its own and needs apostles and priests to whom it commends its soul.

Religious mysticism is a phenomenon characteristic of the decadence of a civilization. The mysticism which has been deliberately and surreptitiously introduced into socialist circles is also a symptom of degeneration. Because of its rational character, socialism rejects all deification of institutions and men. Socialism has evolved historically by a series of struggles, some peaceful, some bloody; by the efforts of the workers to free themselves from both misery and mystification.

Never in the history of the labor movement were idols created, or supermen, for the simple reason that this is alien to the whole spirit of socialism and the ideology of the socialists themselves. Can anyone conceive of Marx or Engels permitting himself to be lauded and eulogized as any CP general secretary is today? Can anyone imagine Lenin dressed as a marshal with his chest full of ridiculous decorations!

Certain manifestations of this fanaticism exhibit features similar to that of Catholic fanaticism. The Catholic fanatic lives in continual fear of heresy, holy terror of the devil and of the spirit of evil; the Stalinist is obsessed with the idea of conforming to the "line," of observing perfect discipline.

The fear of isolation is a consideration which in our times carries much weight in the problems of conscience confronting militants of determination in certain crises. Despite the totalitarian internal regime, it is unavoidable that some discontent will show up in the heart of the party, in concrete circumstances and above all in moments of serious political or economic crisis. Sometimes this discontent is brought into the open by a leader of greater or lesser rank who formulates the criticism by the usual means. Through this channel there is expressed a state of discontent and the political aspirations of the most progressive elements of the party. Such a spokesman for a current of opinion within the party can count on the support or sympathy of a nucleus of militants as long as his views are not denounced as contrary to the spirit of the party. When this happens, when the offensive against the dissenter is launched, he can expect to see all those who had agreed with his point of view up to the day before, desert his side. For him alone, then, is posed the dilemma: capitulate or break with the party.

*(Continued on last page)*

# Books in Review

## Hitler's Coolies

*STALINGRAD*, by Theodor Plievier. Appleton-Century-Crofts, N. Y., 1948, 357 pp., \$3.

Theodor Plievier, whose two previous books have been widely read and acclaimed in the socialist movement, is reputed to have sold over a million copies of his new novel in Europe. Artistically it is superior to his earlier works. It has power, pathos, and a dramatic sweep which places it among the best of the war novels. Yet it is a book vastly different from Plievier's others.

The *Kaiser's Coolies* told the dramatic story of the revolt of the German sailors when they were ordered out to engage the British navy in a suicidal attack in 1918. In his later book, *The Kaiser Goes; The Generals Remain*, Plievier gave a vivid description of the betrayal of the struggle of the German workers by the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party in 1919. In both books the fire of revolutionary struggle is clearly felt. Plievier wrote both with all the heat and ardor of a revolutionary writer. This is not at all the case in his latest work.

*Stalingrad* is the story of the disaster that befell the Nazi Sixth Army at Stalingrad. It is a story of continued and unrelieved horror—the horror of an army completely surrounded by the Russians and gradually pulverized into helpless fragments. It is the story of the criminality of the Nazi High Command toward its own soldiers, and the frightful bestiality of modern warfare. Yet it is not merely a story.

Plievier himself was not a participant in the battle of Stalingrad. His book is based on firsthand observation of the war, and the stories of the German soldiers and officers who managed to survive the Stalingrad slaughter. Were Plievier a lesser writer, his non-participation might have resulted in a pale and more diffuse book. As it is, his absence from the actual scene of combat is to some extent an advantage in that it freed him from the limitations imposed by personal experience. It enabled him to give a more panoramic view of the ghastly events.

The story opens at the time when the German Sixth Army, which has battered down Russian resistance and taken Stalingrad, is in turn encircled by the Russians and cut off from the other German armies. The trapped army is gradually compressed into an ever smaller space and finally, after more than half its forces are destroyed, the remnants are driven into Stalingrad itself.

Scenes of the most nightmarish horror

follow each other in quick succession. The effects of constant shelling, sub-zero cold, and hunger and disease on the German soldiers, burrowing into the frozen fields and icy ravines, are so vividly portrayed that an overwhelming feeling of frightfulness and devastation is created.

The German army was, of course, not an army of heroes fighting for a noble cause. Plievier, the anti-fascist, knows this. He writes about the bestiality of the German officers and soldiers against the Russian population. But he writes with restraint. And he also writes about the courageous but deluded German soldier with deep compassion. Alongside the degraded and brutalized, he portrays Sergeant Gnotke, a simple soldier who clings to life because of his love for a comrade. And there is Vilshoven, the courageous tank commander, later promoted to generalship, who feels deep guilt for his share in the misleading of the German soldier.

Why, when the situation became completely hopeless, did not the Sixth Army surrender? Because Hitler personally ordered it to fight a suicidal war "to the cartridge." The world must be shown that the honor of the German nation could never be stained by the surrender of a German army, even though it meant the destruction of some 300,000 German soldiers and officers.

But why did not the High Command of the Sixth Army—the old generals to whom war was a science and their lifelong profession—why did they not order a surrender when further fighting became sheer insanity? Plievier describes the inner conflict which tore the High Command—which wanted to surrender as a matter of military logic but which could not bring itself to disobey the Fuehrer.

When surrender finally came, the shattered remnants of the Sixth Army gave up piecemeal. Field Marshal Von Paulus surrendered "as a private person" while units of his army were still fighting, and drove off in a Russian jeep discussing very amiably with the captors the merits of Russian *mokhorka*.

One question which Plievier avoids, however, is why the German soldiers did not revolt at Stalingrad as the German sailors did at Kiel in 1918. The answer must be sought elsewhere.

The leaven which helped ferment the Kiel revolt was the work of revolutionary socialists. The Russian Revolution which proclaimed to the world the idea of "peace without annexations" was another mighty factor. Ten years of Hitler's concentration-camp terror had wiped out the German revolutionists. The Ger-

man masses were confused, degraded and leaderless. No Lenin or Trotsky headed the Russian government. Stalin and his capitalist allies had no appeal to the German soldiers. Only the slogan "unconditional surrender" was flung at them. An enslaved Germany under Allied military occupation could not appeal to them.

Little is known of Plievier during the war. He worked for the Russian government among the remnants of Von Paulus' Sixth Army and was connected with the Free German Committee. This was the group of generals and other high ranking Nazis which Stalin sought to foist on Germany as his quisling government. Recently Plievier broke with Stalinism but has apparently not renounced his socialist views. He denounced Stalin's Russia as a country "where it is impossible to find the least spark of communism." How he managed to escape from the Russian zone is not known; he now lives in the American zone.

*Stalingrad* is not infused with a revolutionary outlook. Its philosophy can perhaps be best described as humanitarian nationalism: the disaster of the German nation is symbolized by the Stalingrad debacle, and the German people must unite and learn to live according to "the law, justice, and reason."

Plievier's ideas for the reconstruction of the German nation are vague. In the last conversation between Vilshoven and Gnotke, the general and the common soldier, only the most nebulous ideas are expressed. Both grope blindly and remain confused. It has been suggested that their final friendship was inspired by the ideology of the Free German Committee. This may very well have been the case.

Plievier's recent break with Stalinism suggests that the author of *The Kaiser's Coolies* may yet regain the revolutionary outlook of his youth.

N. S.

## Politics and Classes

*THE AMERICAN POLITICAL TRADITION*, by Richard Hofstadter. A. A. Knopf, New York, 1948, \$4.

This book is a rarity in that it discusses and evaluates the living political tradition as effectuated in practice, rather than the political theory which is largely an organized body of rationalizations for the programs of economic groups.

Professor Hofstadter's appreciation of the past is unencumbered by the ritualistic myth-making so common among our historians, or by the invidious cynicism of the muckraking liberal who has just discovered that material desires are motive forces animating political thinking. His method is related to the clash of social forces.

Thus his essay on the Founding Fathers is a long step ahead of Beard. Acknowledging his debt to this most profound of American historians, Hofstadter starts by assuming Beard's conclusions. But he generalizes the private interests of the individual delegates to the Constitutional Convention into social classes. The disparaging sideglance of the exposé (the flavor of which pervades Beard's *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*) is replaced by an acceptance of rational motives. And these motives are placed in their social context to serve as the instruments of historical understanding.

The Constitution is placed against the background of the experience of the commercial and landlord classes in the Revolutionary War. Having used the "mobs" against the British, the problem of the new ruling classes was to subdue them to their own rule, a problem analogous to that solved by Napoleon in 1795. The American solution took the form of the erection of a government which was not a continuation of the revolution to a new stage but rather what Hofstadter calls "conservative republicanism." The new organic law was intended to put into the saddle the classes that had already won economic power, and to remove from immediate contact with political power the masses of restless Jacobin farmers who threatened an American 1793.

The genius of this Constitution lay in the erection of a structure which is amenable to conflicting pressures, provided these pressures are within the framework of capitalist private property and its legal and economic practices. The Constitution is the oldest organic law in the world today thanks to this flexibility. In effect it organized the arena within which the conflict between different capitalist and propertied groups could struggle for dominance without finally excluding from government other sections of the ruling class.

While the range of the book covers our political history from Madison to Franklin Roosevelt, not all of the essays are equally valuable; but without exception they add new insights and clear away mythical accumulations. The chapter on Wendell Phillips is a labor of reconstruction in which the emphasis is placed on his evolution from an abolitionist to a socialist, against the background of the transformation of capitalism by the Civil War and the rise of the labor movement.

The chapter on Lincoln, "The Self-Made Myth," and the one on Phillips suffer from weakening omissions. The transformation of American capitalism from 1845 to 1860, from mercantile-agrarianism into industrialism, is not sketched; consequently one of the keys to the "irreconcilable conflict" is not explained other than in its expression in the campaigns of 1854 and 1860. Also the theories of Louis Hacker on the split between the

"radicals" and the "new radicals" is ignored to the detriment of a more complete explanation of Phillips' political development during reconstruction.

There was room for a job of historical salvage on Thaddeus Stevens in this book, if not as a primary figure then at least as the political leader of Radical Reconstruction. For it was Stevens' fierce hatred of the slavocracy and his commanding political projection of social revolution for the South through the development of a landed Negro peasantry which held the key to a radical solution of lasting effect. In that brief historic moment between Lincoln's death and Grant's election the balance was not yet irrevocably decided in favor of the overwhelming mastery which industrial and finance capitalism did achieve. Stevens' radical program contained a bright promise which still remains unfulfilled. Stevens was the last of the Jacobins, just as Phillips was among the first of the spokesmen for the emergent working class.

Nevertheless, the essay on Lincoln is the heart of the book, by far its most exciting and brilliant section. There are many ideas here which deserve an extended development. The analysis of the origin of the Lincoln myth is suggestive for an explanation of his pre-eminent place in our hagiology. The Northern ambivalent attitude toward the Negro is so adequately portrayed in Lincoln—for freedom but against equality. So long as this ambiguity in racial attitudes remains part of the American ethic, Lincoln is assured his inordinate place in American tradition.

JACK BRAD

## Lost Decade

*THE LAST OF THE PROVINCIALS*, by Maxwell Geismar. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1947, 404 pages, \$3.50.

Looking backward at the early 1930s, now receding so swiftly behind us, we are able to appreciate what a fruitful period of Marxist culture it represented for the United States. The Marxist approach lay behind a great deal of the significant writing of the period. There was James T. Farrell in the field of the novel; Clifford Odets in the drama; that much neglected man, V. F. Calverton, in sociology; Edmund Wilson in literary criticism; Lewis Corey in economics; and there were scores of others. There was also a large body of important writing which was influenced by the Marxist climate. Lundberg's *America's 60 Families* is a good enough example.

Of course, a great deal of the writing in this genre was inept. But the inner rot which caused the structure to collapse was Stalinism. In the early phase it was ultra-leftism, which, lacking all subtlety,

vitiating the work. In the latter phase it was the policy of collective security, which produced an unstable union of liberal capitalist ideology and Stalinism. This blew up the series of explosions which followed the Moscow trials, the republican defeat in Spain, the improvement of economic conditions, and the Hitler-Stalin Pact. About all that was left when the smoke cleared were propagandists for U. S. or Russian imperialism and a small residue of anti-Stalinist socialists.

What is the prospect for the future? It cannot be called inviting. V-J Day was no Salamis, to be followed by a long and relatively undisturbed period of peace in which culture will flourish like the green bay tree. Everything is being subordinated to the necessities of the war against Russia, especially in those fields closest to the social scene. A recent reading by this reviewer of Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, a purportedly scientific anthropological study of the Japanese mentality, gives a foretaste of what is ahead.

The threats and the propaganda of governmental agencies are even felling representatives of the anti-Stalinist socialist vanguard who escaped from the last disaster in full possession of their faculties. Stalinist writing, of course, is due for an eclipse, as is genuinely Marxist writing, and writing influenced by it. Fortunately, the decline is not a direct one. There are residual currents and counter-tendencies which occasionally cast up books worth reading. Maxwell Geismar's *The Last of the Provincials* is such a book.

Geismar owes a great deal to the Marxist literary critics of the '30s, to their predecessors like Parrington, and to their successors like Kazin. In this book he analyzes five American writers of the period 1915-1925, using the sociological approach. His analyses very skillfully extricate the leading themes of each author's works and relate these works to the development of American society. Esthetic elements of the works are treated in proper subordination.

H. L. Mencken, the subject of the initial essay in the book, is, unfortunately, the least satisfactorily treated of all the authors considered—a fact easily ascribable to the contradictory character of this man who had such a great influence on the intelligentsia of the '20s. Geismar catches the main outlines, however. "His value, therefore," says Geismar, "lies as much in his profound and unwilling reflection of a period as in his brilliant reporting of it. If he helped to mold the spirit of the post-war epoch he also betrayed its underlying pressures. . . . And if he undervalued the resources of our democratic social arrangement—exaggerating in this as in so much else, he could hardly exaggerate the blind consuming power as well as the blind fertil-

ity of our industrial machine." Geismar underrated Mencken's contribution in at least two respects: his tremendous role in introducing European and American literature to the United States—with the enhanced sensibility which resulted—and his role in developing a critical attitude toward capitalist culture.

The essay on Sinclair Lewis is full of stimulating insights. Of Lewis' literary world Geismar says, "This is also a middle class which is essentially without a home life, without children, without religion, and finally, without an economic status to speak of: a middle class which is without all the historical props of a middle class, and which, hardly established in power, has every appearance of dissolving—including the escape into a dream world of the middle class. . . ."

The essay on Willa Cather is brought around very judiciously, using as a point of orientation the thesis that ". . . the whole range of Cather's values, standards, tastes, and prejudices, her tone, is that of an inherent aristocrat in an equalitarian order, of an agrarian writer in an industrial order, of a defender of the spiritual graces in the midst of an increasingly materialistic culture."

Geismar does full justice to that attractive figure in American literature, Sherwood Anderson, whose work can be summed up in the statement Geismar applies to one of Anderson's last productions, *Home Town*: "Then there is Anderson's realization that 'the breakup which came to America in '29'—a breakup whose echoes are everywhere in the volume—that this last and most radical change in the pattern of a changing American life probably marks the final, the ineradicable breakup of the earlier agrarian society he has made his own."

The final essay is on F. Scott Fitzgerald, that tragic, glittering figure, half snob, half radical. Of him Geismar concludes, "Although Fitzgerald remains the folklorist of the rich in their more restricted aspects, and, like his own Munro Stahr, who had never learned enough about the feel of America, still retains a 'certain half-naive conception of the common weal,' there are few others who could have given such a bright and glowing intensity to such a shallow world . . . this age in itself beautiful and damned, for which horror and death waited at every corner, and whose youth may seem 'never so vanished as now.'"

In a final section titled, "Summary: The Years of Loss," Geismar evaluates the literary decade 1915-1925. In words which occasionally smack of the Church Fathers he denominates the '20s as the coming of age of capitalism and the voices of this period as voices which testify against it. "Here, certainly," he concludes, "is Conrad's sense of terror and darkness in the life of man, but where is that accompanying sense of the wonder and prodigality of life?"

It is proper to bring together and to assess this period whose leading representatives served as precursors of those who in the depression decade more explicitly understood the evils of the times. And yet how distant both of them now seem to us! Hardly has the intelligentsia begun to assimilate the disappearance of the frontier, the decline of the village, the monstrous growth of capitalism, the unprecedented depression and World War II, than it faces problems of undreamed-of complexity, extensiveness and import. The literary masterpieces of the '20s are recessive, they are dropping below the horizon. For the conflicts which elevated them to greatness are beginning to seem trivial before those of the atomic war and capitalist barbarism which are looming up over the horizon.

When has the intelligentsia of the United States ever approached the cataclysm more poorly prepared? Where are even the Jeremiahs and the prophets of the threatened catastrophe?

JAMES M. FENWICK.

## Views on Anti-Semitism

*RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ECONOMIC THEORY AND THE RESURGENCE OF ANTI-SEMITISM, by Louis B. Boudin, 1948, pamphlet repr. from ORT Economic Review, 96 pp.*

Boudin's concept of anti-Semitism strays somewhat from the traditional view held by some in the Marxist movement that all the Jews' ills can be traced to the special economic role which they have played throughout history. To this wooden concept (economic determinism passed off as Marxism) he has added a new and vital modification: the status of the Jews, he maintains, has always depended not so much upon their economic role as upon the relationship of this role to the economic theories prevalent in society at any particular time.

In the early Middle Ages, according to Boudin, the relationship of the Jews to society was determined by the fact that their income was derived chiefly from money-lending. The Jewish historians are right in pointing out that the Jews were forced into this occupation because all others were barred to them; however, insists the author, this was not due to anti-Semitism but to the fact that medieval "society was organized in tight communities, bound together by religion, custom, and vested rights." Since, as non-Christians and strangers, they were barred both from land tenure and from membership in the guilds, they were forced into that occupation, usury, which was prohibited to the Christians.

This, however, brought them into conflict with the rest of society. For the economic theory of the Middle Ages held that wealth was created by labor, while

money-lending was "barren." The result of these ideas was a series of restrictions, pogroms and expulsions from various countries.

Boudin shows that the fate of the Jews in the ensuing ages was tied to the economic theories of the times. The Jews gained a toehold in international commerce only during the mercantilist age, for its theory held that international trade was a form of warfare, and consequently those engaged in it were honored as "merchant princes." But the greatest age of the Jews was ushered in by the victory of the British over Napoleon, and the resultant triumph of the economic theory and practice of *laissez-faire*. The part played by the Jews in the development of capitalism was tremendous. But their role and status in the nineteenth century was made possible only by the economic theory that trade was a source of wealth, and that "the natural laws of trade" allotted to each participant his just share of the wealth. The 'rich Jew,' once an object of opprobrium, became the greatest contributor to the welfare of the community. . . . The number of Jewish nobles, von's, de's, barons, and lords,—was legion."

The turn of this century saw capitalism under attack from new, non-Marxist sources. "Even at this time the terrible events to come cast their shadows before them in the form of the identification of Jews with capitalism." The leader of these new theoreticians in Germany, Max Weber, ascribed the rise of capitalism to the Protestant religion. But Sombart decided that this was an error, and assigned this role to the Jews.

"It would be a mistake to ascribe Sombart's opus to anti-Semitism. Rather it would be more in consonance with fact to ascribe his later anti-Semitism to the 'scientific' investigations which led him to the ascription to Jews of an exaggerated role in the development of capitalism," says Boudin.

In the United States he believes that Veblen's ideas may in the future form the basis for an outburst of anti-Semitism. For "If Veblen's theories be true, then the worker is not cheated by his capitalist employer, who uses tangible property in his product, but in the various sections of the marketplace, from Wall Street and the Stock Exchange to the 'sales emporia' on Fifth Avenue and Main Street. And most of these are Jewish—at least so he will be told."

The very briefness of the above summary is an injustice to Boudin. Nevertheless, since our concept of the meaning of anti-Semitism itself exerts some pressure on the course of this virulent phenomenon, it is necessary to reserve space for some criticism.

Boudin has grossly overstated the case for the economic interpretation of anti-Semitism. The following are a few instances of the mountain of evidence,

contrary to his view, which he has ignored.

It is necessary from his point of view to assume that the earliest and chief source of Jewish wealth was usury. However, we have the word of Salo Baron for it that "While in the earlier Middle Ages 'Jew' had become, even in legal terminology, a synonym for merchant, from the twelfth century on we find it increasingly identified with usurer." This is the exact opposite of Boudin's opinion that the Jews did not become merchants until the mercantilist age.

There is no question that, as a matter of fact, Baron is correct and Boudin is wrong. It is only partly true that the Jews were kept off the land by the objective workings of the feudal system; the direct and conscious intervention of the Church was also necessary. Contrary to the author's deduction that the impoverished victims of usury were the chief source of hostility toward the Jews in Poland, S. M. Dubnow has documented the fact that anti-Semitism was introduced into that country by the conscious decision of the church, precisely because of its fear of the friendliness of the population toward the Jews; and that until modern times anti-Semitism was kept alive in Poland primarily by the clergy and by the German burghers (the latter were economic competitors of the Jews).

It would be much more correct to say that the status of the Jews has depended upon the totality of their relationship to society, and that their economic role was only one factor, and not the chief one, in this. In the Middle Ages the principal factors were: the religious difference (in my opinion the most important element); the latent nationalism of the people (this is Baron's discovery); and also the economic relationship.

In general it may be said that Boudin has accepted the statements of the anti-Semites, both of the Middle Ages and of today, too readily at their face value. It is not possible to believe that Sombart first exaggerated the role of the Jews in the rise of capitalism, and only later became anti-Semitic. The direction of a person's thinking, especially in so emotionally charged a subject, is not subject, is not accidental, even though he himself may not be aware of the motivations which supply the drive for his thoughts. Yet Boudin has uncovered an important fact: before Sombart could permit himself to become consciously anti-Semitic, he first had to convince himself of the harmful effects of the economic activities of the Jews.

Today anti-Semitism is simply one aspect of nationalism — here chauvinism reaches its most unbridled point, because the Jews lack the force to check it. But although this constitutes the underlying motive of the hatred, this is not yet sufficient to produce an overt outburst; for this the chauvinist must first be

convinced of the justice of his cause. It is here, in the justification of the atrocity, that the economic theories play their role. It follows that, although an attack on the economic rationalizations cannot remove the cause of anti-Semitism, it can seriously inhibit and cripple its development.

It must be stated that the remissness of all sections of European Marxism except the Bolsheviks in this matter has constituted one of their most serious and symptomatic failures. The counterpart of

this attitude in our movement is found in the familiar "lack of interest" in the Jewish question, which is a reflection of the deep incursions that nationalist ideology makes into our ranks.

Although I cannot agree with Boudin as to the specific role that economic theory plays in anti-Jewish prejudice, certainly it is necessary to recognize the valuable service that he has done in demonstrating the close relationship between the two.

LEON SHIELDS

## Correspondence

### On Mills' Book

TO THE EDITOR:

Ben Hall, in his review of C. Wright Mills' *The New Men of Power*, seems to me to be guilty of some of the sins he accuses Mills of. I agree entirely with Hall's estimate of the great value and importance of Mills' book. I object specifically to the following statements in Hall's review:

"But Mills outlining his own program, and we must add, sketching the purported program of the 'far left' (Trotskyists), succeeds only in creating a bizarre fog. This latter part of his work is of interest mainly as a curiosity which can be overlooked without detracting from the unquestionable importance of the book."

"An early definition fixes the 'far left' as the 'two Trotskyists groups' but the less said about Mills' exposition of the purported 'left' program the better. Readers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL can judge the expert character of his detailed description of the far-left program by the following single sentence: 'The American left focuses its political attention more on domestic politics than on foreign affairs.' He does not in fact present and analyze the program of the genuine American left with the same care and objectivity as the rest of his material. We cannot and do not, of course, expect Mills to advocate our program, but we can expect that before recounting it at length and with apparent authority, he acquaint himself with it and present it objectively."

In the first place, as any careful reader of the book cannot fail to see, the program that Mills presents under the heading "The Program of the Left," in the chapter "Alternatives," is not put forward as the specific program of what Mills calls "the far left." The "left" that Mills refers to is quite clearly an amalgamation of what Mills calls the "far left," the "independent left," and elements such as the Socialist Party which Mills does not specifically place in any of his categories. As a general statement of

the viewpoint of this broad left wing, Mills' summary is certainly accurate. Halls' slightly pompous assumption ("We cannot and do not, of course, expect . . .") that Mills is thinking only of the Workers Party has no basis in fact, as far as I can see.

Nor can I understand the note of indignation with which Hall calls attention to Mills' statement that "The American left focuses its political attention more on domestic politics than on foreign affairs." This is undoubtedly accurate with respect to the broad left wing that Mills has in mind. And even with respect to the Workers Party, has this not been the constant tendency in recent years—to place a greater emphasis on domestic politics? This has been, indeed, the most notable symptom of WP's development away from sectarian isolationism. If an outsider like Mills should mistakenly believe that the WP has developed further in this direction than is actually the case, would not grateful silence be a more appropriate reaction than indignation?

I have never yet encountered a "bizarre fog"; and I have seldom encountered a more bizarre and intemperate dismissal to political oblivion than Hall's remark that "This latter part of his work," that is, on the program of the left, "is of interest mainly as a curiosity. . . ." On the contrary, Mills' discussion of program in the chapter "Alternatives" is an excellent summary of a socialist program for America, bearing in mind the limitations imposed by the kind of book Mills was writing. Mills' program for an independent labor party does not differ in any important respect from the proposals advanced by the WP; but the WP could learn a good deal from the way Mills presents some of his ideas.

Comrade Hall speaks of the "genuine American left" with a somewhat proprietary air, for which I cannot imagine the justification. Let's just say that any of us would be a bit presumptuous to claim to be the one and only "genuine American left" at this particular time.

H. D. COLEMAN



## Psychology of Stalinism --

(Continued from page 27)

To capitulate sincerely while convinced of the correctness of one's views is to betray the truth; it is to negate oneself as a revolutionary. But departure from the party is final; it means isolation—complete divorce. This problem of conscience is most generally solved by capitulation: the fear of isolation carries more weight in the dissenter's mind than fidelity to the truth. He also knows that few will go through with the struggle, that they will desert him, not at the end of the road but as soon as they discover that they walk alone.

Who knows how many crimes are committed out of the holy fear of "remaining alone"! One characteristic which distinguishes the conduct of many prominent revolutionaries is the very anti-revolutionary attitude of fearing "unpopularity," of not wanting to go against the current. At the least it can be called a reactionary sentiment; but it is gener-

ally inspired by opportunist motives.

Naturally, these are not the only considerations which induce members of a faction to separate themselves organically from a tendency with which they have identified themselves over a period of time. They know well enough that in our time what counts in the dissemination of propaganda is the material means, over which the party alone has control.

Any faction that arises runs the risk of being overwhelmed under an offensive of articles and ridicule without having the least opportunity to defend itself and answer the attacks. A reduced and independent nucleus cannot develop that kind of intense activity. To the militants accustomed to that fever of activity of which we have spoken, the renunciation of it would create a void in their daily life. Therefore they silence their real thoughts, betray what they supported in struggle—and remain in the party. We can say that this is the real explanation of the fact that factions do not occur in the Communist Parties despite the fact

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that discontent sometimes arises.

The egoistic spirit, the conservative spirit, is so rooted, in consequence of a centuries-long education in the rule of private property, that when a man has no personal wealth to cherish he becomes an egoist of his own party or organization. This is the explanation of that type of party patriotism which has kept many old militants, who are always in disagreement with their own party, in the ranks of the social-democracy.

JUAN ANDRADE

(Translated by R. S.)

## City Machines --

(Continued from page 17)

fledged urban center for the first time. However, in this new area of rapid urbanization, the old political-machine setup never got started. City politics was openly dominated by the local businessmen. Bryce's buffers were unknown.

In the fall of 1946, the city administration's protection of scab deliveries to a department store, struck by the AFL as part of an organizing campaign, produced a general strike. Most of the demands were ultimately won, but the resentment towards the city's political leaders did not cool down. Five of the nine city councilmen were to be elected the next spring; the AFL and CIO united to form the "Oakland Voters League" to present their own candidates. Again, both the candidates and the campaign propaganda did much to de-emphasize the labor issue, but most of the precinct workers came from the labor movement, and the acts of the administration in precipitating the general strike were decisive in electing four of the five labor-backed candidates. Incidentally, the administration did not have any machine. Participants claim that there were not even any administration poll watchers to be seen.

### Changes Ahead

(7) The congressional election in the Bronx last February was another indicative campaign. This was in the bailiwick of Ed Flynn, whose opponents often did not even bother to look up their vote. The ALP (now Stalinist-Wallaceite) decided to put its all behind candidate Leo Isacson—and elected him by a handsome majority. Whatever one may say about the Stalinists and Wallaceites, they do *not* fit into the tra-

ditional pattern of either machine politics or reform politics.

(8) One concluding item, especially important because of its geography. In Tennessee, the united labor movement was able to accomplish what so many others had miserably muffed: it was able to shear Memphis Boss Crump of some of his might. The "benevolent despot" of Shelby County had controlled the politics of the state for some forty years. In the Democratic primaries of last summer, both CIO and AFL vigorously campaigned for New Deal Representative Kefauver against loyal Crump man Mitchell and dissident Crump man Browning in the race for the senatorial nomination. Kefauver was not only victorious but carried twenty-three precincts in Memphis itself, where Crump had not lost a precinct for twenty-two years.

It should be obvious that what the old-time reformers could not do is on the way to being accomplished by the organized labor movement. The traditional American city political machine is losing its primacy. It is no longer so easy to feed oneself from the barbecue of expanding wealth. The machine's appeal to the voters has already lost its dominance. National issues and class alignments are increasingly significant. New political apparatuses, based upon the vigor of active political workers from the labor movement, have made their appearance and are here to stay.

Until now, their energy has mostly been channeled behind New Deal and Stalinist politics. With the coming of an independent labor party—and it is coming—the biggest blow of all will be struck at the still-remaining power of the city-machine men. For the first time a permanent and far-reaching change will be made in the field of municipal politics.

WILLIAM BARTON