

Gil Green Takes Stand, Tells Jury How He Became a Communist

Gilbert Green, Illinois State Chairman of the Communist Party, second defense witness in the trial of the national Communist leaders, told the jury how, as a youth of 18 in Chicago, he studied the classics of Marx, Engels and Lenin and found that Marxism explained society in a complex world and presented a "dream" of a better world—something to "fight for and work for."

He was called to the witness stand after Daily Worker editor-in-chief John Gates, first defense witness, concluded his testimony.

Following is the verbatim record of the statement by Gilbert Green, one of the 12 Communist leaders on trial on Foley Square, to the jury on how he became a Communist. (Interruptions by the court are omitted.)

Q. Now, will you tell us how these books which you have mentioned influenced your decision to become a member of the Young Communist League and of the Communist Party?

A. Well, these books that I read gave me an understanding of Marxism-Leninism. I learned from them that the ills in modern society that disturbed me were not due to human nature, but were due to an economic system which divides society into economic classes—on the one hand a small group, a handful of bankers and industrialists who own all the means of production, the mines, the mills, the factories and the preponderance of the wealth of society, and on the other hand the great majority of the common people who own very little outside of their personal belongings, but who create and produce all the wealth of society.

CAUSE OF WARS

I learned that wars were the consequence not of man's desire to kill man or because nations hate one another, but because war is profitable to big business and that big business, in its search for newer markets abroad, for sources of raw material, for cheap colonial labor, came into collision with big business interests of other countries and thus created the basis for modern military conflicts or wars.

I learned that the age-old American dream of a land of abundance and equality and opportunity for all could be realized, but only when the means of production, the mines, the mills, the factories, were owned in common by all the people, and when production was organized for use as against profit for a handful of monopolists.

KEY TO HISTORY

I learned the key to the understanding of history which I had not had before. I learned that history is not a crazy quilt of unrelated historical accidents or the mere recording of the deeds of great men, but a pattern of development, a process of development governed by definite social laws which, if understood by man, would enable him to become a conscious force working for social improvement and social betterment, for a better world as against being a blind victim of events.

I learned that history is constantly undergoing changes, that the world we live in today is nothing like the world 50 years ago or 100 years ago, that social systems come and go like everything else in life, that the capitalist social system is not eternal, was not always with us, nor will it always be with us.

ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

I learned that the first social system developed by man was primitive tribal society and that in different parts of the world there are remnants of that system today.

I learned that after primitive tribal society there was the slave system of production and that in different parts of the world there are still remnants of that system, that the slave system of produc-

tion gave way to the feudal system of production, and that we have feudalism in many parts of the world today, and that finally, feudalism gave way to capitalism and that capitalism, at least at that time, in one part of the world, had given way to a new and higher form of social organization, socialism.

I learned that the changes in social systems come not alone because of the change in men's views and ideas, but that the change in men's views and ideas occurs after a prior change has taken place in economics, in man's relation to production; in other words, in how man makes his living.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

When he had the iron plow and the handle and when these were replaced by the horsepower of the steam engine and the textile mill, we had the beginnings of an industrial revolution that had in time to lead to a social revolution, a transformation of old feudal society into capitalist society, because one cannot have large industries and factories, the collective labor of thousands of men under the conditions of the feudal system.

I learned that the transformations from one social system to another are revolutionary changes in that they are fundamental and basic changes, the ending of one pattern of development and the beginning of a new pattern of development; and that these revolutionary changes that occur are not the opposite of revolution, but a product of evolution in the same way that human life is conceived nine months before it is born.

The act of birth is a revolutionary development, the beginning of an entirely new stage of development, but yet is part and parcel of the evolutionary process of human life and human development.

I learned that the motive force in the bringing about of these transformations and changes from one social system to another is the class struggle in society, that ever since the slave system of production society has been divided along class lines, and that the class whose interests correspond with the new relations of production, with the technological changes that have taken place is the class which willy-nilly, consciously or unconsciously, is motivated in the direction of bringing about a change, of ending the old social system and helping to bring in the new, while that economic class whose interests are tied up with the old mode of production thinks its system is eternal, refuses to see the handwriting on the wall of history and stands in the way of progress.

When violence has occurred in these social transformations, the violence occurred because the old ruling class, the old economic class whose interests were tied up with the past used violent means, placed violent obstacles in the path, in the forward movement of society.

I learned that in modern society, under capitalism, the revolutionary class of today, that class whose interests are in harmony with the new change in the social system is the working class, and that the working class has replaced the capitalist as the revolutionary class in society.

The capitalist class was the revolutionary class in the struggle against feudalism at the time of the English revolution in 1648 and at the time of the American revolution of 1776, at the time of the French revolution of 1789, and of the Germany revolution of 1848, but that with the development of capitalism now, the modern work-

ing class is the revolutionary class in society.

And it is revolutionary not in the sense that it is conscious of the fact that its historic mission is to bring about a new social system, but because of its objective place in society, the fact that it, whether it knows it or not, must conduct the struggle to defend its own rights, to earn a decent living, to keep from being completely exploited and oppressed, must conduct this struggle against the economic royalists of today and must, therefore, logically lead in the direction of bringing about a social transformation of society.

I learned that when society is ripe for such social transformation, we have reached the point where the mass of the people can no longer live under the old conditions and must break through the shell of the old in order to build a new, and that if this breakthrough does not occur, if society does not move forward to a higher rung of social existence, then what happens is that society is pushed backward, begins to decay, begins to disintegrate, begins to rot from within.

And I learned that history has given examples in the past of social systems that did decay and did disintegrate and did disappear, such as the ancient Roman and Greek civilizations, precisely because there was not that inner force able to carry those systems to the next stage of human development.

However, I also learned that, despite temporary recessions, temporary throwbacks, temporary hindrances and obstacles, life must assert itself and sooner or later

man does break through and does move from one stage to another of human development, always in the line of progress always in the line of human betterment.

And I also learned that, as far as capitalist society is concerned, this is the first time in the history of human civilization that we now have a state of affairs in which man, through his conquest of nature, through the invention of machinery and tools which can produce an abundance such as we have never known before, can now create a social system without class divisions, a social system in which everyone can truly have what he needs and can create the kind of world in which there need not be any longer class struggles and wars, and can usher in a day in which man actually begins to be man for the first time instead of being merely a higher form of beast.

A SCIENCE

I also learned from all this that Marxism-Leninism was a science that explained the world for the first time so that I could understand it. It not only meant to me a scientific grasp of what the world is like and society is like, but it also represented to me a cause, a vision, a dream, something that one could fight for and work for, and I decided to dedicate myself to that, to dedicate myself to the fight for bringing about a better world, a world without exploitation, oppression, without wars, without discrimination, without the ills that we face in modern society today.

The court: You learned all that before you even became a Com-



GILBERT GREEN

munist?

Green: My becoming a Communist was not a matter of walking into a dime movie, or some other movie, at a chance moment. That was a turning point in my life, and I made an effort to study this thing through to the fullest extent before I made that decision.

It so happens that there are some people who mature at 18 and some who never mature, and it so happens that at 18 I read all these books and I came to a mature conclusion in terms of what I wanted to do. And I did decide at that age to dedicate myself to this cause. I don't regret it today, nor shall I ever regret that decision.



More Notables, Organizations Hit Jailing of Communists

Protests against the continued imprisonment of the three Communist leaders continued pouring in from all parts of the country and the world.

From Argentina, the Executive Committee of the Communist Party cabled:

"Moved by the imprisonment of three of the comrades on trial we reaffirm our solidarity with the courageous Communist Party of the United States. This infamous frameup of the defenders of peace is the work of Yankee monopolists, provokers of war. We firmly protest the court ruling which threatens the democratic rights of the working class and people of North America."

Word arrived from Paris that M. Claude Denner, the French lawyer who observed the early phases of the trial for the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, excoriated Judge Medina's "boulevard manner" and his taunts against the defendants and their lawyers.

IN AMERICA, cities as far apart as Philadelphia and Los Angeles continued to register the mounting protest. In Los Angeles, Carey McWilliams, noted writer, declared: "I think it was improper to try and force Gates to be an informer." A. L. Wirin, counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, said: "(This is) another blow at an important guarantee in the Bill of Rights, namely, the right to be free from incrimination. This right should include the right to be free from incriminating one's friends as well as one's self."

Frank Scully, member of the Democratic County Central Committee and film writer, said: "They might as well resort to the old Chinese method of the axe and give it to them on a corner and stop all this pretense about due process. Any violations of Constitutional rights affects us all—you

can't make exceptions, or the next thing you know you'll be the exception."

Others who expressed themselves similarly were Edward Mosk, chairman of the Los Angeles County Independent Progressive Party; Guy Endore, film writer; Arthur Watwood and George Cowell, members of the Democratic County Central Committee; Victor Shapiro, chairman of the 16th-Congressional District of the Los Angeles Democratic County Central Committee; John Howard Lawson, screen writer and author.

A number of labor leaders joined the protest movement there, including Max Roth, manager of the CIO Fur and Leather Workers Union, Locals 87 and 213; William Axelrod, secretary-treasurer, CIO News Vendors Union; Jack Marcotti, Ralph Lock and Leon Gorelick, leaders in the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union.

PHILADELPHIA saw the largest street demonstration since the trial's start. It took place in the central city shopping area and thousands of shoppers lined Market St. to watch 759 picket the Federal Building.

The Communist Party here announced that to its knowledge 1,600 protest telegrams were sent to Judge Medina in the past few days.

Henry Beitscher, secretary of the Progressive Party here, revealed that his organizations had sent hundreds of protest wires. A dinner honoring the defendants was attended by 329 progressives and raised \$4,000 for the defense. Delegations of steel workers, miners and electrical workers from Philadelphia, the Lehigh Valley,

anthracite, Wilmington and Williamsport attended.

The Cervantes Fraternal Society of the IWO wired Judge Medina, branding his action "a clear violation of the Bill of Rights."

A UE local of 5,000 in Philadelphia, Local 155, unanimously voted to condemn the judge's jailings. The regular membership meeting sent a message to Henry Winston in the Federal Detention House saying it backed the Communists' stand in refusing to become stoolpigeons. "While many of us may disagree with the defendants' political philosophy . . . we expect that all should receive a fair and impartial trial."

SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS came from trade unionists in many parts of the country. From Norfolk, Va., from the Bedding, Curtain and Drapery Workers Union, Local 140 of the CIO Furniture Workers, from Stanley L. Loney, president of the CIO United Electrical Workers District Council 6, Pittsburgh; A. A. Fisher, executive secretary of the Washington State CIO Council; from rubber workers in Ohio who threw a picket line around the Akron Federal Building. Hugh De Lacey, Washington State director of the Progressive Party, issued a public statement calling for the immediate release of the three and condemning the frameup trial.

The executive board of Local 19, Food and Tobacco Workers Union in Memphis, Tenn., sent Medina a telegram denouncing his action. They also wired the Governors of New Jersey and Virginia in defense of the Trenton Six and the Martinsville Seven.

That's a small sample of how it went all across the country.