

THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM

Can Socialists and Communists Find Common Way? a Communist says...

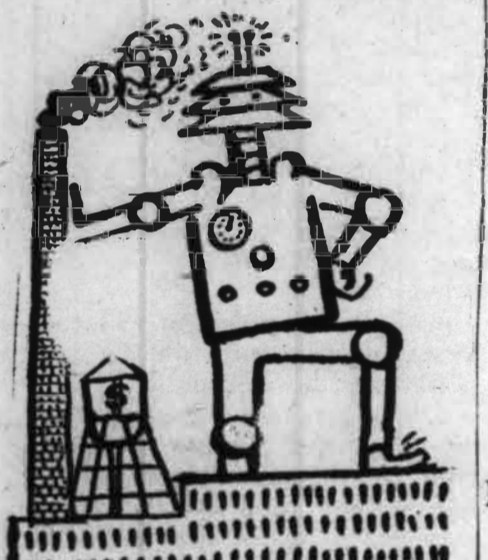
"In the first place, it is the path of class struggle. It is dependent upon the degree of Class consciousness, organization and the fighting quality of the working class."

By DOROTHY RAY HEALEY

IT IS IMPORTANT to note that we are debating the question: Which Road to Socialism?—not: Capitalism versus Socialism. We start on mutual ground. We agree that the basic solution for our country's problems lies in the Socialist re-organization of society, in the ending of exploitation of man by man, and elimination of the fundamental contradiction in today's economic system—private ownership of the means of production.

I am not particularly interested in scoring points over Charles Curtis in this debate. I am interested in widening our knowledge as to how to guarantee that millions of Americans who want a "New America" may increasingly understand it can be achieved only through Socialism.

I share the opinion of the National Committee of my Party in defining one aspect of that road to Socialism as being an advocacy



of a peaceful transition from Capitalism to Socialism. . . .

What does this peaceful path mean? In the first place, it is the path of class struggle. It is dependent upon the degree of class consciousness, organization and fighting quality of the working class. Does this concept in any way alter the classic Marxist analysis that no ruling class ever peacefully left the scene of history? By no means. We are not talking here about the DESIRE of the capitalist class to allow a peaceful transition—we are discussing its ABILITY to resist.

I said this was the path of the class struggle. It is not, therefore, a path which leaves the decision solely to electoral activities. Hell would freeze over before Socialism would come to America if we were to tell the working class that if they keep voting Socialist they can thereby achieve it.

But when Labor and the Negro people's movement unite to end the poll tax in the South—when they unite to guarantee that millions of Negro voters now deprived of franchise by terror shall vote—when they unite for these ends they will not be accomplishing their goal solely by the ballot. It will take mass struggles such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott, plus the solidarity and strength of all labor to achieve such an end. This is the path of the class struggle.

I do not negate the importance of electoral activity. Such activity is an important weapon in increasing the political consciousness of Labor that it represents a class, which defined class needs. But election campaigns are never things in themselves. They are never limited to what takes place on Nov. 6. That date represents only the culmination of one year's ceaseless activities and the beginning of the next year's struggles. And if those struggles continue

and expand to include ever increasing numbers of people, if they are directed against the giant monopolies, No. 1 enemy of the majority of all Americans, then such struggles can provide the basis for development of what is so long over-due in America, a party led by Labor.

WHAT COULD be the next step? Let me quote from our Draft Resolution: "The people's anti-monopoly coalition would have as its central aim the improvement of the conditions of the American people and the defense and extension of their democratic rights. . . . Such a government could curb the repressive economic and political powers of the monopolies and deprive them of the ability to promote violence to frustrate the will of the people.

"Under such conditions, whenever the majority of the American people become convinced of the necessity of a socialist reorganization of society, they would be able to advance to their goal along peaceful and constitutional lines."

I have no quarrel with any who want to vote for Darlington Hoopes (although I would quarrel with a socialist platform which approves of "security" screening in "sensitive" positions)—and we talk of Democratic Party's capitulation on

civil rights) but voting for Darlington Hoopes obviously is not a mass policy—it is a policy for the advanced workers.

I believe that it is correct while participating in and extending a mass policy to simultaneously project a more advanced candidate. If it were not for the systematic harassment and persecution of those who dare to sign Communist nominating petitions, our Party would have candidates in the field. But no Party that wants to eventually influence millions can rely solely on a one-sided policy that can influence only the advanced sector.

One further point should be added regarding the possible development of an anti-monopoly party. In other countries, the customary process is for coalitions to be expressed through already-existing parties coalescing. This has been a most infrequent development in American political history, and is, I think, an additional factor in the reasonableness of the perspective of a coalition within one party.

OUR BELIEFS have nothing in common with those who hold that capitalism can grow into socialism, that a series of reforms can do away with capitalist relations of production. There have been



endless reforms in the last hundred years, but the capitalist relations of production remain, with its resultant oppression and exploitation. Reforms alone cannot do the necessary job—the transformation of those relations of production which ends forever private appropriation of social production—and that transformation is entitled revolution.

Our opponents reproach us for our past attitude towards the Soviet Union. They criticize us for having interpreted internationalism as representing the need at all times and under all circumstances to defend practices which violated socialist democracy. They are right. We saw only one side of the picture—that the first Soviet state

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a Socialist says...

"Once the majority of people voice their support of socialism, a socialist government will be placed into office, charged with the responsibility of realizing socialism."

By CHARLES CURTIS LOS ANGELES

THIS DEBATE takes place under the impact of the Khrushchev revelations, revelations that have shaken powerful and monolithic organizations to their theoretical foundation and left them quivering. But this debate is only one episode in four decades of controversy between the democratic socialist alternative to capitalism and the dictatorial-totalitarian alternative advanced by the 20th Century Communist movement.

In his speech, Khrushchev revealed that Joseph Stalin, previously the object of unfounded adulation by the world Communist movement, was a paranoid mass murderer. . . .

Everywhere the question arises: Where were Khrushchev and Bulganin? There is only silence for an answer would admit the truth; they were lead tenors in the chorus of sycophants to the despot.

But there were those in the Soviet Union who did not join the servile chorus, who in face of persecution, denounced the murderer and frameups. It is to them our salute goes: Out of the prison camps of Siberia, not the sumptuous suites of the Kremlin, will come the socialist regeneration of the Soviet Union.

In terms of this debate, it is necessary to consider three questions: (1) The nature of socialism; (2) the road to socialism, and (3) specifically America's road to socialism.

Socialists have to convince the majority that socialism will mean better, fuller and richer lives for all the people. People are convinced by reason and example.

Only two groups maintain that a Socialist society exists in the Soviet Union: the Communists and the more unscrupulous of the defenders of capitalism. The latter say: This is socialism

they have in the Soviet Union, with its dictatorship, its suppression of free speech and press, its purges and frame-ups, its stratification into a privileged minority and a toiling majority, its arrogant nationalism—with its Stalin. Do you want it in this country?

If—if this is socialism, no one can be blamed for crying out: We want none of it! As for the democratic socialists, we say: We will resist any attempt to foist it on this, or any, country in the world.



More, we pledge to do everything we can to free the peoples of the Soviet Union and the nations in the Soviet orbit from this tyranny. . . .

SOCIALISM is the end of exploitation of man by man, the establishment of the social ownership of the means of production. With socialism comes a strong equalitarian trend in income; democracy, economic as well as political; internationalism and fraternity between peoples and humanness and kindness in social relations.

Using these criteria, how do we appraise the Soviet Union? In the Soviet Union, there is no capitalism. But there is a stratification of society into the priv-

ileged who have the amenities and luxuries, while the masses live mean and restricted existences. . . .

In the Soviet Union there is no democracy, but a one-party rule and that party under the control of the top officials—formerly one man, Stalin, now the so-called "collective leadership."

Internationalism, which from the very inception of socialism, has been replaced by nationalism and chauvinism in the Soviet Union. Stalin developed the official theory that the Soviet Union has achieved a complete socialist society, and that internationalism is not essential for the Soviet Union. . . .

Recite me no figures of the industrial growth of the Soviet Union. "Ill fares the land where wealth accumulates and men decay." Besides, the lion's share of the fruit of the industrial growth has been usurped by the privileged while the rise of the workers' standard of living has lagged behind.

Using these gauges, we say there is no socialism in the Soviet Union. The carefully nurtured falsehood that socialism exists in the Soviet Union is a block on America's road to socialism. This barrier must be removed by restating the fundamentals of socialism.

LET US NOW turn our attention to the road to socialism.

Once the majority of people voice their support of socialism, a socialist government will be placed into office, charged with the responsibility of realizing socialism.

For this transitional period, Lenin and the 20th Century Communist movement proposed a dictatorship. The dictatorship, bad enough under Lenin, became horrifying under Stalin's totalitarianism.

For this transitional period, democratic socialists propose freedom, more freedom and even more freedom.

Democracy and freedom means the right of any individual to hold any opinion in speech and press, to form organizations and parties for the promotion of that opinion; it means the right of a person to have and express his opinion even if he is one alone, even though in the eyes of all the rest of mankind in this opinion is fallacious and pernicious. Freedom and democracy means a socialist government has to protect him in this right.

There is no need for Mrs. Healey to spend a great deal of time assuring us the Communist Party is pledged to the constitutional road to socialism.

We are glad to hear it, but this question is subordinate to another more important one, which is: What Communists do with the powers of government, regardless of how they reach these powers.

In Czechoslovakia, the Communists took government in strict accord with the republican constitution of that republic, but they used that government to establish a typical Stalinist totalitarianism.

SOCIALISTS need democracy under capitalism to express their program and refute the programs of their opponents they need democracy in the transition between capitalism and socialism to most expeditiously and harmoniously establish a socialist order, and of course, democracy will be of the essence under socialism.

This is why we oppose all thought-control laws including the statute under which Mrs. Healey faces prison. . . .

Some socialists propose, for the transition, granting full freedom to all workers and socialist parties, but not capitalist parties. Such a restriction is wrong and dangerous.

Suppression is like trying to quench thirst by quaffing salt water. Once you start suppressing one party, you have to suppress another, and another, until one party remains; then groupings in that one party are one by one suppressed until you have one man rule. Stalin and the Stalin cult is the inevitable outcome of a process that started with the suppression of one party. . . .

The end is freedom and democracy. (Continued on Page 14)

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had been established.

We thrilled at the tremendous accomplishments in Soviet economy which repudiated those who said society could never function without capitalists. But we forget that internationalism also meant being aware of both the inevitable weaknesses which would come from building an advanced economy in a backward country, and of weaknesses and violations of socialist ethics which could stem from wrong policies.

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WE ARE ALSO reproached for our attitude towards civil liberties, with our opponents saying we want civil liberties for ourselves, but not for others; that if we were

SOCIALIST

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racy and the road is freedom and democracy. There can be no full democracy without socialism, and no socialism without full democracy.

This is what divides democratic socialists from modern Communists.

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SOCIALISTS cannot achieve their goal by either open or shame-faced collaboration with either of the two major capitalist parties or by support of their candidates. No person will ask people to vote for something to which he is opposed. The Democrats and Republicans are avowed supporters of capitalism. Instead we propose a vote for the socialist candidates, Hoopes and Freidman whose platform you will find on the literature table.

in power we would deprive others of liberty. I must confess that my opinions on this question have been very slowly changing.

I defended our position on civil liberties on the grounds that ours was a class position—that we were for the concept of free speech in direct ratio as to how it affected the working class, and those who jeopardized the working class should be silenced. I now share the opinion of a growing number of Communists that in its essence this was not truly a class position.

In reality, the class is most strengthened by the widest expression of political freedom. The democratic traditions in America came as a result of tremendous struggles and I believe these traditions are

important not only in a capitalist America, but are vital in a Socialist America. I believe that we Communists should say—and should mean—that are for full civil liberties for ALL Americans, now and in that future Socialist America.

Today is Columbus Day, a most fitting occasion for this exchange of opinions among Marxists. Columbus discovered America in 1492, and we American Marxists had better rediscover it. We all share a common problem; how to unite the science of Marxism with the traditions and realities of our nation. We face the same task—the development of a Marxism that utilized the lessons of the world working class and at the same time is as American as the World Series.

