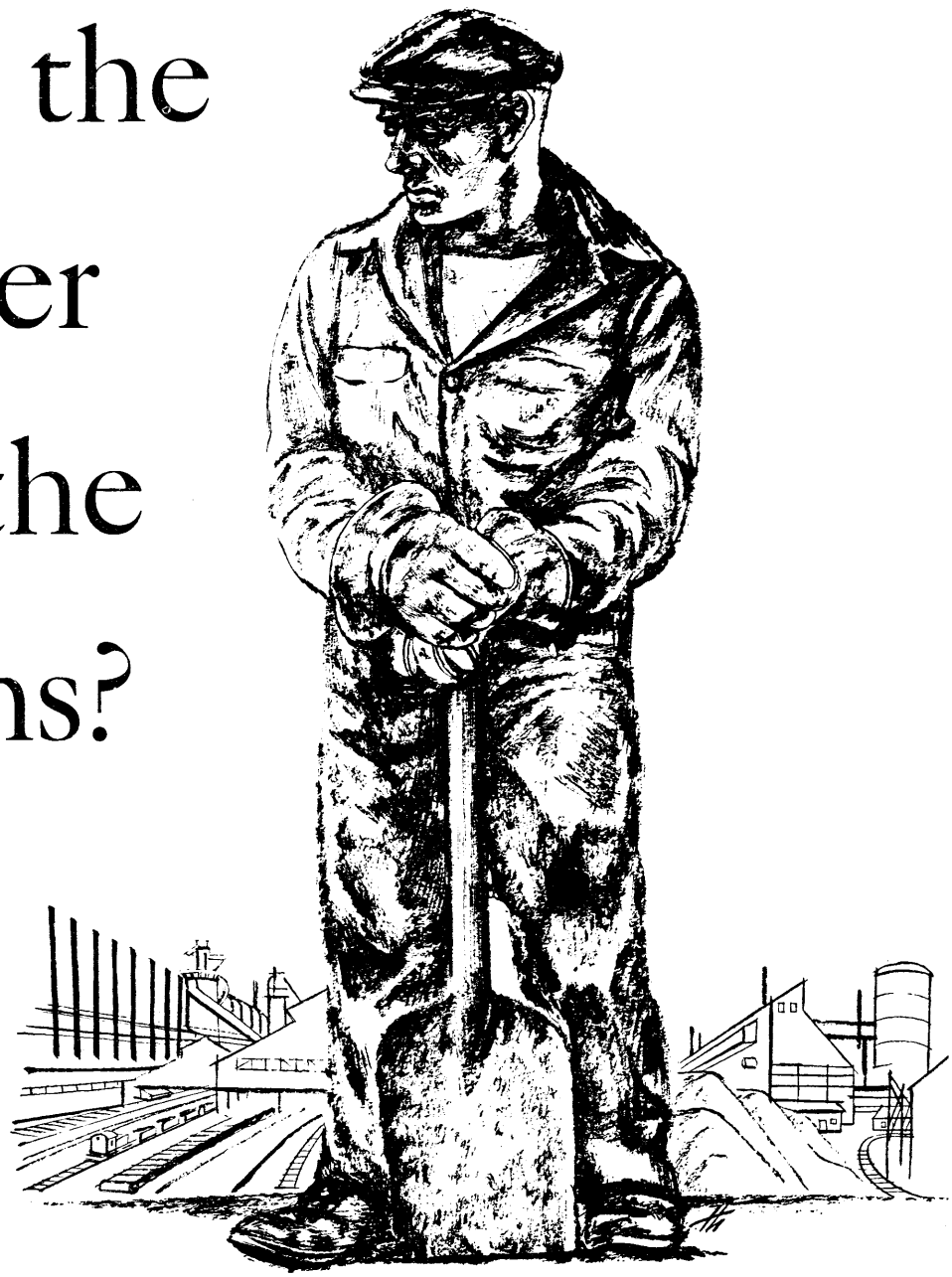
The American
Socialist

Capital vs. Consumer:

Is the Boom Losing its Balance?

What's the Matter with the Unions?



MARCH 1956

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CLIPPINGS

PRESSURE from the textile barons in the chenille rug and bedspread center, Dalton, Georgia, finally proved too great on the Church of God of the Union Assembly, which has been publishing a militant, pro-labor paper called The Southerner, and backing the efforts of the Textile Workers Union to organize the area's workers. Don West, the able editor of the paper, long under fire from the mills' public relations hirelings as a "communist," was fired. West, who had built up the paper in a year to a 6,000-circulation force for liberal ideas in the South, is at present touring the country in an attempt to raise funds for a new Southern publication.

JAMES Kutcher, the legless veteran who got his disability pension back after a public outcry against government persecution, is still fighting to get his job back. He was fired from his clerical post with the Newark Veterans Administration because of his admitted membership in the Socialist Workers Party. After years of litigation, his case was heard this past month by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sitting in Washington, D.C.

At a protest meeting attended by almost 200 people in New York's Community Church on February 17, Kutcher thanked his audience and the N.Y. Post for their support, and called for the restoration of the disability pensions of two Communist leaders, Robert Thompson and Saul Wellman.

OTHER news on the civil liberties front continues spotty. Maurice Travis, former secretary-treasurer of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, was sentenced to eight years imprisonment and an $8,000 fine because of alleged perjury when, as a union officer, he signed the Taft-Hartley affidavit. . . . Paul Brown, a Communist Party organizer, has already served 15 months in jail and faces the threat of an additional five-year sentence, all because he used an assumed name (under which he was holding down a job) for his car registration and driver's license. His attorney, in a summary of the case written for the Wisconsin Civil Liberties Union, charged that "this prosecution . . . both present and past, is purely one of political persecution." . . . On the brighter side, four of the Communists on trial in Cleveland under the Smith Act were acquitted, the first such breakthrough in any of the current Smith Act prosecutions. . . . A three-man panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals a short time ago rendered an important ruling in the case of John T. Watkins, an organizer for the United Auto Workers, declaring that witnesses before Congressional committees cannot be forced to testify about former Communists if the only purpose of the testimony is exposure. But the full court has now granted a Government motion to have the case reheard by all eight judges of the Appeals Court. This is a sign that the case is considered very significant, and the final ruling will have great importance in defining the powers of the Congressional inquisitors. . . . Norman Thomas, at a Debs Centennial banquet in Chicago, renewed his call for amnesty on behalf of the Communist leaders jailed under the Smith Act, saying: "We in America are not stronger or more secure because Elizabeth Gurley Flynn is in jail. There will not be one principle applied to Communists and another to the rest of us."

SEVENTEEN thousand GM workers in Canada smashed through to a victory after being on strike for 148 days. The union got for the first time a master contract covering all five Canadian plants, with a six-cent current wage increase, and additional six-cent increases from August 1, 1956 and August 1, 1957, as well as the pension, health and unemployment benefits of the U.S. contract. The auto International contributed $4 million in the course of the strike. . . . Ford Local 600 President Carl Stellato has asked the U.S. Solicitor General to obtain a Supreme Court review of the Smith Act. . . . Federal Judge Picard has dismissed the indictment against the auto union that alleged illegal use of funds in the Michigan Senatorial election won by Pat McNamara. . . . The machinists' union and the auto union have concluded an informal alliance in their coming battle for contracts with the aircraft industry. The machinists, representing 119,000 workers in 11 major plants of Southern California, are going to concentrate on demands for wage increases and the 35-hour week. The auto union, representing 61,000 workers in eight plants, plans to ask for wage increases and its auto-type unemployment plan. . . . Twelve thousand production workers at Republic Aviation Corporation on Long Island, belonging to the machinists' union, went on strike February 20 for wage and supplementary demands. Violence immediately flared up on the picket line, with six workers hurt and 11 jailed. The union charged that police "rough-house tactics" were responsible. Carloads of supervisory personnel tried to smash through the massed picket line. . . . Another effort to castrate labor politically is under way with the introduction of the Curtis-Goldwater bill in the Senate prohibiting unions from making any political contributions "directly or indirectly." Senator Jenner has further introduced a resolution to start an investigation into the unions' political activities. With this background, Dave Beck, Teamsters Union president, addressed by telephone hookup the American Management Association conference in Chicago to declare that organized labor should stay out of politics, as unions are economic not political bodies. David J. McDonald had previously unburdened himself before the General Management Conference in San Francisco that "it is high time that we in labor and you in management stopped playing the hero and villain roles in respect to each other and assume the weight of responsibilities thrust upon us." . . . An editorial in the January 15 United Mine Workers Journal congratulated the CIO Packinghouse Union "for a tremendous victory in the face of overwhelming odds" in that organization's bitter seven-month strike against Godchaux Sugars at Reserve, Louisiana. Then in the next editorial it proceeded to congratulate right-winger Hugh Gaitskell for his election as leader of the British Labor Party against Aneurin Bevan, "an America-hater and generally regarded as a wild-eyed socialist."

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Off to a Slow Start in Miami

IF the NAM crowd took any of its piercing shrieks about the new "labor monoply" of the united AFL-CIO federation seriously, it can relax. The first Executive Council meeting which held its sessions in Miami the week of February 10 showed that the combined leadership will not set the Thames on fire—not right away, anyhow. At the time of the unity convention reporters figured out the combined weight in poundage or tonnage of the new Executive Council. It is an awesome figure, and probably accounts, at least in some part, for the fact that the Council is a slow-moving and cautious animal, not to be easily jarred from the plodding course it has set out for itself.

The unions are engaged in two crucial strikes right now, the national Westinghouse strike and the strike at the Miami Beach hotels—and they are not doing too well in either. But the labor Solons did not permit themselves to get too ruffled or disturbed. They adopted several proposals of routine support and went on to the next order of business. This is getting too statesmanlike for comfort.

The Westinghouse strike has already entered its fourth month, exceeding in length the longest previous nation-wide strike at General Motors in 1946 which ran 113 days. Westinghouse is not just another routine conflict. It goes even beyond being a potential repetition of the labor routs at Kohler and Perfect Circle. For the first time in a number of years a major corporation in mass production manufacturing is trying the Mohawk Valley treatment on a major union in a national strike. This is a crucial test of strength. If the company gets away with it labor will have been dealt a blow more severe than at either Kohler or Perfect Circle.

The union has already executed several retreats. It has agreed to compulsory arbitration. It has agreed to call off the strike while the biggest issue in dispute—time study and speedup—is laid over for further negotiation. But the company is hanging tough, firing strikers, and demanding unconditional surrender, while pitched battles continue in front of the plants. Even if the union finally secures a compromise agreement—which is the best it will get given the present relationship of forces—it will have settled without registering a gain on the major issue which provoked the strike in the first place.

JAMES B. Carey, president of the CIO Electrical Union, the largest organization on strike, reported at Miami that AFI-CIO unions have contributed thus far a total of $2 million. This is a sizable sum. The Executive Council further called on all affiliates to give additional financial support as the strike-breaking represented a "threat to all unions." The New York labor movement is planning to raise a million dollars, and local and central labor bodies in the striking regions have responded generously. All this is a splendid demonstration of labor solidarity. Unfortunately, it is not enough, as the sagging Westinghouse strike evidences. Labor's massed strength has to be brought into the picture so that things can be brought to a climax more rapidly. The corporations have perfected a technique of wearing out and starving out strikers. The siege tactics tried by the auto union at Kohler didn't work there, and won't work elsewhere. The labor movement has not yet devised an effective tactic to meet the new union-busting challenge.

The situation is no less forlorn in the Miami Beach hotel strike. The Hotel and Restaurant Workers International Union has been trying for ten months to break through in the luxury hotels that dot the beach front but has only been able to sign up five of them. The biggest ones are holding out and give no sign of coming to terms. The union has been slugged with anti-picketing injunctions, and the union musicians and teamsters have been sedulously scabbing on their fellow workers. Petrillo, czar of the musicians, has ignored all appeals to call his members out. The workers sentiment is there for a fight. A mass meeting at Bayfront Park addressed by Meany and Reuther in support of the strikers saw a turnout of 19,000. George Meany later declared: "What we have here is an alliance of the employers, the courts and the politicians to smash union organization. It makes little sense for our merged labor unions to talk about a large-scale campaign to organize the unorganized if we allow ourselves to be licked in the defense of our basic rights."

Which is sound thinking and good sense. But there is no record that the Executive Council took any action instructing Mr. Petrillo to live up to union principles, and the hotel workers have to contiue their uphill fight against the hotels with "invisible picket lines"—the only kind permitted them under Florida court-made law, and with fellow unionists cutting their throats.

THE much-vaunted organization campaign that the merged federation is promising to launch is thus already under a cloud. No announcement for the start of the campaign came out of Miami, as the union chiefs are still squabbling over jurisdiction rights, and the money isn't coming in. George Harrison, president of the Railway Clerks, proposed that Meany name a committee that would try to iron out jurisdiction rights. His union and five others have their eyes on the projected drive for airline workers. Agreement also has to be reached by the former CIO and AFL Textile Unions, Chemical Unions, etc., as to who will get what. With regard to finances, the former CIO unions pledged four million dollars if the sum was matched by the AFL unions, but the latter haven't come across yet.

The Teamsters are conducting themselves like an independent sovereign power. Beck announced that his union would conduct its own campaigns for truck drivers and warehousemen in all industries that the parent body was trying to organize, and he is now signing bilateral agreements with the Hotel Workers, Building Service Employees,

Meat Cutters, and Building Trades for independent joint organizing and mutual assistance with each side putting similar amounts into an organizing kitty. Director of Organization John W. Livingston is therefore still confining himself to studying the problem. How long it will be before he can leave the library and take to the field is uncertain.

A CALL for substantial wage increases in 1956 was issued by the Council, which also adopted its usual program of welfare demands. Its political action program looks better in print, however, than in life. The Councilmen haven't the least idea how they are going to achieve their laudable aims. A. S. Raskin, the *New York Times* correspondent, reported from Miami: "On the political front, the union chiefs evinced intense dissatisfaction with the policies of the Eisenhower administration, but their preparations for marshalling the energies of their 15 million members to do anything about a change in national policies were decidedly apathetic. . . . Labor hopes for little from either party at this session. It has crossed off any expectations of changes in the Taft-Hartley Act, even though it will renew its perennial efforts to have modifications enacted. It has a similarly defeatist approach to most of its demands for more housing, a national health program, a high minimum wage and other New Deal-Fair Deal measures."

The Council became involved in the civil rights question, which bids fair to boil up into the major issue of the 1956 campaign despite the machinations and schemings of the politicians in both parties. Meany took a forthright stand in condemning Stevenson's position on the school aid bill and the segregation issue: "I am in complete disagreement with Mr. Stevenson on this question. I am also in disagreement with Mr. Stevenson that the way to handle this question is to run away from it." Meany added that he thought President Eisenhower showed a lack of courage as well: "I don't like the President's position of saying nothing." The Council then wired a resolution to Washington protesting mob rule in Alabama and demanded that the proposed inquiry into the reign of terror in Mississippi be extended to include Alabama.

But even on the level of protests and legislative positions the Council proceeded to pussyfoot on the Powell amendment to the school aid bill which proposes to deny federal aid to all schools that violate the Supreme Court's ruling on segregation. Reuther announced that the auto union is backing the Powell amendment and fought for it at Miami. But the Council took refuge in the position that the President would be violating the law anyhow if he allotted funds to segregated schools and hence the Powell amendment was unnecessary. The source for the queasiness of the AFL moguls is that the building trades are hungry for the school construction work that will accrue if the bill goes through, and are afraid that the Powell amendment may help bury the school bill altogether. The bureaucrats are as ready as the next man to fight for principles—provided they don't cost them anything.

ALL in all, what with a couple of the jurisdiction conflicts that were settled and the *camaraderie* displayed by all hands in the warming atmosphere of Miami, the united organization is launched and on its way—moving at its accustomed snail's pace. Raskin concludes his analysis thusly: "If the economy continues to prosper and employment stays high, labor will get little election response. . .But if the current sag in auto employment communicates itself to other industries, the listlessness that now marks labor's approach to politics will evaporate. It will be in the campaign with both feet and with all the resources the merged movement is able to command." That's about right.

Lawyers Guild Draws Wide Support

Detroit

THE 14th national convention of the National Lawyers Guild, held in Detroit on February 10-13, was greeted by an impressive array of figures from the public, labor and legal worlds. Emil Mazey, secretary-treasurer of the United Auto Workers Union, and Aubrey Williams, publisher of *Southern Farm and Home,* were the featured speakers at the Guild's annual banquet. A number of Michigan judges were on hand to witness the presentation of a Guild award to Judge Patrick H. O'Brien of the Wayne County probate court, and best wishes were sent to the convention by Michigan's governor, Detroit's mayor, and the Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court for Michigan's Eastern District. The convention program book displayed a large number of greetings from important union bodies in the Michigan area, including many auto locals as well as a Teamsters Joint Council greeting signed by James R. Hoffa.

All of this is testimony to the increased readiness of individuals in the labor movement and in public life to defy the witch-hunt, as the Lawyers Guild is one of Attorney General Brownell's prime targets. Brownell, in a speech to the American Bar Association in August 1953, announced his determination to place the National Lawyers Guild on his list of "subversive organizations," and was only prevented from doing so by an injunction action which the Guild promptly undertook. Brownell's proceedings have been stayed during the courts' consideration of the issues, but his smear scared away some people. The effects of such smear attacks are now evidently wearing off a bit.

At the banquet, Aubrey Williams, speaking about race integration, caused some surprise when he made a fervent plea for "moderation," and urged that nothing be done to increase the tensions in the South. He stated opposition to Rep. Adam Clayton Powell's amendment to the administration's school bill which would deny federal aid to any state which continued segregated schools.

EMIL Mazey, by contrast, adopted a tone of urgency and militancy. He branded the White Citizens Councils of the South as anti-labor as well as anti-Negro, and pointed out that wherever the labor movement is strong, or has taken a hand in the matter, progress has been made toward de-segregation. With reference to Williams' proposal to "take time" in dealing with the South, Mazey pointed out that 93 years have elapsed since the Emancipation Proclamation, and asked how many more generations of second-class citizens there must be in America. Conceding that the problem could not be minimized, he advocated "positive forceful action" as the best means of beating Jim Crow, giving examples from the early days of his union, where a few local unions had to be slapped down for "hate strikes."

The big industrial unions, which only a few years ago had a rich life of internal democracy, are today overhung by a pall of bureaucratism. What caused the change, and will it always remain that way?

What's the Matter with the Unions?

by Bert Cochran

RADICALS are dissatisfied with the labor movement because instead of challenging capitalism, the labor leaders press-agent for it. But even students of the labor movement and mine-run liberals are aware that there is no sparkle and dynamism in the unions today, that they constitute more often a bower of the status-quo than a danger to it.

The Left press occasionally writes about reviving the spirit of '37; and the CIO, at its final session before dissolution into the united organization, slobbered over its vibrant youth. Like an old sinner taking a conventional New Year's resolution, the CIO heads vowed to remember their origins and be good hereafter. But this was strictly ritual. The sharply dressed, well heeled and well padded business agents have most of their fighting behind them. They feel the system isn't too bad, because after all, it hasn't done badly by them. Gomper's philosophy of opportunist adaptation to the system has conquered, and not only Meany, but McDonald as well, are reviving the cankerous spirit of the old National Civic Federation. And Reuther is not far behind.

The trade unions, time and again, have passed through this kind of a cycle. There is a youthful stage of militancy and combativity when they are struggling for recognition. No sooner do they succeed in establishing bargaining relations and wresting from the employers concessions which raise their members a little above the rest of the workers, than the officials become anxious to consolidate their positions, and the membership concerned with hanging on to its small advantages. The original insurgency gets dissipated, the unions go conservative, strike leaders and agitators give way to a cautious professional bureaucracy. This cycle is so common, not only in this country but abroad where workers are more advanced politically, that obviously something deeper is involved than individual malevolence, inadequacy, stupidity or the drive of power-hungry individuals. There are always a lot of power-hungry individuals around, but the question remains why the ranks, which at certain times push them aside, permit them or even encourage them at other times to seize the reins and perpetuate themselves as a bureaucracy.

PART of the dissatisfaction with the trade unions sometimes arises from romanticizing this institution and making greater demands upon it than it is ordinarily able to meet. Unions are the all-embracing, primitive self-defense organizations of the wage earners. As their power resides in numbers (and as the older craftsmen's unions are now in a small minority) the impulsion is ever-present to organize all the workers of a given industry, or a related group of industries. The American unions haven't done a good job of this compared to unions in most other Western countries. Still, 17 million workers are enrolled under the banner, and a few of the largest unions run beyond a million members. However, there is no political basis of selection in the recruitment, there is no common bond of thinking, background, personal interests among these workers—other than the bond of working in the same shop or industry and confronting common (and sometimes competitive) shop problems. You therefore run smack into the dilemma of how to make democracy meaningful when dealing with such huge and diversified aggregates of humanity. (And without democracy unions inevitably become a prey of bureaucracy, which congenitally has a strong affinity for the capitalist status quo.) How is the individual to make his voice heard in

this Babel of voices? How is the majority to rule beyond the formal ritual of marking up paper ballots once every year or every two years?

The problem was different during the foundation of the CIO. What happened in that mass uprising was on a smaller scale the same thing that takes place in popular revolutions—probably the single most important change from ordinary times: The masses of people who are generally the objects of policy, who year in, year out, have things done to them, suddenly came out of their flats and shacks and spilled on to the public stage. They overflowed meetings, they manned picket lines, they marched in demonstrations, they organized themselves as delegations and put the fear of the Lord into mayors, congressmen, state legislators, and governors, they broke the employers' disciplinary machines in the shops by a thousand quickie strikes. There was no problem then of how to get the union members to participate in the life of the organization and to take the initiative. Most of the older officials were busy conniving how to get the members quiet again and trained to take orders from their paid officials instead of the other way around.

BUT these hectic periods of mass upheaval are the exceptions in the flow of history, including the history of labor unionism. The tide naturally receded after a few years. Such extraordinary exertions could not be indefinitely maintained. The workers went back to their jobs and homes. By the time of Pearl Harbor in 1941 the crusade was over, and "normal times" set in throughout the labor movement. And in "normal times," the overwhelming mass of members do not participate very much in the work of the union, and are largely apathetic about its affairs.

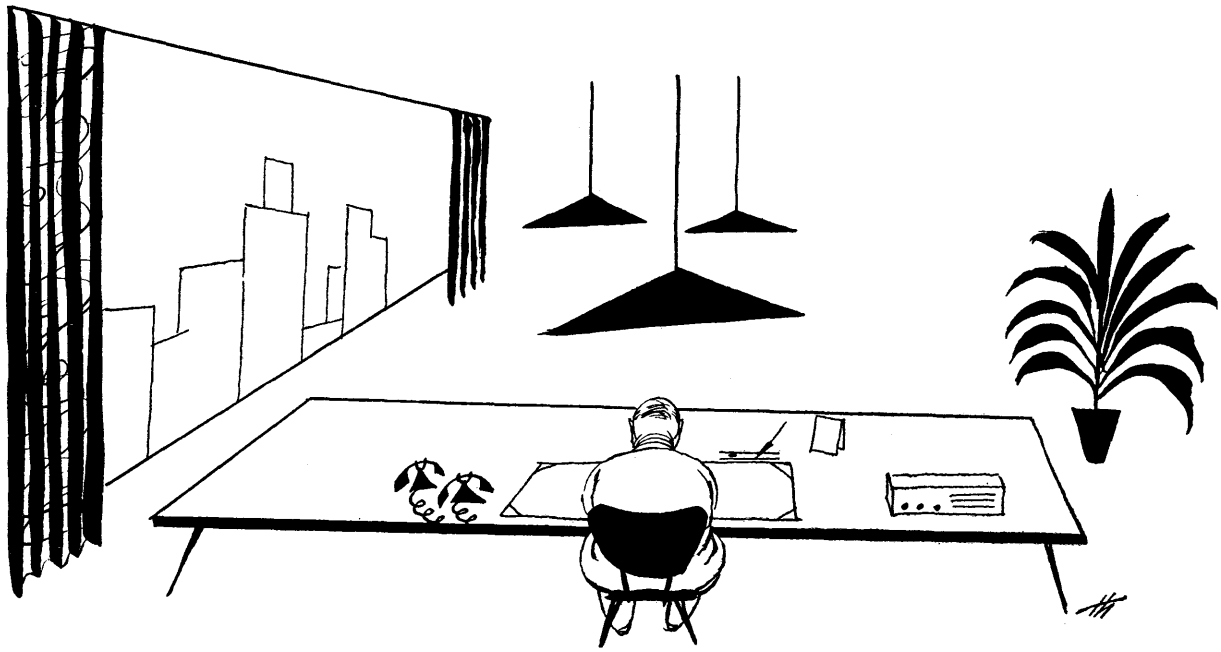
The old-type AFL local union meeting used to be attended mainly by the local's politicians, either in office or on the make, a couple of radicals, plus a handful of old-timers who didn't have anywhere else to go that night. Things picked up a bit in all unions after the CIO got into the picture, but in a lot of building trades or machinists' locals the situation is still not too much different. And the decline in interest in the union's doings has hit the CIO almost as damagingly. Let us take what is probably the most advanced union either in the CIO or in the labor movement as a whole, the auto union. In the Dodge local of Detroit, which has well over 20,000 members, a local meeting of 250 is considered good. Locals of 6,000-8,000 members sometimes cannot get together the necessary quorum of 100 to hold a meeting. Of course this doesn't give a fully accurate picture as workers who never come to local meetings do attend their shop meetings or department meetings, which deal with their more immediate work problems. But the fact remains that not over 3-4 percent of the membership gets involved in the organization's various activities. This automatically determines that democracy in a union does not have very much more meaning than democracy possesses in the political life of the nation as a whole.

The causes of this unsatisfactory state of affairs go to the very nature of business unionism as it is practiced under capitalism. For the past 75 years the tendency has been steadily and increasingly rapid towards centralization of power. The CIO, which revived in its first years the whole labor movement, itself soon became the source of still further centralization. Under the current set-ups in all CIO unions and many AFL unions, all strikes, big or little, have to be authorized by the International Executive Board, which in practice generally means one man—the International President. Furthermore, the local unions, which used to have the say about their own contracts, are now, in one industry after another, subject to either corporation-wide contracts negotiated by their top officials, or pretty much hemmed in by "national patterns" which they cannot in practice transcend. The local union, therefore, is reduced to bargaining solely on how to apply and carry out the master contracts agreed to by others. And even in these local matters, if disagreements reach a stage of possible strike action, International representatives are quickly sent in to take over.

THESE centralization procedures have thrust enormous power into the hands of a professional top staff of paid officials, who in practice run the organization. They make all the important decisions, and like all true bureaucracies, tend to become self-perpetuating. Where any oppositions appear, they are systematically hounded out or bought off. Minority opinion is either nipped in the bud, or the very climate of the organization makes it impossible for dissidents to exist. This power of the labor bureaucracy grows as the membership becomes less active and withdraws its interest. Then, the bureaucracy, by taking still more matters into its own hands, further breeds apathy, indifference and cynicism amongst the ranks, and the paid officialdom grows still more uncontrolled and omnipotent. Thus we have the vicious circle.

The decline of rank-and-file participation, the loss of democratic rights, the squelching of minority voices, invariably add up to the unions' getting conservative, stodgy, and regimented. What happens is this: The employers, who in the early militant period fought the unions head-on, now convert the paid officialdom into an agency to police and discipline the workers and fit them into the proper grooves of capitalist shop practices and techniques of exploitation. Most signed contracts nowadays contain detailed and meticulous provisions which not only set forth the innumerable and expanding prerogatives of the companies, but make the unions responsible for each and every member living up to the Prussian code. The officialdom, which is supposed to be representing the ranks against the corporations, has thus been metamorphosed into an agency with a dual role. In addition to speaking for its members and representing their interests up to a certain point, it also acts as the disciplinary sergeant keeping the privates in line and making them observe to the letter the militarized labor contract.

The totality of this dualistic activity has had a bizarre result. The unions, instead of becoming schools for class consciousness and more advanced activities against capitalism, have been transformed instead into conservative institutions that prop capitalism, prolong the life of the two-party system, and channel the workers' frustrations and discontents into respectable and ineffectual protests. The embattled hosts of labor are reduced to scrounging around for crumbs.



COUNTLESS attempts have been made to break the power of the bureaucracy by decentralizing some of the authority that the few top officials have arrogated to themselves. As a matter of fact, in an earlier period of American unionism, the present degree of centralization was unheard-of. The authority for calling strikes used to be vested in local unions and sometimes, in direct form, in the city central labor bodies. Even to this day, as a heritage of the past, there resides far greater authority in the local unions and district councils of many of the older AFL unions than in those of the CIO. And, of course, a number of the AFL unions, like the Teamsters and some of the building trades, resemble monarchies presiding over an enclave of feudal baronies, rather than the centralized, unrestricted monarchies of the CIO giants, or of Lewis's mine union.

But despite the officialdom's frightful abuse of its centralized authority, the trend will not, under present conditions, be reversed. Centralization derives not mainly from the ambitions of bureaucrats but the objective needs of the labor movement. The unions confront monstrous aggregates of capital organized on national and even international lines that dispose of limitless power and wealth, and are directed by a central core of leaders. The unions can meet this kind of adversary only by being able to concentrate their strength at this or that necessary point of attack. They labor under the necessity of matching the ceaseless concentration of power and wealth on the other side. Where you used to have local agreements with plant managements, you are now getting into national agreements, and even industry-wide agreements. Where wage patterns used to be set on a local or regional basis, they are now often established on a national scale. Similarly, when a strike of 500 workers in Oshkosh may force out of work another 50,000 or 100,000 members, because of the integrated character of industry, the union, with the general approval of the membership, will refuse to countenance complete autonomy in strike decisions. The clock will not be turned back on this trend any more than monopoly will give way to the competition common in an earlier day.

NEVERTHELESS, within this necessary centralization concept, there remains a crying need to loosen some of the power from the grip of the top leaders, and return to the locals authority over affairs that properly belong to them, not to mention the right to dissent from official policies, and to effectively present minority ideas and proposals for the consideration of the membership. Progressives will in the future continue to press, as they have done in the past, for local autonomy in bargaining and in signing their own agreements dealing with shop working conditions, with re-establishing authoritative shop-steward systems in all plants, and in curbing the present over-centralized power of the international office in the matter of strike authorizations, as well as many other questions.

These types of improvements are valid and necessary. But in truth they do not go to the heart of the present trouble of the unions, nor in and of themselves alter anything basic. The auto union, for instance, has a lot of the paraphernalia of democracy in the way it draws up its national contract demands. A national conference, whether in GM, Ford or Chrysler, is called. Delegates are duly elected from all the local unions affected. They theoretically draw up and approve the bargaining program, and elect the National Council that is supposed to do the negotiating. The formalities of democracy in other words are observed to a high degree. But the essence is just about 100 percent absent. In practice, the machine dominates everything. The top clique of officials draws up the contract demands, the national conference is completely under its thumb, and a few major officers carry on the negotiations and make the final decisions. The delegates only play the role of a Greek chorus. The same process is repeated in the case of pretendedly sovereign international conventions.

What is the remedy? Are we up against a law of human nature which subtly subverts the democratic forms?

The Union as Disciplinarian: Employer Testimony

IN a speech on the closed shop, delivered in 1954, Mrs. Herrick of the New York *Herald Tribune,* declared:

". . . Back in 1948 we were having a dreadful time with absenteeism . . . I put the problem up to the Newspaper Guild. . . . Finally they studied the records I had compiled and got out a leaflet to all in the bargaining unit warning that the Guild would not tolerate malingerers and would support management in such discipline cases. The result was spectacular. In 1953 our average was 1.58 percent of total working days lost due to absence for illness. I think the fact that we had a 9-out-of-10 union shop, and the union felt secure when I appealed to the Guild to help on the attendance problem psychologically, made it possible for them to take on some responsibility."

In an address to the AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department, Harry Morton, attorney for the nationally known industrialist, Henry Kaiser, told how Kaiser changed his views to advocacy of the closed shop.

"Kaiser was not always the idol of the working men. He was at one time as rough as any employer in the United States. . . . Kaiser's people built Boulder Dam, an open shop job. A few years later, they built Grand Coulee, the tightest closed shop you ever saw. . . .

"We did not get religion just because we like you people. I am speaking of management now. We learned this: The cost per yard of concrete poured at Grand Coulee was less than it was of concrete in Boulder Dam. The cheaper job was the closed shop, the union shop. The more expensive job was the open shop job. This is your beginning and reason for us getting religion, and when we got it, we went all the way."

Labor's Economic Review,
AFL-CIO publication,
January 1956.

That was what Max Weber, Michels and their school of sociology said. Michels argued that there is a law of oligarchy operating in all mass organizations, that the need for organization inevitably dooms every democratic movement. Because the strength of the working class lies in numbers, and must lead to hierarchical organization, it necessarily spells a "tendency to oligarchy": "The power of the leaders grows directly in proportion to the expansion of the organization," and organization is also "the spring from which conservative waters flow into the democratic stream."

IT cannot be denied that a good case can be made out for this theory on the evidence of the present functioning of the American or British trade unions. But a historical survey quickly discloses that the theory is based on a one-sided appraisal. When material conditions altered sharply in the United States after the '29 crisis, the cozy two-bit AFL czardoms became isolated islands in a sea of erupting lava, and a new militant organization was thrown up. True the 15-year boom re-invigorated business unionism again on a new, more modern level. But material conditions will inevitably alter again, and one has to be a slave to habit to imagine that this will not set into motion still another violent series of reactions.

What made the new unionism relax into a bureaucratic mold was its very victories and successes. For a decade the new unions vastly improved shop conditions, raised wages, gained all sorts of collateral concessions. The workers began living higher up on the hog. And a union, after all, is organized for limited purposes. When the most crying grievances were eliminated, the members settled back and let the paid officials worry about administration.

Even the conservatism of the union officialdom is not based exclusively on its own identification with the status quo. It is often a reflection of the conservatism of the mass of workers. This is said not to whitewash the officialdom's culpability in thwarting militancy, in pushing the rank and file around, in aggravating the indifference and apathy, in cracking down on all dissidents, or in their crime in 1947 in opening the unions to the witch-hunt. The American trade union leaders are guilty of all this—and more. But it remains also true that they couldn't get away with their present policies for long if they were at political odds with their members.

The virtual destruction of the radical movement has deepened the process, making for apathy and deadness of the unions. Even in the United States, the home *par excellence* of business unionism, the radicals were some of the chief organizers and sparkplugs of the unions. It was radicals (in some cases ex-radicals) who were responsible for the early organization of the AFL back in the 1880's, and it was radicals of all varieties who played a key role in the organization campaigns that built the CIO. The reasons are self-evident. The radical worker, being animated by larger motives and interests than improvement of his own financial or social position, brings into the labor movement a broader outlook and an idealism that goes beyond self. His devotion and vision opens up greater vistas to those around him and triggers their enthusiasm and capacity for self-sacrifice. That is why it can be put down as a virtual law that when the radicals are around, the union becomes a place of life, verve, disputation about union programs. The needle trades, the miners, the machinists were organizations pulsating with life when the radicals had strong influence in the World War I period and the early twenties. Ditto for the auto workers in the thirties. Today all these organizations are dead in their internal life. The Ladies Garment Workers has to advertise in the liberal magazines offering life-time jobs to all young people who will go through its leadership school—so little can come up from the ranks when the dead hand of bureaucracy firmly keeps the lid down.

RADICALS have often gotten into disrepute in the American unions because of their own deficiencies. Splits in the radical movement often resulted in the waging of internecine warfare which was foolishly carried into the unions, in some cases badly disrupting them. The Communist Party people, in the more recent period, brought their totalitarian spirit into the unions, and where they attained leadership, they gave opposition elements even less of a chance than many old-style union leaders. Sometimes radicals aroused antagonism simply by trying

to move faster and further than the rest of the members were willing to go. But eliminating the abuses that radicals are sometimes guilty of by throwing them out and flooding the unions with the red scare is like curing a case of lumbago by cutting off one's head. There is an old story that when the Jews got driven out of Spain that country's greatness was finished, and it quickly went into decline. Whether there is any merit to that tale or not, it certainly is true that when the radicals got chased out of the unions, the verve of those organizations departed with them.

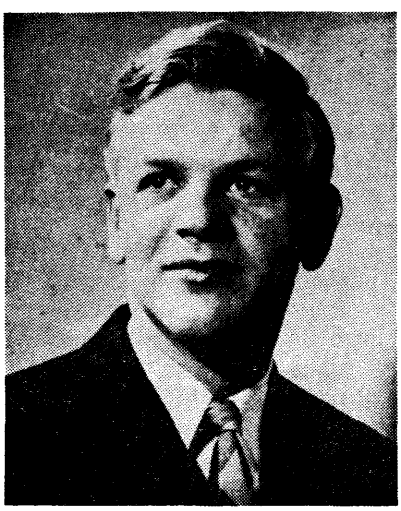
The elimination of the radicals, and the decline of the radical movement in the country at large, stemmed from a common cause—the prosperity, the achievement by the unions of their immediate objectives, from which was derived their conservatism and complacency. In other words, it was a definite set of material conditions that produced the mental apathy and consequent renewed triumph of business unionism. It was not immutable laws either of human nature or human organization.

When the present boom busts—and that is in the cards—and automation and related problems press the unions to the wall, when the present open shop drive (Taft-Hartley, "right to work" laws in 18 states, Kohler, Perfect Circle, Westinghouse) stiffens and widens, the present easy-going methods and smug attitudes will no longer be acceptable to the ranks. Then radicalism will revive in the country at large and will also necessarily grow inside the plants and shops as well, because contrary to the fables of the Attorney General and the Chambers of Commerce, radicalism is not an artificial foreign importation but the natural product of labor's experiences. When that occurs, we will see real debates taking place again, real struggles to alter policies in a more radical direction, real drives for more militant activities. And along with that, meetings will grow again in size as dozens of slick advertising gimmicks have not been able to make them grow, and education will flourish of a more telling variety than is transmitted in the present union seminars and roundtable discussions on "bargaining techniques," "political techniques," and all sorts of other "techniques." The unions will then again become schools for all-around political advancement as they were in the CIO's formative years. In a word, there is no substitute for a militant and active membership.

The basic power is there in the unions. The basic organization is there. What is required is a new policy, a new direction, a new spirit and hope. That will come in due course, if this analysis is correct. There is nothing the matter with American unions that some good fighting radicalism cannot cure.

The Jencks Case: Test for the High Court

DUE for decision any Monday soon in the U. S. Supreme Court is whether that court will hear the appeal of young Clinton Jencks for a new trial. The circumstances surrounding this request are among the strangest of any in these strange times.



Clinton Jencks

Mr. Jencks is an officer of the independent International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, which has its chief strength among the metal miners of the Western region of the country. Hired as business agent by an amalgamated local of five smaller locals that pooled forces in 1947, he led the important Empire Zinc strike in 1950-52, about which the motion picture "Salt of the Earth" was made.

Shortly after this strike, on March 16, 1953, Richard C. Berresford, personnel manager of New Jersey Zinc Company (of which Empire Zinc is a division), testifying before the House Committee on Education and Labor in Washington, demanded action by Congress. He wanted the union leadership which he bargained with changed, and when asked by a Congressman why the men didn't elect "better officers," replied: "They feel perhaps that these leaders give them good service . . . and therefore why change?" He went on: "I do not think the average worker thinks very deeply on this nor realizes its implications. I suppose that is particularly true of the Americans of Mexican or Spanish background. They want good labor representation which they think this union is giving them, and they also want racial equality which we think this union has distorted."

Mr. Berresford soon got help in his frustrating dilemma of trying to foist on unwilling unionists a leadership he thought more "proper" for them to have. One month later, Clinton Jencks, one of the union officers to whom Berresford was referring in his testimony, was indicted by a federal grand jury, charged with filing a false Taft-Hartley affidavit that he was not a Communist.

The trial which followed in a Texas court featured the usual trappings of a witch-hunt trial—aggravated by the fact that this was in a Southern state. Although at least three-fifths of El Paso area residents are Mexican-Americans, not one was permitted on the jury, nor was a single union man allowed on. Most of the names submitted for jury duty came, the jury commissioner admitted, from "newspaper society pages." The single Negro member of the jury had to submit to every form of Jim Crow ostracism *while serving on the jury,* and was ignored by the 11 businessmen.

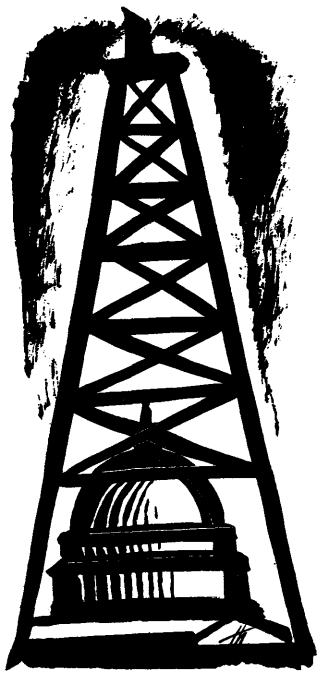
NOR was the evidence above the general witch-hunt level. In brief, Jencks was convicted of Communist membership at the time he signed the affidavit on the sole and unsupported testimony of Harvey Matusow. In the amazing sequel to the story, Matusow later filed an affidavit in federal court admitting he lied during Jencks' trial.

Did this bring about Jencks' immediate freedom from his five-year sentence? No, instead, Matusow was sentenced to three years for contempt of court (a conviction which has just been unanimously reversed by an appeals court) and Jencks was denied a new trial. This most fantastic miscarriage of justice by a vindictive court serving anti-union interests can only be reversed now if the Supreme Court grants Jencks the new trial he should have, and if that new trial sets him free. This case is a clear test of just how far back McCarthyism has really been driven.

The attempted gas steal was stopped—for this time—by a lobbyist's indiscretion, but new attempts will be made. The facts behind the Senate natural-gas scandal.

The Natural Gas Monopoly

by Henry Haase



WHEN, in the midst of a great lobbying campaign by the oil and gas companies to get passed a bill worth hundreds of millions each year to them, the head of an oil company furnishes the cash for a heavy "campaign contribution" to a Senator after making noisy inquiries about his stand on the bill, only the U.S. Senate has to set up a special committee to find out what it's all about. The rest of the country knows. The background of the revealing incident forms a classic study in economic royalism and political handmaidenship.

The natural-gas steal was vetoed by President Eisenhower as a result of the stink and scandal which was raised in the Senate and in the nation over the crude pressure-and-payoff attempts on the part of the big corporations directly interested in the measure. But it was vetoed with reluctance, as Eisenhower himself confessed in his veto message, since he is in favor of the principles embodied by the bill and therefore of the steal from the consumers provided by it.

Another measure with a similar intent is sure to be introduced sooner or later, as the forces behind this campaign are too strong to be permanently denied. The next time the party managers will try to have their signals straight. Eisenhower will certainly sign such a bill if and when it comes before him again, and his rather cheap bid for election-year popularity in appending to his veto message a remark that the interests of the consumers should be safeguarded in the next bill will be meaningless, as the interests of the consumers are completely incompatible with the object of the measure which Eisenhower endorses. The facts will serve to make this plain.

THE big gas producers are our giant oil companies, since most of the reserves of natural gas were discovered during the twenties and early thirties in the course of the search for oil. For tax purposes, these oil companies have traditionally written off the cost of finding the gas as costs involved in the search for petroleum. But this practice, which began in the days when natural gas was considered all but worthless, left the oil companies very vulnerable to federal price regulation, as their books showed natural gas as costing them little or nothing. If natural gas were to be regulated as a public utility, which it most certainly is, and the cost-plus-a-six-percent maximum profit enforced against it, fabulous profits from the almost $1 billion a year natural gas sales would be drastically cut.

In 1938, Congress did pass a Natural Gas Act putting regulatory authority into the hands of the Federal Power Commission, but the FPC, responding to Big Business pressure, refused to regulate the price of gas at the well head in the manner in which other public utilities are regulated —according to cost of production. It concerned itself only with the interstate pipelines.

However in 1954, a five-to-three Supreme Court decision in the Phillips Petroleum Co. case threatened to bring this long idyll to an end. Well-head regulation of the price of gas was upheld. In the months that followed, the FPC did its best to go easy on the companies, discarding the legitimate-cost-plus basis for a novel fair-field-cost basis which allowed generous price increases to the gas producers. But this did not satisfy the corporations, as they felt that the foot-in-the-door decision by the Supreme Court might open the way to further attempts at regulation, and indeed bills were being introduced in Congress to compel the FPC to use the same basis for regulation of gas prices as it does in all other cases. They therefore began their offensive which culminated in the passage of the Harris-Fulbright bill.

UNDER this bill, independent producers would be exempted from direct regulation by FPC; they would not be considered public utilities. They would be able to do business much as they did before the Phillips decision

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except that the FPC would see to it that their prices move uniformly. All gas would be sold at what the Harris-Fulbright measure calls the "reasonable market price." It would apply to both old and future contracts to sell gas to interstate pipelines.

What does "reasonable market price" mean? Nobody knows for sure. It has no specific definition in law, it is not in the vocabulary of the FPC or other public-utility regulatory bodies. It would open the way for extensive pick-pocket thefts from the consumer.

"Reasonable market price" in effect means no regulation at all. It is synonomous with the current field price, or weighted average price; which means it is nothing but the highest price which the market will bear. All FPC will do is ascertain whether the price charged is in line with other prices in the field. The well-head price of gas to 60 million consumers, it was predicted by Senator Douglas, would rise by 10 cents per thousand cubic feet under this rule or to about double its 1955 level. "Ten cents would mean $600,000,000 each year," he said, "and 10 cents is a conservative estimate of the probable rise. It could well go up 25 cents."

The oil companies with natural gas interests are particularly fearful of any government regulation because the special tax loopholes that give them super-profits in their oil business might some day be threatened by the beginnings of any kind of regulation today. These corporations pay an average tax of only about 29 percent, instead of 52 percent like most other corporations. Last year, according to a recent *Fortune* article, eighteen oil companies had total before-taxes profits of $2.9 billion. Their after-tax profits amounted to some $2.1 billion, whereas if they had paid tax rates applicable to the general run of corporations, it would have been under $1.5 billion.

WITH sums of this magnitude involved, the attempt to assure themselves of Senator Case's vote for a mere $2,500 was surely bargain-hunting at its close-fisted best. *Petroleum Week,* a top spokesman for the oil and gas industry, wrote in its November 25, 1955 issue, "Proponents of the bill, however, are going to concentrate on the Senators, counting on a vote by February. . . Senate supporters have made it clear they will seek a quick showdown. . . It is this approach that colors the activities of the General Gas Committee, which intends to concentrate its efforts now on the men who will do the voting. How well it succeeds may soon be known."

"How well it succeeds" is now known, despite the backfire in the case of the Senator from South Dakota. A new lobbying group formed under the direction of a former mayor of Indianapolis, Alex M. Clark, a personal friend of Senator Homer Capehart (R., Ind.) did its work well. The campaigners were not restricted to the ranks of either party—bi-partisanship was the order of the day in the Senate. The leaders were Senators A. S. Mike Monroney (D., Okla.), Fulbright (D., Ark.), Lyndon Johnson (D., Tex.), Knowland (R., Calif.). The states with the bulk of natural gas for shipment in interstate commerce are Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Texas. Ninety-five percent of the gas produced by U.S. independents is produced in those states. But Superior Oil, the company which made the advances to Senator Case and which was vitally interested in the bill, is located in Senator Knowland's home state.

In a most revealing moment of candor, the *Oil and Gas Journal* for Jan. 2, 1956, carried on page 47 a picture of Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, Democratic majority leader, with the caption under it: ". . . Will quarterback the industry's team."

The opposition to the Harris-Fulbright measure was led by Senator Douglas (D., Ill.), by the mayors of major Northern cities, by the organized labor movement, and by the local distributing gas utilities. Political pressures and consumer interests motivated many in this coalition, but the local gas companies were along for a different reason. Since their rates are regulated, it would take them longer to get price increases than it would take for the unregulated gas producers to raise their prices.

THE extraordinary striking power of the producers of natural gas is explained by great unity of purpose and concentration of control in the industry. In 1953, 42 producers sold 70 percent of all gas purchased by pipelines. Nineteen companies own 43 percent of total U.S. reserves. The *Wall Street Journal* of November 2, 1954, showed that two companies, Phillips Petroleum and Humble Oil (a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey), led all other producers in estimated reserves of natural gas.

Humble is estimated to have 16 trillion cubic feet; Phillips exceeds 18 trillion feet. Thus the two between them control 34 trillion feet, or one-sixth of the total reserves of the country. Less than 200 natural gas producers control approximately 97.9 percent of all natural gas reserves.

In the debate over the gas bill which shook the Senate, the issue was not an obscure one; it was a naked steal of billion-dollar proportions. The AFL-CIO, representing 15 million taxpayers, repeatedly pleaded with the Senate. But in this contest between labor and Standard Oil (with its allies), our august Senators—including many of the so-called liberals—gave a resounding demonstration to all the fuzzy-minded as to who it is that runs the affairs of this country.

"All Mixed Together"

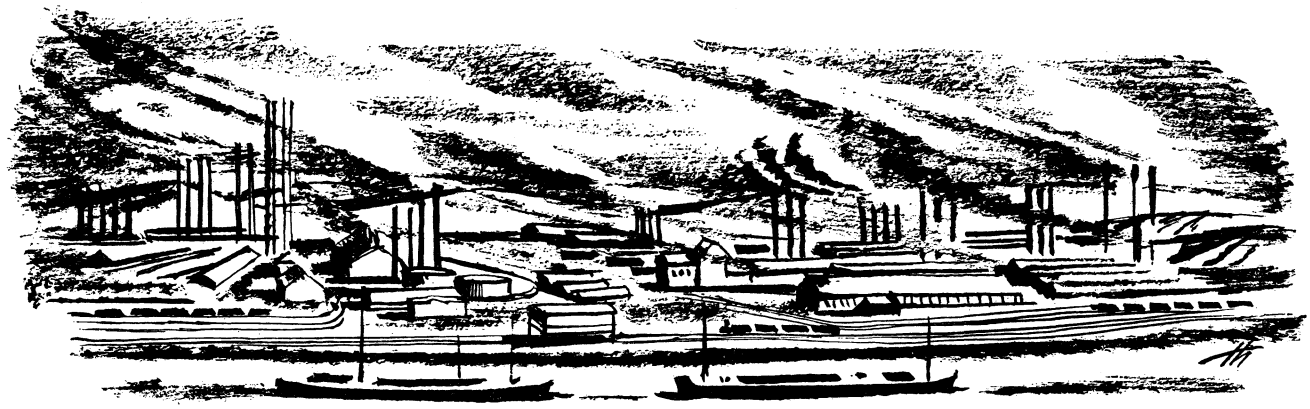
WASHINGTON, Feb. 6—The Senate fight over the bill to free natural gas production from direct Federal control disrupted traditional partisan political patterns to a degree rarely seen in Congressional life.

It was the most classic instance in many years of the way in which compelling and competing local and state and regional economic interests could sometimes split the most monolithic of party structures and rupture the most durable and long-established of party blocs.

What the political parties thought of this question as parties was from the beginning almost wholly irrelevant. Voting went forward not on partisan lines but on lines largely dictated by powerful and rival economic pressures directly or subtly applied. . . .

Conservatives and liberals were on both sides, all mixed, together.

William S. White in the
N. Y. Times, Feb. 7, 1956.



Is our capacity to produce out-running our consumer purchasing ability? Some of the statistical indicators of the past decade compared with those of the twenties.

Capital vs. Consumer:

Is the Boom Losing its Balance?

by Harry Braverman

LOOKING back at the 1929 collapse economists have tended to agree that it was the lopsided development of the country's capacity to produce, contrasted with the limited and restricted growth of the capacity to consume, which underlay the debacle. Armed with that insight, statisticians went back to the figures of the period, which unfortunately were not kept then as they are today, and tried to reconstruct what had happened during the twenties. They found the contrast between producing and consuming capacity quite striking. Although the picture varies with the statistics used, one such set—the estimates made by the Commerce Department from data of the National Bureau of Economic Research—while far inferior to present statistics, can serve to give us an idea. Consumer expenditures started the period in 1921 at a level of $50.5 billion, and arrived, by 1929 at $70.8. Spending for producers' durable equipment, which we will take as our indicator for the expansion of the means of production, started the period at $3.7 billion and, by 1929, had reached $7.3 billion annually. If we construct an index based upon the figures for each of these categories for the years 1921-29, it looks like this:

	Consumer Expenditures	*Producers' Durable Equipment*
1921	100	100
1922	103	100
1923	114	146
1924	121	135
1925	125	149
1926	131	162
1927	131	151
1928	136	162
1929	140	197

Source: Economic Almanac, 1956, National Industrial Conference Board.

This picture, familiar in the history of capitalism, may be translated into words in the following way: The boom is, at its outset, based upon an expansion of consumer expenditures, but, by virtue of the competitive drive of each individual firm to make more goods cheaper in order to increase the rate of profit and get a larger share (or hold its original share) of the market, it turns into a boom in capital goods. Consumption expands at a slower rate from year to year, but, instead of slowing down along with it, building of new plant and equipment actually speeds up. Resting more and more on an expansion in the capital goods industries, the boom cuts itself loose from its only real foundation—the ability of the ultimate market of consumers to purchase the products of industry—and becomes a speculative boom on a future which cannot possibly furnish such a rapid expansion of the market.

HAVING taken this backward glance at the nine years preceding the collapse of 1929, let us now make a similar comparison for the nine years that have gone by since the end of World War II. For our table here, we will take the figures for personal consumption expenditures, and match their trend against that of the figures for non-farm producers' investment in plant and equipment. In 1947, personal consumption expenditures were $165 billion, and by 1955 had expanded to $252 billion. And producers' investment started at $20.7 billion in 1947, and rose to $33.3 billion in 1955. (In these comparisons the

rise or fall of prices does not concern us, since it affected *both* series of figures, if not equally at least comparably.) The comparison for the years 1947-55 shapes up this way:

	Personal Consumption Expenditures	*Non-farm Producers' Investment in Plant and Equipment*
1947	100	100
1948	108	114
1949	109	105
1950	118	123
1951	126	141
1952	132	143
1953	140	156
1954	143	144
1955	153	161

Source: Economic Report of the President, January 1956.

This interesting tabulation shows a number of things. First and most important, while the trend of the two sets of figures resembles that of the twenties up to 1951, the Korean War helped redress the balance by restoring near-full employment and boosting consumer purchasing power. Thus a comparison for the whole period shows that, up to 1954, the two series do not diverge by very much.

Here we must interrupt ourselves to take note of one important fact. An expanding economy requires that a portion of its national output be set aside for new producers' goods, to supply new factories for turning out the increased output the following year or years. But it does not require that a *larger* portion of its output be set aside every year, unless expansion is to be very rapid. Thus, just because our index for producers' investment and our other index for consumer expenditures rise at about the same rate does *not* mean that no excess capacity is being built. In actual fact, there is already much evidence to show that many parts of American industry have been overbuilt, and have a greater productive capacity than the consumer market can support, despite the good showing in 1955.

BUT even keeping that caution in mind, it is clear that the pattern of 1921-29 was not fully reproduced in the years 1947-55. Up to now, the present boom has rested upon a far broader expansion of consuming power in relation to the expansion of capital-goods spending than was the case in 1929. This becomes even clearer when we take into account another factor not yet mentioned here: the big growth of government spending. When we add in the amounts spent in the years 1947-55 for goods and services by the federal, state and local governments (something we are fully entitled to do as its economic effect

How the Economy Looks to Me

by Ernest De Maio

WITH both eyes firmly focused on the presidential elections this fall, the forecasts on economic conditions for 1956 fully reflect the wishful thinking of the Republican Administration. Operating as they are on the questionable theory that wearing rose-colored glasses makes the world rosier, the word has gone down the line that all economic news must be favorably slanted.

But facts are stubborn things and they indicate that all is not well and that caution should be the watchword. Nearly every index boomed to a new high in 1955. But unmistakable signs show that the boom began to peter out in the fourth quarter of last year.

The most disturbing fact is that the boom could be sustained only one year—by the rise in production and sales of housing and automobiles—and this in turn resulted from a huge rise in credit. Total consumer credit rose $4.5 billion from 1953, to a level exceeding $34.5 billion as of October 1955. Outstanding auto credit, at more than $14 billion, is greater than the total value of the cars sold in 1955.

While total employment in November 1955 rose to a new high of 64,807,000, unemployment also rose by 796,000 over 1953. Population grew at a faster pace than employment. The effects of automation and speedup are reflected in the following comparison between 1953 and November 1955:

Total manufacturing employment rose from 49,681,000 to 50,608,000. But in the same period industrial production rose by 7.5 percent, and if employment had kept pace with the rise in production the increase would have been 3,716,000 instead of the actual 927,000.

Mr. De Maio, of Chicago, is president of District 11 *of the independent United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America. The data for his comparisons were taken from* Economic Indicators, *U. S. Department of Commerce publication, for December* 1955.

FACTORY employment dropped 154,000 in this period, while factory output rose 7.3 percent. In durable goods, 2 percent fewer workers produced 6.5 percent more. In mining, employment dropped 99,000, or 11.6 percent, but production rose 7.7 percent. The housing boom raised construction by 17.8 percent. This was accomplished by 2 percent fewer workers. These facts make a mockery of management's contention that higher prices are caused by the rising cost of labor. The rise in employment is almost entirely accounted for by two groups: wholesale and retail employees up 455,000; and Federal, state and local government employees up 432,000. Obviously the number supported by each producer is growing.

"Them as has gits"—for not all shared equally in the boom. Corporate profits after taxes rose from $17 billion in 1953 to $21.9 billion by the third quarter of 1955. Stock prices rose to 335.2 as of December 9, 1955, a percentage rise of 73.9 percent over 1953. This means that every $100 invested in 1953 was worth $173.90 plus dividends less than 2 years later.

Gross national product of goods and services rose from $364.5 billion in 1953 to $391.5 billion in the third quarter of 1955. This is more than enough to provide for the necessities of life, with many of the luxuries thrown in. Yet we see that the average American has mortgaged his future wages to maintain a minimum standard of decency today. As mortgaged goods are paid for, current buying power is cut. Clearly we are approaching the time when inventories and production will have to be adjusted downward to meet prevailing market conditions.

The boom is petering out. Our days of relative prosperity are borrowed from the coming bust. Big Business and its Cadillac administration will use its narrowing maneuvering ground in an effort to maintain the bloom on the boom until election. There is growing doubt that the considerable skills of the financial wizards can cope with the coming crisis.

is precisely that of consumer spending except in the few instances where it is used to set up new plants by the government), our comparison looks like this:

	Combined Government Purchases and Personal Consumption Expenditures	*Non-farm Producers' Investment in Plant and Equipment*
1947	100	100
1948	111	114
1949	116	105
1950	122	123
1951	140	141
1952	153	143
1953	163	156
1954	162	144
1955	170	161

Source: Economic Report of the President, January 1956.

Keeping in mind that these figures are the result of large-scale government spending for war purposes—which robs the people of a portion of the consumers' goods and services they might otherwise be enjoying—the conclusion is still inescapable: The boom does not yet have so badly lopsided a character as that of the twenties insofar as the relations between capital investment and consumption are concerned. While any attempt to reduce our complex economy to a bare series of a few statistics must be badly one-sided and grossly over-simplified—and the above statistics are no exception—it may well be that much of the recent surprising strength of the American economy can be found illustrated here.

Let us turn now to the recent boomlet of 1955. If we make the same kind of comparison, taking the last quarter of 1954 as our base period, we get the following result:

	Combined Government Purchases and Personal Consumption Expenditures	*Non-farm Producers' Investment in Plant and Equipment*
1954		
Fourth Quarter	100	100
1955		
First Quarter	102	100
Second Quarter	103	108
Third Quarter	105	114
Fourth Quarter	106	117

Source: Economic Report of the President, January 1956.

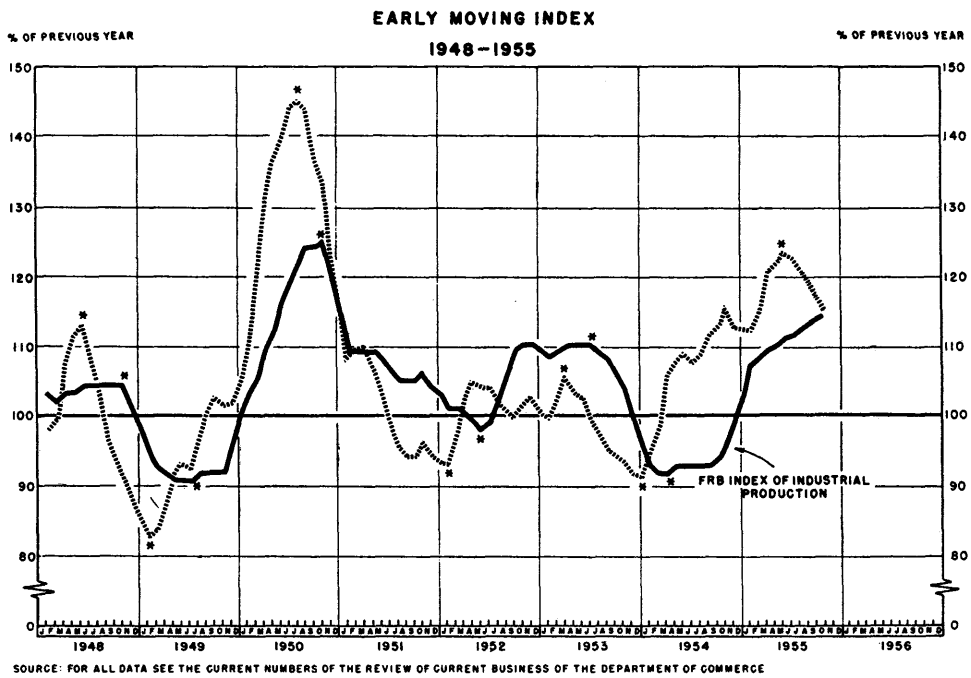
This shows a decided increase in the capital goods sector, while the consumer goods sector and government purchases rose at a far slower rate. It must be emphasized that by itself, this table proves nothing with respect to the long-term trends we are discussing, as it reflects only one year. But, taken in conjunction with a number of other facts, it may show up as an important turning point in future reckonings.

THE consumer boom of 1955 was sparked primarily by expansion in auto- and home-buying. No forecast for 1956 is so optimistic as to suggest that the boom in auto and homes will continue at its 1955 level. Rather, by every indication, a decline in these two areas is in sight. Auto sales in 1955 were at about the 7½ million level,

A Reliable Indicator Points to Trouble

THIS index of economic indicators (broken line) has proven quite reliable in forecasting turns in the business cycle. It is constructed from seven of the eight series offered by Geoffrey Moore of the National Bureau of Economic Research: new orders for durable goods, adjusted; new incorporations; liabilities of business failures, inverted; commercial and industrial building contracts, floor space; residential building contracts, floor space; average hours per week in manufacturing; and the Dow Jones industrial common stock price index.

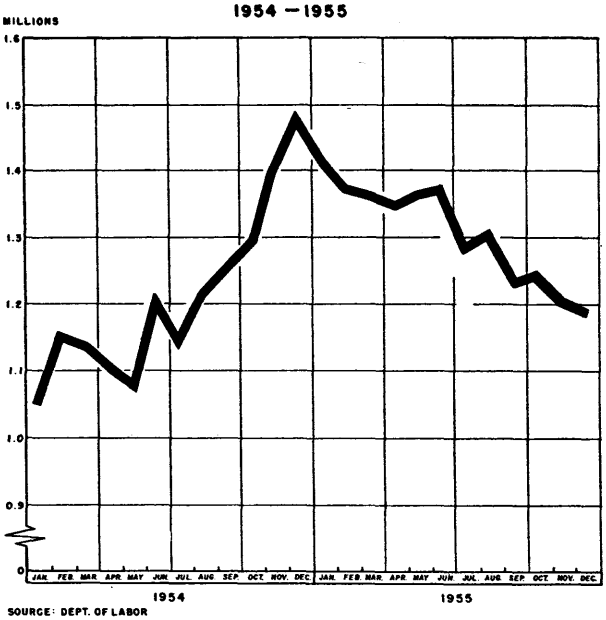
As the chart shows, these series, properly combined into an index, serve as a rather remarkable forecaster of the movements of industrial production, leading the downturns or upswings in production by a four-month average. This early moving index indicates that a sizable drop in industrial production is due now.



SOURCE: FOR ALL DATA SEE THE CURRENT NUMBERS OF THE REVIEW OF CURRENT BUSINESS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

HOUSING STARTS: SEASONALLY ADJUSTED ANNUAL RATES

1954 — 1955



SOURCE: DEPT. OF LABOR

and even industry spokesmen do not venture above the 6½ million figure in forecasting 1956; others go even lower, as for example *Fortune,* which predicts sales of 6¼ million.

In home building, the peak of housing starts was in December 1954, when it hit about 1.5 million. This helped spark the boom of 1955. But by January 1956, housing starts had fallen to 1.2 million. Even more important, all the indicators for the future are well down in this field: Applications for FHA mortgage insurance, requests for Veterans Administration appraisals and home-building contracts awarded are running very far below the figures of a year ago.

Next, much of the growth of consumer spending in 1955 was due to a vast expansion of consumer credit, which would be very dangerous if continued at the same pace and which is not expected to continue as before. Consumer spending in 1955 rose more rapidly than consumer income, due to this credit expansion and a decline in savings. Since 1956 will most likely not see this duplicated, this is another important indication of a slowdown in consumption. The latest field sampling of the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan indicates a leveling off of family buying plans, in place of the previous upward trend. The findings show that customers may hold their present level, but are not likely to increase significantly.

If we turn to government payments and receipts, we find the picture a similar one. Government purchases of goods and services are expected to continue at about the current level, and the budget will cut into personal income by taking more from the public than it pays out in 1956 and 1957, instead of showing a deficit as in 1955 and before. Hardly any help towards expansion is to be expected from this quarter.

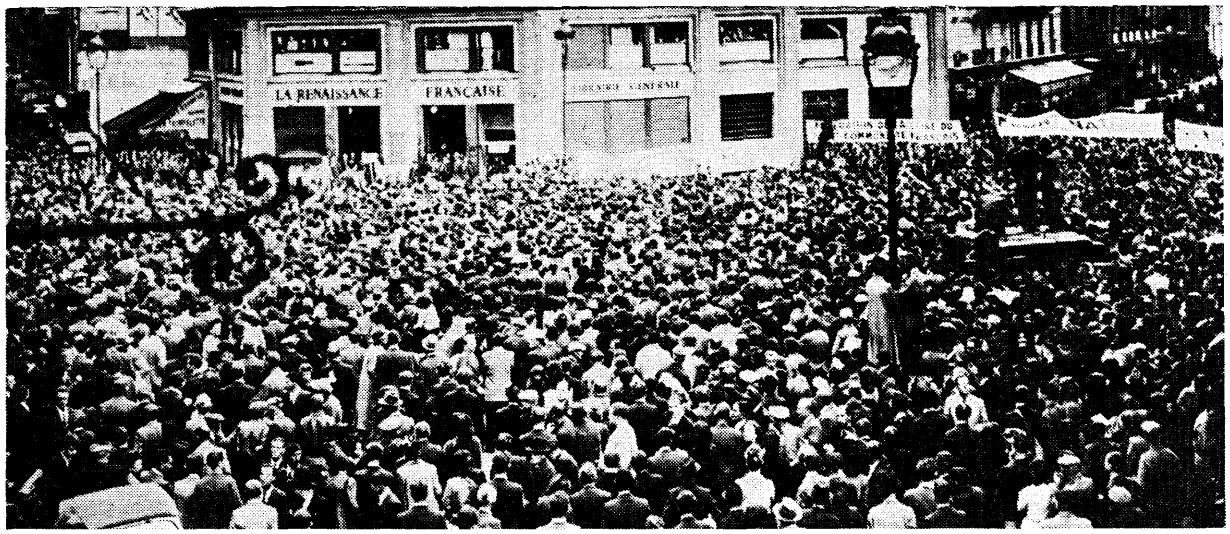
HOW then is the boom expected to maintain itself? As in 1955, a big increase in business investment is forecast—unmatched, this time, by any substantial increase in consumption. The picture of expectations in this field is drawn by the *Guaranty Survey* of the Guaranty Trust Company for December 1955:

> *Of chief significance were the ambitious plans for expansion unveiled by corporations. A number of steel companies, for example, have disclosed that they intend to embark on large investment projects beginning next year. Railroad companies have similarly announced intentions to add substantially to their rolling stock. The Standard Oil Company of New Jersey outlined a projected rise in capital spending for* 1956 *of some* 20 *percent, the Chrysler Corporation revealed it was contemplating investment of more than* $1 *billion over the next five years, and so on.*
>
> *That this type of planning is fairly general throughout the economy was indicated by the release of results of the highly regarded McGraw-Hill survey of businessmen's capital-spending intentions. This year's survey indicates that* 1956 *expenditures on plant and equipment will increase a full* 13 *percent over the* 1955 *record amount. . . . These results are the more significant because the McGraw-Hill questionnaires were mailed out after President Eisenhower became ill.*

Toward the end of 1955, according to the Chase Manhattan Bank, new orders for most types of business equipment ran 20 percent or more ahead of the previous year. Manufacturing firms, according to the McGraw-Hill survey, are scheduling a full 30 percent increase in 1956, and most firms propose to keep this up in 1957. Producers of iron, steel, automobiles, cement, and non-ferrous metals plan to increase spending by more than 50 percent in 1956 over 1955. F. W. Dodge Corporation reports that contract awards for non-residential construction in the first three weeks of January were 39 percent greater than last year. According to the First National City Bank *Monthly Letter* (December 1955), "The rising volume of industrial, commercial, and public utility construction scheduled for next year is counted upon in both Government and private forecasts to more than offset a moderate dip in residential building."

VARIOUS gleeful economists and periodicals have celebrated this picture as proof that American capitalism has many strings to its bow, and cry up the virtues of business expansion coming in to fill the void which will be left by lowered consumer spending. That is one way of looking at it. But these facts may turn out to be subject to another interpretation by future historians.

A trend of this sort continued over a number of years will signify that the boom has departed from its consumer/government-spending moorings, and has begun to soar into the empyrean of a fiercely competitive expansion of the means of production, powered by a cost-cutting and labor-saving drive which will still further tend to hold down the consumer-spending part of the economy. And that kind of boom would not have to continue for very long before it set up serious trouble in the economy, and posed a problem far deeper than any which has confronted American capitalism and its governments in the post-war period.



Edgar Faure's tightrope act in the French political circus has given way to a new cabinet headed by Guy Mollet, after an election which showed that the Left has held its strength and the Right has come forward with a new, fascist-type, party.

France: New Government — New Crisis

by Our European Correspondent

Paris

EVENTS have been moving rapidly in France since the elections of January 2. The country is aroused politically and more clearly divided between Left and Right than it has been for a long time. Guy Mollet, the new Socialist premier, had a mandate from the people to put an end to the colonial war in Algeria, to turn the wheel of state sharply to the Left in France. But like his Socialist predecessor in 1936 (although the comparison is unfair to Leon Blum) Mollet started the motor in reverse gear. In the first two weeks in office he has fumbled, stumbled, retreated and all but capitulated. Emboldened by this exhibition of weakness, the fascist Right struck in force from its stronghold in Algiers. The blow has sent Mollet reeling, but it has also had the effect of galvanizing the popular forces on the Left. "From now on," says *Le Monde,* "we must reckon with the street" which "may throw up a People's Front government."

To put this fast-moving scene in its proper perspective it will be useful to go back to the January 2 election, which registered with rare accuracy the pulse of the people, the state of the nation.

Edgar Faure's last Machiavellian device was to confront the country with a surprise election run along the lines of the tricked-up 1951 electoral procedure which had produced the do-nothing legislature ruled by alternating clerical and conservative majorities, dominated by the big colonial interests in conjunction with the coal-and-iron cartel barons, subservient to the Pentagon and dependent on its off-shore military orders. What had worked once, he calculated, should work again.

THE social dynamics of the country, accelerated by the defeat at Dienbienphu and by the war in Algeria, made short shrift of this parliamentary trickery. Without the stimulus of the cold war, the anti-communist barrage of 1951, uniting all parties excepting Communists and Gaullists in an electoral coalition, fell to pieces. The Radical party was split in a deep cleavage between a left wing headed by Mendès-France and a right by Edgar Faure. The Socialists were forced by their own electoral clientele to separate from their erstwhile allies, the reactionary clerical party, the MRP. The Gaullists had disintegrated, their place now occupied by the fascist movement led by Pierre Poujade. In the absence of the old alignments, the electoral system produced opposite results from those expected, the people returning a legislature more closely in accord with their actual votes. A number of salient facts emerged from the election results:

- Communists, Socialists and Mendèsists gained new voters. They now had enough deputies between them to form the new government.
- The two million Poujadist votes, sending fifty representatives to the National Assembly, showed that a desperate middle class had already taken the first long step on the road to fascism. Heavily financed by North African colonial interests, it was clear that this movement, which had begun as a shopkeeper's revolt against unfair taxa-

tion, could regroup the dispersed forces of the Right, uniting financial magnates, colonial overlords, ex-Vichyites, ex-collaborationists, under the sinister banner of fascism.

• The cardinal issue in the election was Algeria. The people—even many of those voting for the Right—were overwhelmingly in favor of an immediate end to the war. The great increment of new voters, largely youth, can be attributed to this issue. They recorded at the ballot box the sentiment voiced in more vigorous terms by the conscript mutineers before the elections.

The situation is one of great opportunity and great danger. Opportunity if the Left is united and determined to act boldly, resolutely. Dangerous if it remains divided and lets the initiative slip back to the Right. Prior to the elections, an all-too-clever theory had wide currency on the sophisticated non-Communist Left. It held that only some 300,000 of the five million Communist voters were really Communists and that an aggressive "laborite" party with an imaginative reform program could cut the Communists down to size. Of course, the more hard-headed of these politicians tried to guarantee the theory in advance by their own revision of the electoral law. It would have prevailed on Communist voters not to "waste their votes" because instead of one out of three, two out of three of their votes now would not count. Edgar Faure spiked this "great experiment in democracy," the conservative Right preferring their own brand of trickery to one that would favor the so-called laborite Left at their expense.

MENDES thereupon expelled Faure, the Socialists broke with the MRP and together with a grouplet of dissident Gaullists they launched the "Republican Front" under the challenging slogan of "Left against Right." The Communist offer for unity was flatly rejected. "We prefer to lose seats," Christian Pineau told a big pro-unity minority at the Socialist Party Congress, "rather than ally ourselves with the Communists." This is just what happened. The Communists, unaffected by the challenge of the "Republican Front," increased their vote by almost a half million. They remained the first party in France, and profiting from the split in the Radical party and the breakup of socialist alliances with the Right, gained fifty additional seats to become the first party in parliament. Neither the Socialists nor the Mendèsists benefited from their increase in votes in terms of new seats.

The day after the election, when it became obvious Guy Mollet would be called to form a new government, the Communists renewed their unity offer for a government of the Left. Although the strongest party, they withdrew their own candidate to elect the Socialist Le Trocquer as speaker of the new parliament. Meanwhile the Right was not idle, adding cajolery to pressure and threats. The MRP again, as in the last days of the election campaign, offered to support Mollet on condition he break unambiguously with the Popular Front which, they added meaningfully, would "isolate" France from its "allies." Edgar Faure saw no reason, now that electoral "passions" had subsided, to prevent a national-union government including everyone but Communists and Poujadists. Right-wing socialists like Auriol and Ramadier solemnly opined he was right.

These were Mollet's inclinations as well. But he was confronted with a ticklish problem. He could not get rid of Communist support because the Communists were determined despite Mollet's open hostility, to advance the cause of unity on the Left by voting for him. On the other hand Mollet could not solicit MRP support without violating electoral promises and discrediting the Socialist Party. Being in a minority he needed the support of one side or the other, preferably both, but as he was determined to compromise with the Right instead of allying with the Left, the MRP vote was the more important of the two. This was achieved by a quick retreat on two main fronts, personnel and program.

TO everyone's surprise, the Socialist Pineau had been designated as nominee for Foreign Affairs Minister in place of Mendès-France. This was the first retreat. Mendès had been the *bete noir* to the MRP since he overthrew their government to make peace in Indo-China and then allowed the EDC, another of their pet projects, to go down to defeat. Pineau, a "good European," was eminently acceptable to the party which is in spiritual unison with the Vatican and in physical liaison with the "little Europe" that fronts for the coal-and-iron combine. The deal was sealed with champagne a few days before the surprise announcement, at a dinner for "Europeans" given by Jean Monnet, evil genius of the complex of finance capital. With Pineau now as the "laborite" spokesman for a foreign policy of "relaunching Europe" from the blow it suffered in the defeat of EDC, French dependence on American capital—and its subordination to the Ruhr barons—could be continued. That would also effectively throttle Socialist plans for reform legislation.

The next sacrificial offering was the program. The first part was a pledge that the government would not initiate action to revoke the MRP laws of the last legislature granting state subsidies to the confessional schools. This was a clear affront to the strongly anti-clerical Socialist electoral clientele, which had been aroused to action by encroachments on lay rights under MRP and Right governments. The second and more important part was on Algeria. The SP had promised during the election to seek immediate negotiations with the Moslem Resistance forces. It had promised to stop the "blind repression," and also but not so clearly to withdraw French troops. Now Mollet came before the legislature with marbles in his mouth: "French presence" in Algeria would be maintained at all costs; first "order" would be re-established, then "free and secret" elections would be held, and only after that would some form of autonomy for Algeria be conceded. The plan was indistinguishable from those of all the past Right governments. So, with the exception of the Poujadists and a few conservative die-hards, Mollet got all the votes, not only those of the MRP but Faure's and Pinay's as well. Mollet was now their captive—even though the Communists had also voted for him.

IT was as captive that Mollet went to Algiers. This trip, concocted by Mendès-France as a dramatic gesture and still presented by Mollet to the legislature, was the one plank that remained from his electoral program on Algeria. But, having dropped all his weapons in advance, a more bonehead—and disastrous—stunt could not have

been contrived. For however much he retreated Mollet remained the symbol of a liberal policy, an anathema to the colonial despots making their last stand for empire against a united Arab people. In fact, this cabal of financiers and planters, factious generals and police in league with fascist gangs of Europeans, has held veto power over most French governments since the end of the war. Even the so-called Left ministries could exist only by a kind of tacit agreement to keep their hands off North Africa. Mendès-France was laid low because he "meddled" in Tunisia even though he had dispatched a full division to keep Algeria in France. What made matters even more dangerous now was the popular link between Poujade in France and the fascist scum of Algiers who have been shifting affiliation to his movement.

Mollet's path to Algiers was strewn with dynamite. Jacques Soustelle, the resigning Governor General, had plotted with the colonial administration, and openly denounced any tampering with the Algerian statute as his last act before leaving. The fascist Europeans protested his departure. Plans were then openly laid for the riotous demonstration which received Mollet on February 6, the Poujadists in Paris brazenly announcing their participation. Everything went off according to plan, except possibly that Mollet escaped with his life.

The first victory of the fascists, literally torn out of Mollet's hands, was the dropping of his appointee, General Catroux, a liberal with a reputation for preferring negotiations to a killer policy in the colonies. Having drawn blood, the spokesmen for these mobs, called, euphemistically, "The Committee of Public Safety" stalked in on Mollet's "fact-gathering" parleys—as though the facts were not as plain as the rock which almost killed him—to present him with an ultimatum consisting of four points.

> *1. That the French army be reorganized to effectively combat the cut-throats and highway bandits paid, armed and led by foreign sources; 2. France should use all means, including military ones, to put a stop to the intolerable intervention [of foreign powers] in North Africa; 3. Subscribe—unequivocally—to the historically sanctified policy of French sovereignty, which however has never excluded political, economic and social progress; 4. Renounce all attempts to impose policy defined by government declarations, and especially the one of a single electoral college [a proposal of Mollet to establish an Algerian legislature where Arabs would receive representation on equal footing with the French].*

Mollet did not answer the ultimatum publicly. But in an interminable number of fireside radio chats, interviews, declarations, he babbled on about "France's determination to remain in Algeria," about "justice," "liberty," the "Franco-Moslem community," etc., etc. All he *did* was to appoint the unlucky Socialist Robert Lacoste to the vacated position of Catroux. Then he went on to Bone, still on his mission of "inquiry," only to be greeted by another riotous mob, this time shouting for him to resign. It is hard to believe that this man does not understand that he is confronted with what French commentators have compared to the slave-holders' rebellion that started the Civil War in the U.S.

MEANWHILE the fascists have crossed the Mediterranean to carry their action into France. Six hundred Algerian mayors, all Europeans, appeared before a conference of the Association of French mayors to demand it adopt the fascist ultimatum. When the motion was turned down by the narrow margin of 4,783 against 4,552 the "Algerians" resigned from the association. A demonstration of "veterans" was called in Paris at the Arc de Triomphe in solidarity with the "veterans" who rioted in Algiers. The government banned the demonstration, but also banned one called by the Communists and the CGT to commemorate the great outpouring of the working people of Paris on February 12, 1934, which smashed back the fascist menace of that time. It seems, however, that faced with a new menace, the workers are again aroused and that what the Communist appeals for unity have failed to achieve the threat of fascism may. Several facts are noteworthy.

- Communist and Socialist members of parliament have been acting in concert to unseat illegally elected Poujadist deputies. They have been successful against the opposition of a large part of the Right.
- Communists and Socialists have combined in committee to bring the abrogation of the Barange law, subsidizing the confessional schools, before the National Assembly. This will force Mollet's hand and may stop his undercover dealings with the MRP.
- The fascist "veterans" at Paris submitted to the ban on their demonstration. Part of the reason for this must be ascribed to their fear of the counter-demonstration called by the Seine Federation of the Socialist Party and the Mendèsist radicals.
- At a huge meeting at Paris, Raymond Guyot, the Communist leader, called upon Communists, Socialists, and radicals to unite the Parisian population in all the neighborhoods and suburbs on an action footing to defend the offices and meeting places of all democratic organizations. He also announced that the Seine Socialist Federation has agreed to establish liaison with its Communist counterpart.

Beneath these moves there is a groundswell of opinion which this writer noticed at a packed debate between Mendès and Duclos during the election campaign. People who voted for the Mendèsists have been writing to the Mendès-France daily *Express* that if the government doesn't get off the dime, they will vote Communist next chance they get.

Correction

Two factual inaccuracies crept into the article "Big Business Moves in on the Farmer" by Harry Braverman in the January 1956 issue of the *American Socialist*. In Table III, which gave the change in the number of U. S. farms between 1950 and 1954, the decrease in the number of farms with a value of product of $250 to $1,199 was given as 40.7 percent. It should have been a decrease of 34.7 percent. The increase in the number of farms in the $10,000 to $24,999 value-of-product bracket, given as 13.9 percent, should have read 16.1 percent. The errors, due to arithmetical miscalculations, do not alter the trend of the table.

A courageous woman who has seen this land cowed by witch-chasing public officials a number of times in the past 32 years, and who has been chased by them herself on a few occasions, is still in there fighting and calls on other Americans to help.

Witch-Hunts I Have Seen

by Florence Luscomb

I THINK I can rightfully claim to know something about witch-hunts, for my first personal encounter with one occurred almost 32 years ago. Since that time my life has been repeatedly harassed, my purse impoverished, my rights violated by no fewer than 11 other witch-hunts.

My first encounter took place in 1924. Old Bob La-Follette, that magnificent battler for American ideals, was fighting our double-headed political-party monstrosity by running for President on a new, independent Progressive Party ticket. It so happened that I was fired from my job when I publicly supported La Follette, so I marched down to Progressive headquarters, volunteered for the duration, and was made Secretary of the Massachusetts State Campaign Committee. In the course of the campaign, we accidentally discovered that the FBI had sent a special agent to Boston to get a list of every person holding any official position with La Follette's party. So, because I exercised my right to vote as I pleased, an American Gestapo has had my name in its files since 1924, and has periodically checked on where I was living and what I was doing. I learned of no fewer than four of these check-ups, so I know they take place.

The setting-up of the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1938 under Martin Dies is generally thought of as the start of official snoopings into the private affairs of citizens, from which all the other inquisitions have been spawned: the Senate investigating committee, the McCarthy committee, and the flock of state investigations under pint-sized McCarthys. Actually, Massachusetts led off this infamous procession with a commission here in 1937 under State Senator Sybil Holmes. And my second experience with the witch-hunt came one morning when I was spied in the audience by Senator Holmes, and immediately called up and questioned. As an example of the accuracy and truthfulness of these investigations, the Holmes report stated that I had introduced a prominent Soviet official to a Massachusetts audience—an honor which had never been mine.

In those days the spirit of freedom was still so strong in America that this inquisition roused widespread indignation and defeated Senator Holmes for re-election the next year.

NEXT, the witch-hunt has destroyed my right of assembly, through the Attorney General's list of "subversive organizations." The Supreme Court has said that "no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion or other matters of opinion." Nevertheless, year after year the Attorney General—Democratic and Republican alike—goes on adding organizations to that list till now it numbers almost 300. A further and even more vicious encroachment on my right of assembly is the Subversive Activities Control Board set up by the McCarran Act. My right to work through these or any organizations of my choice has been violated.

In a number of different ways, the witch-hunt has perpetrated against me one of the foulest sins that can be committed against a human soul. It has decreed: "Thou shalt be ignorant!" It has tried to put out my eyes on the world.

A year ago I subscribed to a little Canadian magazine, *Peace Review*. Only four copies have reached me; the rest

MISS Florence H. Luscomb, born at Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1887, has long been in the forefront of many important progressive struggles in her home state. A graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1909 with a degree in architecture, she was a leader in the Massachusetts and Boston Equal Suffrage Association during the fight for women's voting rights, and later of the Boston League of Women Voters. For many years she was Vice Chairman of the Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union, and

About the Author

Secretary of the Boston Scottsboro Committee; also took part in the work of the Boston Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as Vice President. She served as president of both an AFL and later a CIO local union of office workers. In recent years, she occupied the position of State Chairman of the Progressive Party of Massachusetts.

In her defiant statement before the Massachusetts Commission to Investigate Communism and Subversion last year, she explained her ruling passion in these words: "Above all, I have tried to fight every attack on civil liberties. My forefathers fought to establish this nation as a free country. My grandfather served as a member of the Congress during the Civil War to maintain it free. One of my great-uncles as Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts strove to maintain its legal freedom. These things do not make me one whit better or worse than the poorest immigrant who landed yesterday, but they do make me feel an obligation to do *my* part in keeping American freedom inviolate."

have presumably been seized by the postal authorities, as they boast they seize and burn hundreds of thousands of books, magazines and pamphlets at the port of Boston every year. The customs service does its part too. At the Canadian border they have stolen shipment after shipment of a book coming from Toronto called "Five Stars Over China." The Treasury Department joins in: I could not buy a book on Asia shipped from Australia unless I authorized the New York bookstore to register my name and address with the Treasury Department.

My welfare as a worker has been attacked. For many years I have been a member of organized labor. The union, the Boston local of which I was a charter member and one-time president, was smeared and hounded, its membership intimidated and disrupted. The witch-hunt got it thrown out of the CIO and finally succeeded in killing it. That is the witch-hunt I have personally known in the field of organized labor.

I am held prisoner by the State Department. Three years ago I was on my way to a world peace assembly in Vienna. My journey was arranged, I was vaccinated, my airplane passage reserved. On Tuesday, December 9, I got my passport. Four hours later, two agents of the State Department came and confiscated it without explanation. The State Department neither refunded my money nor answered my letter. Yet the American government has the nerve to talk about an Iron Curtain.

And finally, the witch-hunt has in recent years subjected me to two inquisitions which violate my every constitutional right to freedom of conscience and thought, speech, press, assembly and political action.

ON January 7, 1955, I was haled before the Massachusetts Commission Investigating Communism. Beyond giving my name and personal history, I refused to answer any of their questions about memberships, activities or acquaintances on the ground of the First Amendment, which guarantees freedom of speech, press, assembly and petition. In spite of the fact that I did not invoke the Fifth Amendment the Commission has not chosen to proceed against me for contempt. In the statement which I made at the hearing I defined my idea of patriotism as not closing one's eyes to the fault and misdeeds of one's country, but rather fighting to end them, thus making America better. I labeled their inquisition as the only subversion of which I have the slightest knowledge.

Because it seemed important to awaken the citizens of Massachusetts to the iniquities of the Commission, my statement was printed as a leaflet and mailed widely throughout the State. Requests came in from all over the country. Altogether about 23,000 were distributed, and it was reprinted in Missouri, Texas, New York and elsewhere. The Commission became concerned enough to send its agent to our printer to find out the number of copies that were run off.

Then in June the Commission published a blacklist of 85 persons, including myself, against whom they claim to have "creditable" evidence of Communist Party membership. Such evidence, of course, means the word of a secret informer, who, judging from many of the things reported about me, is a perjurer. None of the investigating committees of the past quarter-century, to the best of my knowledge, has dared to go to such lengths in publishing a formal blacklist of individuals. Without any kind of a trial before a court and a chance to know their accusers and to defend themselves legally, these men and women were publicly branded, many fired from their jobs, careers wrecked, their families subjected to suffering and want, and anxiety and unhappiness visited upon them.

The newspapers spread the blacklist in full collaboration with the commission. The *Boston Traveler,* as an example, covered its front page with a huge headline: "Reds, Ex-Reds Listed," and devoted five and one-half pages to printing the specious "biographies" of the 85 persons. The chairman then proudly told the State Senate that his commission had set "an example for the rest of the United States and congressional committees."

MEANWHILE, five of the most distinguished lawyers in Massachusetts, including a former president of the State Bar Association and a former Republican Speaker of the State House of Representatives, had begun court action to prevent the issuance of this blacklist, calling it unconstitutional. The Superior Court dismissed this suit, on the ground that as they were not on the blacklist they were suffering no injury and had no right to intervene. This decision was appealed to the State Supreme Court where it was heard in November 1955, and that court has recently upheld the dismissal of the suit.

In view of the uncertainty about this suit, someone actually on the blacklist had to take action, so I filed suit in July, challenging its constitutionality on legal grounds that may be summarized as follows:

• That by no stretch of the imagination can the publication of a blacklist be considered law-making, and under our system of the separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers, the legislature has no right to venture into this field.

• That the blacklist constitutes a "bill of attainder," which is specifically forbidden by our Constitution which, in Article I Section 10, prohibits this practice. (A bill of attainder is a legislative action pronouncing an individual guilty arbitrarily, instead of by fair trial and conviction.)

• That the Constitution guarantees every person "due process of law," which includes indictment by a grand jury, public trial by a court, the right to confront and cross-examine one's accusers and to present evidence in defense.

There is also a third suit, filed by Donald Tormey, an officer of the independent United Electrical Workers Union. He was not named in the list of 85, but was named in the report, so that his qualification to bring suit was better than that of the five lawyers but not as good as mine. Now, however, Tormey has been listed in a new blacklist issued on the union of which he is an official, putting both of us in the same class.

IN my suit I also asked that the commission be forbidden to distribute the blacklist until the court decided on its constitutionality. A hearing on the point was held last July, at which time counsel for the commission made a motion the entire suit be dismissed, on the ground that members of the legislature cannot be sued. Without hearing argument on this motion, the judge granted it and threw my suit out entirely. We appealed the decision to the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. My lawyers are very hopeful of winning, because the Supreme Court has already held that this is not a legislative committee since it has two public members appointed by the Governor. But meanwhile we must wait until the court gets around to deciding this point, and as our courts have almost discovered perpetual non-motion, that will not be until March.

The final item in the witch-hunts I have personally known is the New Hampshire inquisition conducted by Attorney General Wyman, before whom I was summoned in October. Oddly enough, it was a result of a speech I made at World Fellowship Center, in Conway, N. H., on the subject of the witch-hunt in Massachusetts. As a result, I am now qualified to speak in Massachusetts on the witch-hunt in New Hampshire. In that state the First Amendment had already been tested in the state courts, so that reliance on it meant a fine of up to $1,000 or a jail sentence, unless one could afford to fight the case up to the U. S. Supreme Court, with no assurance that it would be heard. I therefore invoked the Fifth Amendment in New Hampshire and refused to answer the inquisitor's questions.

There is a new and sinister development in New Hampshire. Last spring, at Wyman's urging, the legislature passed an immunity law aimed to circumvent the Fifth Amendment, similar to Brownell's federal law. Wyman did not use it on me, but is now applying it to a New Hampshire man, Hugo DeGregory. The court has ordered DeGregory to answer all questions, under a grant of immunity. This immunity: 1. Is no real immunity, for it does not protect him from prosecution in the federal courts on the basis of his replies. 2. Does not protect him from the extra-legal—and possibly harsher—penalties of loss of job and social contumely. 3. Forces him to become an informer. If in view of these facts he refuses to take this "immunity" and answer, he is guilty of contempt of court and can be jailed until he consents to answer, which, in case of persistent refusal could mean indefinite imprisonment.

Attorney General Wyman is a China Lobby man, a McCarthyite, one of the most skillful inquisitors of any of the witch-hunters, an exceedingly able and ambitious politician—a man potentially as dangerous as McCarthy. So he is trying to use his new immunity law to achieve the triumph of sending a man to prison for contempt, since in two and one-half years and at an expense of $72,000 he has not been able to turn up a shred of evidence of subversion. Wyman aims to achieve national leadership in witch-hunting, and should he make his immunity law a success similar legislation will undoubtedly be attempted in other states. It was Wyman who lined up the Attorneys General of 27 states in support of state sedition laws in a brief to the U. S. Supreme Court in the Nelson case.

I HAVE told the story of how the witch-hunt has entered into my life—not as an important individual and natural target for persecution, but as an ordinary person trying to function as a good citizen interested in today's issues. It is a terrible and terrifying story for anyone who values the freedoms which have made America great.

Today, however, we all feel a new stirring of liberty throughout the land. The last year has brought concrete victories for civil liberties. All too many persons are complacent over recent victories, over the improved climate of opinion. They assume that now they can sit with folded hands and wait for the battle to win itself. Freedom was never thus won or preserved. Now is the time for every American who values freedom to work with all that is in him, till witch-hunts and witch-hunters are utterly destroyed and America is once again the land of the free.

Socialism in America

by Donald D. Todd

I DO not expect to interpret the past, solve the problems of the present, and chart a course for the future, in this one article. I do hope to throw the doors open to discussion. I wish to indicate my own thoughts, and I shall, by and large, confine myself to one major point: the partial responsibility of socialists for their own failure in American politics.

The failure of American socialism to develop into a vigorous force, and the vitality of American capitalism with its expansion of productive forces and high standard of living, has led some to the fallacy of American exceptionalism. The exceptionalists maintain that American capitalism has developed differently than classical capitalism and is, therefore, immune to most of the ills that chronically inhere in capitalism abroad. American capitalism is so sound, they believe, that a reaction to injustice, wastefulness, irrationality, and inefficiency has not developed because such a movement is unnecessary as a vehicle for social change in the United States.

It is not my intention here to analyze the unwarranted assumptions behind American exceptionalism, but to take up what I believe was the opposite error made by American Marxists in the course of rejecting exceptionalism.

FUNDAMENTALLY American capitalism is the same as its European counterpart. The economic laws of capitalism work in the same manner on both continents. But the two capitalisms did originate and develop under vastly differing conditions, political, historical, and geographical. The greater part of the North American continent was virgin country at the birth of capitalism. It consisted of a vast area, unbelievably rich in natural resources. Immigrants coming to the Atlantic seaboard found few of the social restrictions they left behind in Europe and plenty of opportunities previously denied them. For the next century, despite the growing stratification of American society, capitalism here was able, because of these exceptional circumstances, to impart a social mobility to the system quite unknown in the older European capitalisms, which were held back by their more limited resources, and their feudal heritage.

Socialists rejected the theory of exceptionalism because they recognized the basic similarity of capitalist systems everywhere. But in doing so they tended to equate them —an equally serious error. The failure to understand and master the specifically American aspects of the problem of developing a strong socialist movement has led to a sad neglect of Marxist analysis of American history and economy. Socialists in the main still view America from the shores of Europe, not from within.

The failure to Americanize socialism—to think and act in terms of American life, culture, and history—is reflected in theoretical and practical activity. While the circumstances of American life go a long way toward explaining the non-socialist character of the American people, it is too little recognized that the methods and activities of socialists themselves are responsible to an extent for the anti-socialist character of the American people.

Disregarding for the moment the cold war, the suppression of Left activity by the government, the constant barrage of capitalist propaganda against socialism, etc., I think it significant to note that the one time the socialist movement was led by men with a wholly American orientation—by men like Debs and the editors of the *Appeal to Reason*—it gained widespread acceptance. The Bolshevization of American socialism subsequent to the Russian Revolution—keeping in mind at all times the existence of various other factors—virtually destroyed the groundwork of those men. Left propaganda became permeated by an unintelligible political jargon, and socialist activity increasingly took on a European flavor. Socialism began to be expounded from the point of view of another country's experiences.

I AM neglecting a number of political factors operating outside the Left, not because I am ignorant of them, but because I feel that avoidable shortcomings of the Left itself have been too often ignored in discussions of this sort, and because I feel that the American Left can be revitalized in large measure by correcting these shortcomings. I realize that not too much can be done until social conditions of the right type are present in the United States; that it is conditions in society that give rise to radical movements. But I also realize that the American people will take to a social movement which is presented to them in a palatable fashion. I am very much afraid that unless socialism is made to appear more than a rejection or negation of much that is American, unless it is made to appear as a continuation of all that is best in American traditions, it will continue to be rejected in this country.

In the future, when the establishment of socialism becomes a paramount issue, the specific application of socialist principles to American problems will be dictated by the concrete conditions that prevail. Discussion of those things right now would perhaps be sterile. The important

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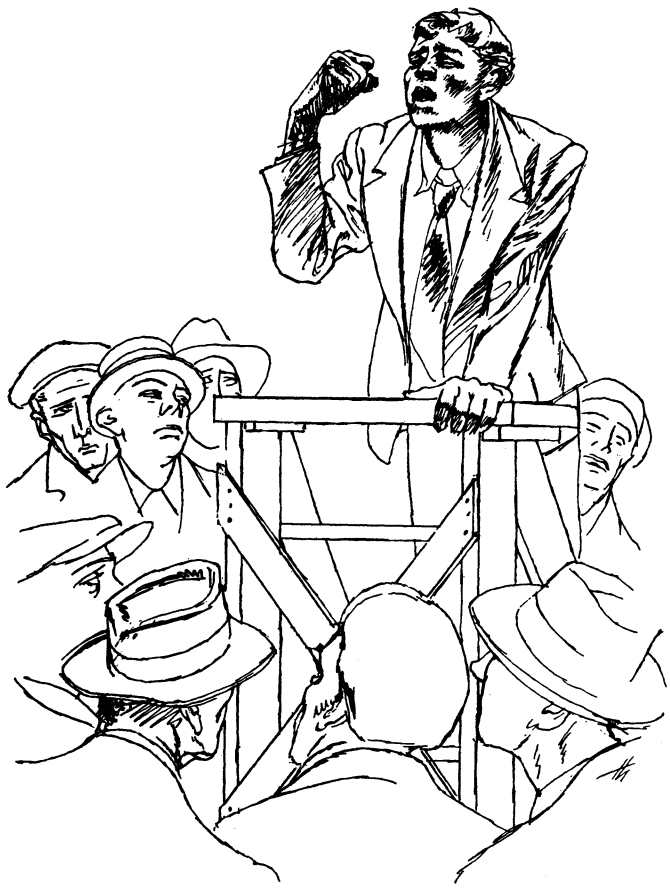
thing at present is to find some common ground for the union of socialists around a minimum program aimed first, to preserve what democracy there is left in this country.



Two things should be clear to all socialists: 1) A fight for government control of monopoly, for extensive welfare measures, and increased civil liberties, is the only course open to socialists at the present time; 2) This program tends to lead to socialism as it weakens capitalism. A fight for such measures is a fight to break the power of Big Business. Sectarians who view reform only as tending to preserve capitalism fail to realize that such measures tend only to preserve a capitalism evolving in a particular direction.

I would like to observe in conclusion that it is axiomatic that a flight from socialist politics is a defeat of socialist politics. That is why socialists must emphatically reject the Communist Party's suicidal policy of attempting to influence the Democratic Party by joining it and working within it. Aside from the immorality of it, it is a policy of embracing our executioners.

No Time for Greatness

by Dr. Jay W. Friedman

LIVING in the United States today one can't help but sense the complete lack of inspiration, the preoccupation with small ideas. Just as World War I destroyed the American socialist movement, World War II spelled doom to the radicalism rising out of the Depression. The young men of the New Deal gave in to the practicality of the Old Guard. Inspiration gave way to cynicism—and finally the spectacle of recantation before Congressional Investigating Committees by former Communists and whatnots. Certainly the Russian Communists who developed the art of public recantation after the style of medieval witch-trials must enjoy the spectacle. It is this recantation which symbolizes the complete loss of direction.

The spirit of compromise and reform—practicality—is a pleasant attitude for well-fed white Americans with a life-expectancy of seventy years. But is it so pleasant for the Navajo Indian whose poverty and disease limits his life to barely thirty years, and not the most pleasant thirty years at that? Temperance is a virtue for the "haves" but does not provide for the "have nots." Liberal circles are today populated with intellectuals who profess basic belief in socialism but are too "practical" to assert and pursue this belief. Not so curiously, this practicality concerns itself with their personal success, whether in politics or business.

THIS is the "great" idea which preoccupies most Americans today. But compromise is the seductress of inspiration, it is the leech which draws off the blood of youth and energy. In ordinary times (prior to the Atomic Age, the phrase "ordinary times" had no real meaning; it was a cliché) a radical might view compromise as engaging reality. This calm philosophic view is no longer tenable. The United States is not a democracy. It is a capitalistic aristocracy. While minor radical journals are published and tolerated (because they *are* minor) the business aristocracy controls communications. The radio is nationwide, television is nationwide, the Associated Press is nationwide. This does not mean the dissemination of better news and information. It means the dissemination of the *same* news and information.

While radicals and liberals sit back and lament the excesses in our capitalistic culture, they send their children to schools where they are indoctrinated to be good little compromisers and defenders of the status-quo. The labor movement moves forward to unification. What ho! To embark on socialist equity for all workers? No, to usurp the prerogative of defending capitalism from the capitalists. One wonders what the Navajo thinks of this.

These are not ordinary times. The atomic debacle is no fanciful exaggeration. Three times the United States veered towards atomic war (re: Statesman Dulles) not in bluff, but in actuality. War can no longer be considered as self-limiting. Nineteenth century compromise might have been argued in the light of nineteenth century warfare. But worse than the Navajo, we are on the verge of not even a thirty-year life expectancy. We are on the precipice of total suicide.

What, then, does compromise mean? It means no time for greatness—not in ideas, not in actions. It means the

Dr. Friedman, whose article on medical care appeared in our February issue, is with the Group Health Dental Cooperative in Seattle.

dilution of inspiration, the steady preoccupation with trivia, the fatigue of material acquisitiveness. It means resorting to the time-worn and time-wearied political hacks —the clever little Stevensons, the fatuous Eisenhowers, the labor-leader defenders of virtue exemplified by Meany and Reuther. It means the minor reformers, the well-fed liberals in middle-class parlors discussing ways and means of reforming the Democratic Party, of working within the system—while the system devours not their pocketbooks—these they protect well—but their ideals.

If this is not the time for greatness, then it never existed. Radicalism—and radicals—must emerge from the muck and mire of compromise. Condescension must give way to inspiration and socialism must develop into a militant faith glad for the opportunity to proclaim its convictions to the world. Compromise is the tool of its enemies and must be defeated. The cooperative commonwealth must be proclaimed the only alternative to capitalistic corruption and destruction. To compromise with truth is to fabricate lies, and the truth is that socialism must prevail or humanity perish!

Free Choice Under Socialism

by Dr. Hans Freistadt

DR. Jay W. Friedman's stimulating article on "Pioneering in Cooperative Medicine" (February 1956) contains one statement with which I cannot agree: "The criticism . . . against socialized medicine . . . that it eliminates the 'free choice of your doctor' . . . is pure nonsense." I would readily agree with Dr. Friedman if he meant by this statement that we can have socialized medicine *and* free choice of physician. But Dr. Friedman apparently is *against* such free choice. Let us examine his three principal arguments:

(1) "A large segment of the population today has no such choice because of inability to pay." By a similar argument, socialists should be against proper nutrition, decent housing, and free speech, since a large segment of the population does not enjoy these rights today. If the free choice of physician is intrinsically desirable, then socialists should be for extending this right to all, not for abolishing it.

(2) "A lay person . . . is hardly qualified to choose a good doctor." This is a gratuitous insult to the good judgment of the laymen, as well as the core of the discussion. I believe that with a modicum of reading and inquiry into a physician's training, accreditation, and reputation in the community, an intelligent layman can find, not only a *good* practitioner, but also the one who is best *for him.*

There are in medicine, as in any science, many controversies which a layman is perfectly capable of grasping. I do not refer here to crackpot ideas, but to questions concerning which reputable scientific opinion is divided. In my own field of theoretical physics, the concepts of which are considerably more abstract than those of medicine, I have successfully explained the essential points of basic controversies to persons without technical training. To take a position on such a fundamental controversy, one needs only the willingness to engage in some mild intellectual effort. A typical medical controversy is the obstetrical doctrine known as "natural childbirth," on which the medical profession is far from unanimous. The arguments on each side are easy to comprehend, and require the reading of no more than two or three books. Whether or not to adopt "natural childbirth" is a decision that can and should be made by the expectant parents. Since one cannot ask a physician to practice contrary to his own persuasion, the only alternative is the free choice of physician.

FINALLY, a point which Dr. Friedman ignores, it can easily happen that a patient just does not like the personality of a particular physician. Why should he be stuck with him? Ideally, personality elements should not enter into professional relationships. This ideal will perhaps be achieved some day, when several generations of socialism will have made us somewhat saner than we are now. Meanwhile, no useful purpose would be served by forcing people into relationships as intimate as those of physician-patient without regard to personal preferences.

(3) "In (co-operative) programs . . . poor doctors are weeded out by the doctors themselves. . . . Chances of receiving good treatment are greater . . . (under) group practice." This statement is probably true, but has no bearing on the free choice of physician, which, as I shall suggest below, is entirely compatible with group practice. Whether Dr. Friedman's statement would still be true under a system of assigned physicians, similar to the system of assigned teachers in the public schools, is highly debatable. The public schools are replete with poor teachers, who, except for the captive audiences furnished to them, would find themselves without a single pupil. I suspect that one of the principal reasons for not permitting free choice of teachers in the public schools is to spare poor teachers the humiliation of empty classrooms. Physicians, like teachers, might easily put "professional solidarity" ahead of obligation to the public, until socialist ideology has taken deeper roots in our national thinking.

WE can socialize medicine, make medical personnel salaried employees of a socialist government, de-commercialize the physician-patient relationship, encourage group practice—and still maintain and extend the principle of free choice of physician. We could also have free choice of teachers in our public schools. There is no contradiction between socialism and a maximum of free choice at the level of everyday life. It is a pity indeed that Dr. Friedman, in an otherwise informative and well-reasoned article, should have discussed the question of free choice of physician in terms of the dichotomy with which the issue has been befuddled—if you want socialized medicine, you must throw away the free choice of your physician. Socialism does not seek to regulate for the sake of regimentation. Socialism seeks to plan the economy; but the aim of such planning is greater freedom, more choice, and less regimentation at the level of everyday life.

Dr. Freistadt, author of a previous American Socialist *article on Albert Einstein (June* 1955), *teaches physics at a New Jersey college.*

A Review-Article

The Defeat that Gave Hitler His Chance

FAILURE OF A REVOLUTION, by Rudolf Coper. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1955, $5.

THE subject of revolutions, as turbulent events taking place in general beyond American borders, has until recent times seemed indescribably far away and incomprehensible to even the educated portion of the American public. It is only this sense of insularity, stronger than ever exhibited by the British in the days of their "splendid isolation," that can account for the fact that there is no authoritative work in the English language on such a historical climacteric as the German Revolution of 1918. However, not only is the revolutionary age in which we live breaking down the provincial ramparts of the past, but a host of European intellectuals, fleeing from Hitler's terror, have settled throughout the Anglo-Saxon world, and some of them are enriching its academic literature with a discussion of social theories and European experiences that were largely absent in our learned writings of the past.

Unfortunately, Rudolf Coper's book cannot be considered as much of a contribution to this enrichment. The subject is obviously beyond either his literary or political capacities. His qualifications are exhausted with his having been present in Berlin as a boy of fourteen at the time of the revolutionary turmoil, and his having read or consulted the bibliography of approximately 125 works listed at the end of his book.

He is too wrapped up in sundry pieces of gossip, or conversations in high places gleaned from the various memoirs of leading participants, to unravel cleanly the main threads of the revolutionary development. Moreover, his analysis lacks a consistent focus: In the early part of the book, our author draws himself up like a revolutionary Marat and hurls annihilating charges at Ebert, Scheidemann, Landsberg and the other Social Democratic leaders who conspired with the Kaiser's generals to destroy the revolution. Further along, he drops pseudo-revolutionary posturings to insist that a bloc of the Socialists and progressive capitalist parties could have saved the situation and "fashioned a German State that was neither militarist nor Socialist." After riding this hobby-horse for the better part of the book, he begins to voice doubts whether any such middle-of-the-road solution was actually possible under the given conditions. Then, as he approaches the fateful January 9 uprising and the bloody Spartacus Week that followed, the outraged middle-class philistine breaks through the previous disguises, and he begins to belabor the revolutionary leaders with a most unhistorical, injudicious and even slanderous partisan venom.

WHEN Macaulay wrote his well-known essay in 1841 for the *Edinburgh Review* on a biography of Warren Hastings, he found himself in a predicament of being intensely interested in the subject matter, but harboring a poor opinion of the work which furnished the justification for the review. He proceeded to dispose of the difficulty in this fashion: "We are inclined to think," he began, "that we shall best meet the wishes of our readers, if, instead of minutely examining this book, we attempt to give . . . our own view of the life and character of Mr. Hastings." In the case of some books this is a sound approach. With Macaulay's precedent as our authority, we will take leave of Mr. Coper and his book for a thumbnail sketch of the aborted revolution that proved a crucial link in the tragedy of events crowned with the victory of Hitler and the outbreak of the second World War.

On September 28, 1918, faced with an imminent Allied break-through, General Ludendorff told the Kaiser that the government must request an immediate armistice. The next day, a new, spuriously liberal government under Prince Max von Baden, which included a few right-wing Socialists, was formed to parley with the Entente. Toward the end of October, the Kaiser's admirals concocted a scheme to wage a last-ditch battle with the British fleet and ordered the naval vessels out of the harbor at Kiel. That was the spark that set the magazine ablaze. The revolution was on. A mass uprising of unparalleled scope swept over northern Germany, and finally struck Berlin. The Chancellor begged headquarters for reliable troops to hurl back the revolution, but no sooner did so-called reliable regiments reach the capital than they got caught up in the whirlpool, and began furious discussions whether or not to join with the embattled people.

By November 9, the human mass streaming toward the royal *Schloss* became irresistible. The old regime cracked up before the onrushing human flood, the Kaiser's abdication was announced and the Republic proclaimed. Next day Berlin was in the hands of the newly formed Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. After the Kiel revolt, these Councils had sprung up throughout the country, and after November 9, monarchist dynasties and state governments began abdicating wholesale in favor of cabinets set up by the Social Democrats.

NOW was cruelly demonstrated the treacherous renegacy of the right-wing Social Democrats, and also the tragic inadequacy of the left-wingers. The right-wing Social Democrats had been cooperating throughout the war years with the Kaiser's General Staff, had endorsed the imperialist program, had regimented the working masses to

accepting the war sacrifices and suppressions; and thus it was for them an entirely consistent development to now continue the alliance in order to stamp out the popular revolution. But the left-wingers, who had split in 1917 and formed the Independent Social Democratic Party to pursue a militant socialist policy, were in a state of pathetic bewilderment over the fast-moving events, possessed no coherent plan of action, were animated by no strategic concept.

Even the Spartacists under the leadership of Rosa Luxemburg were totally unprepared to place themselves at the helm and ride the whirlwind. As this great revolutionist had correctly predicted, Germany was swept by mass actions and strikes, and the workers spontaneously threw up a new institutional mode of rule in the form of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. But unlike Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Russia, Luxemburg had no firm disciplined organization, there was no central leadership to bring order out of the chaos, to harness the conflicting energies of the revolution and to impart purposefulness and direction to the swirling mass movement. This was the strongest condemnation of Luxemburg: Unlike the Russians, she really did not understand what a struggle for power entailed.

On November 9 the old regime was crushed; it had no reliable troops at its disposal, it was overwhelmed by the hatred of practically the entire population. The Independents, who had the support of the clear majority of the workers in Berlin and a number of other centers, could have at that moment set forces in motion which would have elbowed the Social Democrats aside and led to the formation of a new government, with probably very little struggle. But taking power was furthest from their minds.

Karl Liebknecht, one of the most popular working class leaders, was one of the very few who was thinking in terms of revolutionary power, but he had no organized movement, or even faction, behind him. From the first, he was in conflict with Luxemburg, and was often on the verge of being repudiated by the Spartacists, as his policy was considered adventurist. Under Luxemburg's leadership, the Spartacists embarked on a course of intransigent revolutionary agitation coupled with resolute political abstention, a program that guaranteed its feebleness in the revolutionary storm. The organization's founding convention on December 30, 1918, where it re-formed itself as the German Communist Party, declared:

> *The* Spartakusbund *rejects the sharing of governmental power with Scheidemann and Ebert, the tools of the capitalists. . . . The* Spartakusbund *will also reject gaining power through the collapse of the Scheidemann-Ebert government or because the USPD (Independents) has reached an impasse in its collaboration with them. The* Spartakusbund *will never assume governmental power unless it is supported by the clear, unambiguous will of the great majority of the workers in Germany, and in no other way except with their conscious acceptance of the ideas, aims, and fighting methods of the* Spartakusbund. . . . *The socialist revolution hates and despises violence and murder. . . . The victory of the* Spartakusbund *stands not at the beginning but at the end of the revolution.*

Ruth Fischer, in her book, "Stalin and German Communism," not unjustly concluded that "the Spartacist program was equivalent to a critical toleration of the Ebert government, combined with a militant propaganda against the army and for socialist aims."

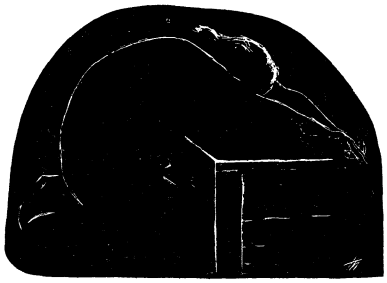
IN theory, the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils held power after November 9. But as these Councils were

bewildered and leaderless, they, in effect, handed the government over to the Ebert cabinet, which was composed of three Social Democrats and three Independents. On the night of November 9, Ebert telephoned General Gröner, who replaced Ludendorff at Hindenburg's headquarters, and asked for support for the new cabinet. A kind of Kerensky-Kornilov conspiracy was effected between the two against the revolution. The General Staff immediately began to organize new select cadre divisions under picked Imperial officers, and soon bloody clashes became common between these troops and revolutionary detachments.

On December 16 the first all-national conference of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils began its sessions, and revealed to the full the absence of a revolutionary leadership and the indescribable muddle of the revolutionary forces. The Social Democrats, because of their prominent position, superior machine, and the confusion of the masses over the meaning of the various party labels, swamped their opponents. Out of 490 delegates, 298 were Social Democrats; Liebknecht and Luxemburg were refused their seats. Even so, it was clear that the conference ardently desired the smashup of the old military structure and the creation of a socialist government; but the delegates did not know how to go about achieving their purposes, and were tricked out of their aims by the wily Ebert and his associates. The conference adjourned in incredible confusion and wrangling between the Social Democrats and Independents, leaving the situation about where it had been before.

Now Ebert was determined to strike a decisive blow and rid himself of the Councils. On December 23 he ordered General Lequis, commander of the Brandenburg garrison, to march into Berlin and disband the Volksmarine Division, which was allied with the revolutionary elements. An indecisive engagement took place between the two sides which ended with a compromise. Two days later, 500 workers occupied the *Vorwärts* building. The *Vorwärts,* the daily Socialist newspaper of Berlin, was the property of the Berlin Socialist movement, and as most of the members had gone over to the Independents, they felt the newspaper belonged to them, and viewed the occupation of the building as an act designed to restore the property to the organization from which it had been stolen by the Social Democrats. Ebert,

intent on a showdown, ordered the removal of Eichhorn, the Berlin police chief, who was an Independent, and



an attack on police headquarters and the newspaper building. The Independents resigned from the cabinet.

THE revolutionary forces could have easily taken over Berlin at this juncture if they were united and acted decisively. The revolutionary Shop Stewards' movement was the most important power in Berlin at this time. Eichhorn, the Independent police head, had a security guard of 3,500 men, which could have been enlarged overnight by many thousands of demobilized soldiers. The Social Democrats had virtually no support in the capital. But the Independents were engrossed in negotiations with Ebert. Luxemburg had a hands-off policy. The Shop Stewards, estranged from all party leadership and organization, wavered and could not pass over to the offensive.

On January 6 a monster pro-Eichhorn demonstration took place in Berlin, astonishing both friend and foe by its phenomenal size and militant mood. Here was an army that lacked only leadership and organization to be invincible. This was one of those days that decide the fate of a nation for decades. Everything hung by a hair. In Ruth Fischer's opinion: "The rapid overthrow of the Ebert cabinet, the establishment of a workers' government in Berlin, would have acted like a bellows to the smoldering fires in Germany. Once the industrial centers were set in motion, the demoralized military would have been unable to regroup enough cadres." The masses waited in the streets, waited endless hours, and finally, receiving no instructions, no guidance, no plan of action —they went home.

In the next two days, the troops of General von Lüttwitz were permitted to gather without opposition in the environs of Berlin. On January 8, Ebert and Scheidemann issued a savage manifesto against the Spartacists, declaring they would meet violence with violence. This was the signal for the troops to begin moving. The military entered the revolutionary city without opposition. On the morning of January 9 they opened fire on the *Vorwärts* building. The occupants, considering their position hopeless, sent seven emissaries to the troop commander under a flag of truce to negotiate a surrender. The men were taken to the military post in *Dragonerstrasse,* beaten with whips and clubs, and then shot. The Shop Stewards' Committee, hunted by troops, went underground. Military posts were set up throughout the city. On January 15, Luxemburg and Liebknecht were arrested (they had not even gone into hiding), brutally manhandled, and then killed. Counter-revolution had won the upper hand with hardly a battle.

ONE month before she was murdered, Rosa Luxemburg wrote: "In all capitalist revolutions, bloodshed, terrorism, and political murder have always been weapons in the hands of the rising classes, but the workers' revolution needs no terrorism to attain its ends, and its supporters abominate murder. It needs none of these weapons because it fights against institutions, not against individuals."

Carl Schorske, in his recent study of the German Social Democracy, makes this comment on Luxemburg's position: "Such democratic humanism, such profound faith in the masses, were little calculated to bring success to the revolutionaries when counter-revolution had no hesitation in restoring and maintaining order by force of arms. In the young democratic republic the revolutionaries acquired their first schooling in violence. From the suppression of the sailor's mutiny in December 1918 to the Kapp Putsch in March 1920, the Imperial Army and the Free Corps, at first at the behest of the Social Democratic government, later on their own initiative, demonstrated again and again their superiority in arms. When some of the revolution's finest leaders—Haase, Luxemburg and Liebknecht—fell to assassin's bullets; when the revolution was being crushed locally with no centralized direction of resistance; when in the name of democracy War Minister Noske used troops against defenseless demonstrators, the outlook of a large portion of the Independent Party underwent a change. . . . By 1920, the Independents were sufficiently disheartened by their own failure to look elsewhere for support and guidance, to Russia, where the revolution had succeeded." They accepted Lenin's 21 points for affiliation to the Communist International. With the entry of the Independents into the Communist Party, the latter was transformed from a small propaganda group into a great mass party.

B. C.

BOOK REVIEW

Reminiscences of the "Rebel Girl"

I SPEAK MY OWN PIECE, by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. Masses & Mainstream, New York, 1955, $1.75.

THIS first volume of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's autobiography, which records her activities up to the time of the Sacco-Vanzetti case in the middle twenties, furnishes an engrossing account of aspects of the labor struggle in the two decades when the author was the leading woman agitator of the IWW. In those days, according to observers, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn had everything that ideally suited her for her work on the platform: looks, presence, burning zeal, an impassioned and eloquent delivery, and a quick mind.

She made her first speech on "What Socialism Will Do for Women" at the Harlem Socialist Club in New York on January 31, 1906, when she was not yet sixteen, and soon was launched on her unusual career as a Wobbly strike leader, free speech fighter, and labor defense worker. The mind of the reader reels as we dash breathlessly from one strike scene to another, from the free speech fights on the West Coast back to the famed Lawrence strike in Massachusetts.

The book has the virtue as well as the limitations of similar past autobiographies of Mother Jones, Ella Reeve Bloor, Emma Goldman and William D. Haywood: There is plenty of color and action, occasionally some wonderful anecdotes or droll incidents, as in a fast-moving picaresque novel; but despite the fact that it is well

written throughout, neither the author nor her friends fully come through as persons, and the reader has to supply his own background knowledge in order to place the many events and people in some sort of overall perspective. It is even difficult to glean from the book the author's precise political thinking and appreciations in those days.

She expresses her admiration for Haywood and Debs as the real leaders of American socialism in the pre-war period, and puts in strong plugs later in the book for William Z. Foster and Charles E. Ruthenberg. How much of this is conventional praise is hard to say as her relations with Haywood, for one, were very bad after "Big Bill" took over the national secretaryship of the IWW. The book is written in such a manner, however, that one often has to infer the cause of Haywood's antagonism and the exact nature of the differences between them. She doesn't make it clear, but Brissenden's authoritative history indicates that Flynn was hooked up at this time with the extreme anarchist wing in the IWW.

HAYWOOD stepped into the national office in 1915 when Vincent ("The Saint") St. John decided to turn prospector and work some claims in New Mexico. By that time the organization had been in existence ten years and couldn't seem to expand. According to Flynn, 300,000 membership cards had been issued in the decade, while "the most glowing figures set our membership at 50,000 in 1915." (Brissenden gives a far lower figure.) On all sides the question was asked, "Why doesn't the IWW grow?" The IWW leaders were exceptional strike organizers and strategists, and incomparable mass agitators. But they were very poor when it came to building any kind of stable unions. A few months after the smashing victory at Lawrence, the local IWW organization had all but disappeared.

The causes for this lack went back right to the basic philosophy of the Wobblies: the confused attempt to build an organization that was a cross between a labor union and a political party; the romantic theory that the workers, once freed from the misleadership of the AFL, were ready and eager to flock to an extreme revolutionary organization that gloried in its intransigence and martyrdom. If this wasn't enough of a load to carry, the IWW fell into the hands of the anarcho-syndicalists in 1908, and began advocating "sabotage" and "direct action," oriented itself increasingly towards the migratory workers, and got into throes of ultra-leftist notions on de-centralization, rank-and-file control, no signed contracts with employers, and a dozen other subjects. What Haywood's opinion was of the St. John regime is not in print. He had the syndicalist bias of most socialist left-wingers of that period, but just the same he was no professional anti-political and did not believe in anarcho-syndicalism raw. The fundamental philosophy of the IWW remained unchanged while he was at the helm, but Haywood apparently tried to eliminate some of the more infantile extremes, especially the anarchistic behavior of the local and national organizers, and the lack of attention to building up functioning union bodies.

Flynn states, "In 1916, the IWW made a real turn in the West towards job organization and union demands. If there had not been a war, it might still have been able to anticipate the CIO by two decades, at least in building strong industrial unions in agriculture, mining, lumber, and maritime." Which may or may not be so. But while Flynn describes approvingly this change of pace, she feels that "From the extreme of anarchistic decentralization, from which the IWW had long suffered, Haywood now began to develop a degree of bureaucratic centralism, that was equally dangerous"—a comment that is somewhat ironical, considering the author's presumable satisfaction today with the Communist Party regime. At any rate, she fell afoul of the national office when Haywood publicly blasted her for a deal she was a party to in Duluth, when with her agreement the IWW lawyers entered a plea of guilty for three workers arrested for manslaughter in connection with the mine strike at the Mesaba range.

ANOTHER disagreement concerning defense policy blew up between Flynn and Haywood when 169 IWW figures were indicted in September 1917. Flynn, Carlo Tresca, Joe Ettor and several others were arrested in New York. Both Tresca and Ettor had severed their connection with the IWW after the incident at the Mesaba range the year before in which both were involved. Flynn relates, "Our plan was to tie this dragnet case up in legal knots—in a dozen places—by a fight against extradition and for severance." But according to her, Haywood wired Vanderveer, the IWW attorney: "Trial or dismissal may be left to Government. We cannot compromise." This was essentially the stand that Debs took a year later. He refused to let his lawyers bury his case in technicalities.

Flynn doesn't discuss Haywood's jumping bail later and making the trip to Russia, but a whiff of the bitterness of the old quarrels that raged for years thereafter in the IWW comes through when she remarks that St. John, with whom she was closely associated, "was extremely bitter, as were many of the IWW prisoners, when the 'Big Fellow,' as he called Haywood, had insisted on all the men surrendering for trial in 1917."

The present volume concludes with interesting sidelights on the Sacco-Vanzetti case in which Flynn was an important figure, and a few brief remarks on the break-up of her thirteen-year-old personal relationship with Carlo Tresca, the Italian anarchist editor and former IWW organizer. ("Carlo had a roving eye that had roved in my direction in Lawrence and now, some ten years later, was roving elsewhere. We separated in 1925 . . .")

"The Rebel Girl"—as Joe Hill called her in one of his songs—is now 65, and spent her recent birthday in a prison cell at Alderson, West Virginia, one of the Communist leaders sentenced under the Smith Act. She promises in the second volume to deal "with my period of inactivity due to illness," and the reasons which led her to join the Communist Party in 1937.

B. C.

Babeuf to the Commune

ESSAYS IN POLITICAL AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY by Samuel Bernstein. Paine-Whitman Publishers, New York, 1955, $4.

THE nineteenth century—which, if understood in historical rather than calendar terms, dates from 1776, the year in which the American Declaration of Independence was proclaimed, Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" was published, and James Watt's steam engine was put to work—marked the great crossroads of the human condition on this Earth. Marking the high point attained by capitalism, it saw the *coup de grace* administered to the old social order in Europe and America, and the foundations laid for a new society.

That century, most fittingly, witnessed the birth of modern socialism, the movement of the working classes for control of society, and the surge of all mankind toward its finest hour of fulfillment. Marxism, as Lenin once wrote in a famous essay, brought together the "best that was created by humanity in the nineteenth century in the shape of German philosophy, English political economy, and French socialism." Of these three, two were primarily doctrines, but the third, the socialist movement in France which took shape after the Great French Revolution, was in its more important part, an actual movement of the French working class and lower middle class.

While this collection of essays by an editor of the quarterly publication *Science & Society* touches on several topics, its major concern is with French history, politics, and socialism in the nineteenth century. This is a subject of great interest to modern socialists and students of Marxism for the reason that the Marxist method took shape in the hands of its founders in great part through a running analysis of that turbulent period in France. Students of Marxism often find themselves at a loss to understand much of what Marx and Engels wrote in its full implications because the materials are often obscure, and are not fully clarified by the authors in their writings for contemporary audiences. That is why the book by the early—then Marxist—Sidney Hook on the philosophic antecedents of Marxism, "From Hegel to Marx," proved so valuable. Mr. Bernstein's book should prove helpful in its field also.

IN an introduction to Marx's "The Civil War in France," Frederick Engels wrote: "Thanks to the economic and political development of France since 1789, Paris has for fifty years been placed in the position that no revolution could break out there

without assuming a proletarian character, in such wise that the proletariat which had bought the victory with its blood did not put forward immediately afterward its own demands. These demands were more or less indefinite, and even confused, in accordance with the particular phase of development through which the Paris workmen were passing at the time; but the upshot of them all was the abolition of the class antagonism between capitalist and laborer. How this was to be done, 'tis true, nobody knew. But the demand itself, however indefinite its form, was a danger for the existing order of society; the workmen who made it were still armed; if the bourgeoisie at the head of the State would maintain their political supremacy, they were bound to disown the workmen. Accordingly after every revolution fought out by the workers, a new struggle arose which ended with the defeat of the workers."

Every capitalist revolution, in whatever land, showed to a greater or lesser degree this "crack of the whip" towards its end, when the new ruling class, having achieved its major ends, wants to halt the swing of society at mid-point, and consolidate its power on a new conservative basis, while the oppressed mass wants to continue onwards towards the aims which it had dimly formulated of freedom from all oppression and an improvement in its conditions of life. But the French revolutions, for the reason pointed out by Engels, showed this phenomenon in advanced form. In the remarkable Paris of the nineteenth century, the *sans-culottes* stirred with a feeling for social change, for a cooperative commonwealth, for the rule of the underdog, which in sum total added up to the first anticipatory vision of the socialist society.

During the French Revolution of 1789-95, there arose a movement known as Babouvism, after its leader and organizer Francois-Noel (he later took the name "Gracchus") Babeuf. It grew to considerable importance after the overthrow of Robespierre and the seizure of power by a Directory. Babeuf called for a continuous war between patrician and plebeian, declaring that the Revolution would not be completed until property relations had been reformed to give full equality to all and permit none to exploit others. While very cloudy in its formulation, his program contained definite socialist overtones, demanding social ownership over the products of labor and an equal division thereof.

A PARTY, with its major strength in Paris but with some support elsewhere, was formed under his leadership, made up mainly, it appears, of artisans and workers. From the beginning it was suppressed by the Directors, so that its whole short life of a year or two was lived in a semi-underground state. And, as suppressed radical movements are wont, which exist for objectives that have little chance of achievement in their lifetime, its tactics were conspiratorial and coup-d'-étatist. It had a revolutionary committee in the Paris legion of police.

The short-lived crisis around Babouvism was brought to a head by a mutiny in an army battalion at Vincennes and in two battalions at Paris which refused orders to leave for the front in the war France was then conducting. The government moved swiftly, aided by a police spy high in the Babouvist ranks, and the foredoomed movement, born before its time, was soon beheaded and cut to pieces.

This event was an anticipatory glimpse of the course of every French crisis up to the Paris Commune of 1871. In the Revolution of 1848, when the Louis Philippe monarchy was overthrown, the Paris workers again took over the city, and again were driven back. The French capitalist class, facing the organized hostility of the workers and crippled in its political maneuvers by its own split between two major factions, was forced to fall back on a Bonapartist dictator, Louis Napoleon, who ruled for two decades as an arbiter of strife-torn French society. When he was overthrown in the course of the war with Prussia, the Paris workers again took over the city and gave the nineteenth century a first picture of a labor government, which lasted for 72 epoch-making days, again to be drowned in blood.

Thereafter, French capitalism found stability in a growing world market and the exploitation of a big colonial empire, from the proceeds of which it was able to keep its own population in line. Now the French ruling class, again in a crisis in which it is bitterly divided within itself and faced by a hostile working class, turns increasingly once again to a new Bonapartism—in fascist form this time—while the workers look once more—the time now fully ripe and overripe—towards the fulfillment of the movement which began a century and a half ago with Gracchus Babeuf.

Unfortunately, Mr. Bernstein's book contains no essays on the Revolution of 1848. But the other major events, from Marat to the Commune, are presented with considerable original source material from his researches into the periodicals and documents of the time. The reader of history—and especially the socialist reader—will find the materials valuable in giving him a picture of movements and individuals which may have been only names to him before.

DESPITE its value, the book is far from a first-class interpretive study, as it suffers from an academic approach which often fails to perceive the difference between a major and minor point, and loses much space piling up documentation for matters of little weight. Mr. Bernstein's essay on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the "Communist Manifesto," for example, is largely devoted to a refutation of the foolish cracks taken at Marx and Engels by Harold Laski and others to the effect that they had "plagiarized" from one Victor Considérant. Other essays devote themselves to rather pointless fact-collecting, and do not leave the reader with much of a thread on which to string the individual beads of fact—the major defect of academic writing. But the service which the book performs for the student of socialism is of value nonetheless, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Bernstein will follow up these researches with others of similar informative character.

H. B.

Risky Subject

DIGEST OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OF COMMUNISM IN THE UNITED STATES, published by The Fund for the Republic, Inc., New York, 1955.

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE COMMUNIST PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES, published by The Fund for the Republic, Inc., New York, 1955.

IT is not accidental that while a number of complete studies of the Socialist movement have been issued by the university presses since 1952, not one full-length scholarly work has yet been attempted on the American Communist movement. The absence is all the more noticeable as there does not exist any adequate history of the Communist Party. The only two books that pretend to cover the subject are "American Communism" by James Oneal and G. A. Werner, and "History of the Communist Party of the United States" by William Z. Foster—and both books are very poor. The former was first issued by Oneal, a right-wing Socialist, in 1927, and a number of additional chapters have been tacked on by Professor G. A. Werner of the College of the Pacific for a new edition published in 1947. Oneal's chapters are ferociously slanted and biased, and Werner's contributions are remarkably puerile and superficial. Foster's study is strictly a hack job.

The reasons that scholars have fought shy of embarking on this kind of project can easily be guessed when we consider the outcry that greeted the publication by the Fund for the Republic of simply a bibliography on the subject of American Communism. The academic cold war warriors whetted their knives and charged the Fund in general and Robert Hutchins, Jr., its director, in particular, with being a dupe of the Communists, or playing into the hands of the Communists, or being just plain pro-Communist! Verily, Communism is a subject full of pitfalls and traps, and the young academician, mindful of his career, is well advised to steer clear of it.

It recalls the story of the cop who charged into a demonstration cursing at the ringleaders as Communists while belaboring them with his night-stick. When several of the demonstrators remonstrated with him, "But we are not Communists! We are anti-Communists!"—the cop replied, "I don't care what kind of Communists you are"—and his club continued to swing. Such was the fate of Hutchins. The cold-war terminology and slant that pervades the two volumes didn't avail him with the witch-hunters, or with the small-minded professors, who either had a personal grudge to settle, or were hurt because their particular book or article was not included in the bibliography.

The two volumes are strictly reference works. The first contains an exhaustive resume of the statutes, executive orders and court decisions, as well as the important Congressional hearings and public documents, relating to Communism. The second is a huge bibliography of books and articles on the American Communist movement, and of the main Communist Party publications since its foundation. Both volumes will prove of inestimable aid to historians and students of American radicalism.

B.C.

State of the Nation

USA TODAY, by Helen & Scott Nearing. Social Science Institute, Harborside, Maine, 1955, $2.25.

THIS book contains the observations resulting from a lecture tour which took the authors through 47 states during 1952-55 and enabled them to address 600 meetings attended by 30,000 people. Expenses were covered by fees, sales of books and magazines, and indirectly, by a very abstemious way of living.

Long known for their non-conformist writings, Helen and Scott Nearing's purpose is to "inform and arouse" the American people to an "urgent" national situation, and "to enlighten those outside our borders as to the state of mind and condition of the USA today."

The authors found this country unrecognizable from what it was in 1948. In addition to a comprehensive recapitulation of the extent to which our liberties have been undermined in recent years, the book offers brief, but often provocative discussions of standardization, widespread emotional instability, the squandering of national resources, the decline of agriculture, and the disintegrating effects of urbanization.

In keeping with their sense of responsibility, the Nearings—unlike many other social scientists today—do not restrict themselves to a bare listing of facts and figures, but attempt to integrate them within a wider political framework. From their historical material, the following analysis emerges:

In contrast with the more gradual transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy that occurred in such capitalist countries as France and England, the U.S. —like Germany and Japan—absorbed this transition in a single generation. As a result, "the social balance was so explosively modified that the community, having lost its equilibrium, staggered and plunged from one excess into another." The "competition, acquisition and violence" characteristic of capitalist societies have reached a stage of development which the authors compare to a social cancer that, unchecked, will destroy the United States. In the face of these difficulties, and under the added impact of the extension of Communist influence abroad, the "USA Oligarchy"—the core of the American ruling class—has "deliberately and systematically" organized an almost completely fascist structure. This Oligarchy has planned a program of "coke and television," a carefully worked-out pattern of spare-time activity, which has driven the American people into a semi-stupor. In a recent article, Mr. Nearing is even more categorical and speaks of "the changes that have transformed American democracy into American fascism."

The Oligarchy would have the country entirely in its grip were it not for the general apathy of the population, and the "American Resistance," the entire body of non-conformists, described as "amorphous, fluid, fluctuating in numbers and in momentary intensity."

Abroad, however, the Oligarchy is in a weak position, chiefly as a result of the revolution unfolding in Asia. Placed in a counter-revolutionary position which it cannot maintain, the Oligarchy has "overreached" itself.

BASING themselves on the development of nuclear weapons, the extension of socialist ideas, and the colonial revolution, the authors are confident that the tide will turn, as increasing numbers of Americans will come to recognize the capitalist system as bankrupt. The Oligarchy will eventually disappear "into the limbo of files and records," swept away by the "tide of cooperative brotherhood."

Helen and Scott Nearing are obviously independent thinkers. This independence unfortunately tends at times toward an eccentric outlook which detracts from their persuasiveness, especially to those who still have to be awakened to some basic facts of life in the U.S. today.

Describing Americans as excessively preoccupied with the "enjoyment of physical sensations," the authors state that "we watched with amazement while men and women [in supermarkets] checked in their purchases of twenty, thirty, forty different items, with money totals running generally above ten dollars and frequently over twenty dollars." It is doubtful whether this will be favorably read by most hard-pressed parents in any of our cities.

While it is undeniable that militarism is playing an increasingly important part in this country, the argument is vitiated by such statements as "We do not know of a single instance in which the girls have refused to marry men because they had been members of the armed forces," or "the mass of USA juveniles hang around restlessly . . . waiting . . . for a likely war which might replace boredom by action. . . ."

What appears as a lack of balance, and a tendency to reduce complex matters to rigid formulations, is also manifest in the book's analytical sections.

The view that fascism has triumphed in the U.S. is contradicted by the authors' own trip (difficult as it was), by the confinement of McCarthyism, and by significant victories on the civil liberties front. The book ventures the guess that Landy would be refused the commission which, in fact, he got. There is no merit in proving right by hindsight, and there was considerable reason at the time to doubt this outcome. It should be considered, however, that things are not so far gone as we are told, when a few newspaper articles can still generate enough publicity to result in significant setbacks for the Oligarchy.

The book suffers much from a failure to deal with the trade union movement. It is hardly adequate to say that the "Oligarchy has accepted the principle of management-labor responsibility . . . and maintains relations with its working force . . . which have virtually eliminated the costly labor-management conflicts which proved so destructive to industrial effectiveness at the turn of the century." It is true that capitalists nowadays are more sophisticated and circumspect in their dealings with labor; but this is due to the strength of the trade union movement, and the authors' few references to it in no way convey the progressive possibilities inherent in this strength if, and when, the economic situation worsens—as the book indicates it will. The absence of any discussion on the situation of the Negro people also stands out in a book of this kind.

IT is difficult to follow the authors' picture of the "American Resistance." It is described generally as a conglomeration of unrelated dissenting individuals and small groups, mostly preoccupied with their own grievances; yet elsewhere we are told of a "widespread, growing Resistance," and of the war danger which has "galvanized the American Resistance into activity." It is regrettable that the authors, so strongly committed to socialism, did not find it possible to contribute more concretely and cogently to the question: By what process will the American people—and particularly the working class—turn leftward?

The central concept of the "American Oligarchy" presents serious difficulties. The authors state at one point that there are many cracks and splits within the Oligarchy. Yet the tenor of the book is heavily in the direction of a monolithic, conspiratorial group acting unitedly in behalf of its own interests. Such a concept is unrealistic and static, and unfortunate in that it ignores the opportunities afforded progressives by the ruling class' difficulties and resulting lack of cohesion in its day-to-day activities. One has a strong impression that the failure to be more explicit on the nature and future of the "Resistance" is paralleled in its lack of realism by this inadequate view of the capitalist class.

While in disagreement with much of the material, this reviewer found the book very well written, frequently informative, and moving. Sensitive readers, especially those who can confess to passivity and lethargy in the face of the events described by Helen and Scott Nearing, will experience a sense of humility in the presence of this fearless and dedicated couple who braved considerable material and emotional obstacles to penetrate the "curtain of fear" that isolates so many Americans. Their journeys probably helped to revive many sparks that had begun to die out. There are many who give lip service to the notion that action ought to complement words. Helen and Scott Nearing are among the few who live up to it.

F. G.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Israel and the Arabs

For a long time, the doctrinaire Left has condemned nationalism *per se* as a tool of reaction. Zionism has been characterized by the automatons of the Communist Party as a "tool of British imperialism." It is strange to see these robots now cheering on Arab nationalism, and even stranger to see the same thing from your quarter, from which I had come to expect penetrating analysis, and not slogans. Nationalism which seeks to replant a people who have been uprooted for centuries and nationalism which seeks to destroy another people for whatever reason must be distinguished between.

Fully half of the Israeli economy is on a socialist basis. Its health-and-welfare system far surpasses that of Britain. The dominant party is the social-democratic Mapai, and for the first time since the provisional days, the Marxist Mapam and Achdut-Avoda are in the government, with better than 50 percent support for these three parties.

The "lightning rod" theory of Arab hostility cannot be discounted. Long before Arab "anti-imperialism" took root, notably in 1948 when future Israeli policy could not be known, the Arab leaders were engaged in anti-Jewish provocation. In addition, budding Arab capitalism fears the preponderance of the capitalistic sector of Israel, and it is this group of Arab capitalists which is pushing rival foreign capitalism. It is also this group which fears the spread of influence of Israel's socialist sector.

It cannot be in the interest of socialism to support the demise (not simply defeat) of any nation, and most certainly not one of the promising social character of Israel. It is disturbing that you did not see fit to condemn Russia's trade of arms to aggressive Egypt in return for nice words and more votes in the UN.

Larry Hochman
Rochester, New York

. . . Let me mention just an instance of the accuracy and penetration most of your articles show. After the recent French elections, I looked through my old papers for background. I found the article in *American Socialist* from the June 1955 issue on trends in the French Left. There were all the dynamics in germ which found expression in the recent elections. And there were predictions which the future still has to uncover. For example, I'm sure the CP is going to take more interest in a domestic program with teeth in it. But we shall see.

Long life this year, and next, and next. And bravo to your democracy in opening your columns to reader articles and long reader letters. I enclose my renewal, a subscription for a friend, and a small contribution.

B. L. *Ann Arbor, Mich.*

I consider your magazine very good. I was very much interested in your article on the farm problem. I lived on a farm when I was young. My brother still runs it.

It is a very painful thing to go through to have to give up your economic existence and habits of life and watch the big farms take over. Yet it has to come. That is progress. It is only too bad that we don't have an intelligent society that could educate these people on the necessity of change, or ease the burden of change. . . .

E. P. *Milwaukee*

We like the *American Socialist*—but of course our ideas have been and are running along your lines, since we see no solution for our problems under a capitalist society as it is now. Certainly the socialist countries are putting us to shame.

The old-time religionists are now prophesying the end of the world (but not doing anything to avoid it and everything possible to bring it about) and for everyone to be ready to meet his Maker in the sky! That we will only have peace in the "millenium," after we are dead! Who wouldn't have peace then?

Keep up your good work. Enclosed find a two-year renewal subscription. We have faith the world will last that long.

R. W. *Montana*

Opportunity for the Little Fellow?

Where is "free enterprise" located today in American society? Like the Condor or Dodo bird it seems to be rapidly becoming extinct.

A larger percentage of small business enterprises failed in the past year than in any other year in our history. Small chance to successfully exercise free enterprise in the business world, competing with Sears, Montgomery-Ward, Thrifty, Kress and other monopolized store and market chains.

Fifty years ago you could start a small merchantile store, factory, butcher shop, newspaper or other business enterprise with reasonable chances of moderate success. And, if sufficiently unscrupulous, a sharp buyer, able to cut prices under competitors and engage in other ruthless practices you might be able to branch out with additional stores, gobble up smaller and more honest competitors and eventually become a Sears, Marshall-Field, a Chandler or other bigshot in your line of endeavor.

But today? One in a million to reach the top would be a liberal average regardless of ability or branch of business selected.

Take the independent farmer: In spite of the fact that there are more farm products raised in the United States than ever before, there are fewer farmers than at any time within the last several decades. And the ratio is diminishing year after year. Farms are getting bigger and bigger and individual farm owners fewer and fewer.

Why this decrease in farm population and what is becoming of the disappearing independent small farmer? The answer is simple. Mechanized farm equipment, necessary to profitable farm operation in this age, costs more than a small farmer can afford. Only the bigger farm owner can pay the 10, 20 or 50 thousand dollars for machinery required to successfully and economically operate a modern farm today. Such machinery cannot be used profitably on a small farm of limited acreage.

A 2,000-acre farm with such equipment can be operated today with less man-power than 160 acres could have been some 40 or 50 years ago. Hence the bigger farmers are taking over the smaller ones in order to keep their high-priced equipment moving and ownership profitable. Thus the more affluent are displacing more and more small farmers and farm hands.

And these displaced small farmers and displaced farm hands go to the city. They hire out to General Motors, Ford, Douglas, or other monopolized industry as wage earners and are seen no more, independence gone forever.

There was a time, not too long ago, when an ambitious young man could quite easily acquire a piece of farm land, a small stock ranch, or timber claim. By working his heart out fourteen hours a day he might become quasi-independent. If exceptionally alert and thrifty—and lucky—he could possibly become a cattle or timber baron or wealthy farmer. In that day there was freedom of enterprise which, if taken advantage of, gave the small man an opportunity to become big.

But where does such opportunity lie for the little fellow today? Where does it lie in any known field of activity in which consumer products are made available for human needs? Who would be so naive as to imagine—even if not prohibited by government restrictions—that he could successfully build and own a railroad or other transportation line, compete in automobile manufacturing, airplane, steel, oil, gas, meat-packing, lumber, electric power, telephone, telegraph, shipping, fisheries, papermaking, farm equipment, brewery, distillery and a thousand other mentionables?

Let's be realistic. Let us face the truth as mature thinking people. Such free enterprise as may remain is practically nil. And those who harp the most upon its existence in American society know its limits best.

Independence, initiative and free enterprise on assembly lines? No such animal. If wholly subservient and acquiescent to industry's dictum, one in 10,000 may become a straw-boss. If especially talented and tractable, one in 100,000 may become a diminutive official. And if luckily favored through relationship or otherwise one in 500,000 could possibly become an executive cog in the vast corporate machine.

But where! oh where, lies any unexplored fallow ground, not restricted, in any field of human endeavor where free enterprise—"rugged individualism"—may be indulged, in this the beginning of the year of our Lord, 1956?

George D. Brewer
San Pedro, California

We'll Do the Rest

NOW that we are settled in our new office (see box with details on page 2), we are getting ready with a new push to expand the circulation of the AMERICAN SOCIALIST. We are casting about for ways and means, and, as in the past, we expect that the greatest aid will come from present readers.

We are sure that there are many readers who have possibilities among their friends and who have not yet sent the names in. For one thing, it is some time since we last asked our readers to send in lists for sample-copy mailings. For another, some readers have been sending us lists on their own.

A number of readers have concentrated to such good effect on spreading the AMERICAN SOCIALIST in their towns that we now have nice-sized readerships in a number of places where we formerly had none. We urge every supporter of the magazine to work up a list of friends' and prospects' names, and mail them in to us. We'll do the rest.

CHICAGO MEETING

Ten Years of the Cold War: Where Are We Going?

✧

Speakers: **Harvey O'Connor**
Bert Cochran

Chairman: **Rev. William Baird**

FRIDAY, MARCH 30

8:00 P.M.

Midland Hotel

172 W. Adams

Contrib: $1 Students 50 cents

Auspices: American Socialist

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