

The American **Socialist**

By Conrad Lynn:

**Acid Test
of
American
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DECEMBER 1956

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The Crimes Against Hungary and Egypt



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IN RUSSIA?**

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**NEW LOOK OF
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CLIPPING S

WHATEVER the outcome of this Hitler-like aggression [France's attack on Egypt], the consequences are of course going to be appalling. But until these consequences have developed, the French press, largely in the hands of financial and political "lobbies" like the textile-king Boussac, the aircraft magnate Bloch-Dassault, etc., is trying to stifle all feeling of anxiety by presenting a sensational picture of the thrashing given to the Egyptians.

Among the workers on the Left in general, hostility against the Mollet government is reaching a peak-point. Many meetings have been held, and short token strikes have been called in industry, both by the Communist-dominated CGT and by the local Christian unions.

Force-Ouvriere, the non-Communist trade union congress, seems to be more reluctant, partly because of its ties with the Socialist Party, partly because of the influence of its North African federations, which are generally anti-Moslem and fearful of North African independence.

But the great obstacle to a powerful attack against the government lies on the one side in the Socialist Party, and on the other in the Communist Party, especially after the events in Hungary.

The Mollet machine, based on bureaucrats who have no other political idea than anti-Communism, and supported by a large majority of card-carriers, can effectively stifle the voice of the real militants and create a permanent threat against parliamentary deputies who would like to oppose the government. This puts all real Socialists cuffed and gagged into M. Mollet's hands.

On the other hand, the French Communist leaders have not shown the slightest sign to follow the Gomulka way. They played down the events in Poland to an extent that astonished even many party members; they have never really endorsed the 20th Congress principles and were only too glad to receive Mr. Khrushchev's blessings after the Poznan riots.

Whether Mollet realizes it or not, the generals and some of the Ministers are plotting to use general war against the Arabs as a means of establishing a dictatorship in France. (From article by Claude Bourdet, editor of "France Observateur" appearing in British "Tribune.")

Many Socialists are said to believe that the Soviet attack on Hungary has had considerable effect on the loyalties of Communist militants in France and this was an opportunity for the Socialists to gain strength at Communist expense. This cannot be done, according to some Socialists, until the Socialist Party returns to what they consider Socialist principles.

An editorialist for "Le Monde," Maurice Duverger, said today that many Communists were ready to abandon their party, but in view of M. Mollet's brand of socialism, they

had nowhere to go. (From Paris correspondent, "N. Y. Times," November 20.)

ATTORNEY General Brownell is pushing the case to deprive James J. Matles of citizenship and deport him. Howard B. Gliedman, assistant U. S. Attorney, submitted an affidavit urging speed in the case as Matles "is probably the main guiding spirit of the United Electrical Workers Union, a strong labor union whose members are engaged in plants where secret and sensitive work is being performed on behalf of the United States government. This is the same union which recently conducted a long strike against Westinghouse Electric Company, and defendant James J. Matles represented the union in these negotiations. If the government's charge be correct, it would be extremely dangerous to permit the defendant to continue in this position any longer than absolutely necessary, and a speedy determination is essential for the security of the country."

This is the same Brownell who in the midst of the national Westinghouse strike last summer filed charges against UE under the Brownell-Butler law asking the Subversive Activities Board to declare the union a "communist-infiltrated" organization.

The U. S. Court of Appeals at San Francisco announced that it would issue a mandate permitting 2,000 maritime workers who had been screened out of the industry by the Coast Guard the right to regain their shipping papers. The court's announcement came as the deadline passed without the Department of Justice making any move to appeal the court's previous decision.

A CONSIDERABLE opposition movement is making headway in the giant steel union whose president, David J. McDonald, has just recently succeeded in having his salary jacked up to \$50,000 per year. The opposition started over the dues increase from \$3 to \$5 a month which was steam-rolled through the union convention at Los Angeles. First, a few scattered locals sent in protests. But these were soon knit together with the formation of a Dues Protest Committee which has as its aim the calling of a special convention to reconsider the decision. The union's constitution requires the support of 25 percent of the locals before such a convention can be called. The Committee has opened up its own post office box at McKeesport and is asking all locals sending in resolutions to the International to submit copies to the committee. The dues opposition movement also carries overtones of general opposition to the McDonald machine.

THE Socialist Club at the University of Minnesota sponsored a symposium on the Polish-Hungarian events October 31. The participants were David Herreshoff, director of the club and representative of the "American Socialist," and Carl Ross, State Secretary of the Communist Party. Herreshoff also announced that a letter addressed to both Premiers Mollet and Bulganin had been signed by many members of the faculty and student body at the university. The letter calls upon both governments to order the withdrawal of their troops from Poland, Hungary, Algeria and Egypt, and concludes, "As American socialists and democrats we will meanwhile not shirk our own responsibility to do our utmost to secure the dismantling of the far-flung military bases which our own government has set up overseas. It is our opposition to our own militarism which, we believe, gives us the right to reproach you about yours."

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Poland and Hungary

TWO revolutions have swept over Eastern Europe—revolutions in the scientific, not just sensationalistic, use of the word. The upheavals have not yet stabilized in either Poland or Hungary and particularly in Hungary, no one can yet tell what will be the new structure when the smoke of battle finally clears away. But both in Hungary and Poland, the old rotted, wormy regimes have been shattered irrevocably and a new stage will now open up in the lives of the peoples of both countries.

The play of circumstance, timing, and inner-Communist conflict produced from the same basic matrix of forces, a cold settlement and victory for independent communism in Poland but a bloody revolutionary maelstrom and an ensuing chaos in Hungary. Despite the vast contrast in the course of events in the two countries, nobody doubts, least of all the Polish people and Communist leaders themselves, that what happened in Hungary could just as easily have happened in Poland. The sources of revolt, the popular demands, the moods of the masses, the causes of the eruption, the composition of the people and of the government, were all very much the same in both countries.

The Russians, in their eleven years of domination over the East European satellites, earned the full measure of hatred evoked by arrogant foreign conquerors. It is true that they brought with them a new social and economic order, many features of which were appreciated by the workers and peasants. But no people welcomes a regime thrust upon it on the point of a bayonet. Robespierre, who knew about these things, said long ago that people do not go for armed missionaries.

BUT when the conqueror compounds the injury by a systematic looting of the country's wealth, as the Russians did, and when he chokes the subject countries in a vise of despotic authoritarianism, so that every major decision, economic or political, is made in the imperial capital, resentment naturally turns to an explosive hatred. Some apologists have thought to rationalize the matter by interposing that all of this is being done to "bring socialism," not realizing that this explanation only smears the idea of socialism without mitigating the crime.

The result of this brand of so-called "socialism" we have now all seen. There is no room left for doubt about the feelings of the East European people on this score. The enraged howl that issued from the Polish working class towards the Russians during the showdown there; the repeated cry "Rokossovsky to Siberia;" the death-grip with which Hungarians of all classes hung on to the demand for an evacuation of Russian troops and continued to fight for it long after all of their other major demands had been granted—this gives the answer. *The revolutions in Poland and Hungary were first of all national revolutions against a foreign occupation.*

The Soviet Union, it is true, did bring to the countries it occupied at the close of World War II a socialist framework for the economy. But along with it they brought their own special caricature of that system: a privileged satrapy; an iron political dictatorship; a purge system for the physical destruction of all dissent, whether socialist or capitalist; a miserable dogma of conformism in the sphere of ideas; a bureaucratized factory administration which, far from inspiring the working

class, squeezed the breath from its body.

Months before the October outburst in Hungary, at a meeting of the Petofi Circle, a branch of the Communist Youth League organized last March to give voice to discontent, a writer shouted: "It is high time that an end be put to this regime of gendarmes and bureaucrats." When the first flood of criticism, too bitter and widespread to be dammed by censors or police, hit the Polish and Hungarian press almost a year ago, the Stalinist party chiefs, the secret police, the bureaucratic apparatus and the entire structure of dictatorship was literally stripped of all support. The hatred for the foreign conqueror extended to his regime of native *gauleiters*. And since the Communists had extirpated or silenced all political opposition voices both inside and outside the party, the governments found themselves in a state of suspended animation as soon as the iron lid of authoritarianism had been loosened. Thus, besides being a revolt against foreign domination, the revolution of East Europe was likewise *a revolt against the native dictatorial puppet regimes.*

THE third major cause of the revolutions was *the breakdown of the economic structure.* Industrialization was pushed, in imitation of Russia, to such extreme limits that the people lived under a permanent state of siege. While industrial production was growing, living standards were not improving, as Gomulka made clear in his survey of the Polish economy. (See his speech in this issue.) Housing was deteriorating in much of Poland faster than it was being built. Productivity started to fall, and in the end, the industrialization targets of the plans were threatened, as the workers began, in growing bitterness at their poverty, to withhold their labor. The result was a fall in the national income in Hungary in the latter years of the plan, and a disorganization of Polish economy which led to the Poznan rebellion and the complete loss of control over the economy immediately thereafter.

In the countryside, the peasants were herded into collective farms which, in the absence of mechanization, became nothing but bureaucratic units of administration for keeping a tighter con-

trol over the peasants and collecting compulsory taxes-in-kind from them. The real meaning and benefit of an agricultural cooperative was thus dissipated, and the peasants looked upon them as rural concentration camps and robbery-depots. Not having consumer goods to give to the peasants in return for farm produce, the regimes were increasingly forced to resort to coercion or the threat of it. The peasant began his silent struggle against the regime. Productivity, instead of increasing, was lower in the collectives and state farms than on the private farms.

WHILE it is easy to recognize the three basic causes of the revolts, it is not as simple a matter to trace out the next course of development, particularly in the midst of a situation so unsettled as the present. Certain major landmarks, however, emerge from the turbulent October-November days. The Soviet bloc is in the grip of a gigantic transformation in which changes from above interact with upheaval from below. The trend is in the direction of destroying Stalinism and all its vestiges, and reconstructing socialism on an entirely new model: more democratic, more popular, economically more beneficial for the people. The vast reservoir of popular will is now beginning to be turned to that end throughout the Soviet bloc, and this more than anything that has fallen from any Russian ruler's lips guarantees that history will write finis to the nightmare of Stalinism.

Some liberals and socialists of the West, while displaying infinite patience with a snail's pace of reform in their own countries, insist that in the Soviet bloc the transformation must be put through at a single blow, and call anything short of that a counterfeit. Admirable as that would be, it is in the nature of the thing impossible, as Polish developments proved from the affirmative side and Hungarian events from the negative. The revolution is compelled to move in stages, making up its leadership out of the political material available from the old setup, until new leaderships, organizations, and movements can be fashioned. Under any leadership and program, it will be some time before these countries can attain the economic standards of ad-

vanced capitalism, let alone surpass them with the standards of socialism. The resources and productivity of labor required for that cannot be created by fiat, but require time, and perhaps even the victory of Western socialism and its aid and collaboration.

What will the coming stage be? A slowdown in the rate of industrialization and more consumer goods; a dispersal of the collective farms or at least their continuance on a purely voluntary basis until the machinery is available for more effective operation; independence from the Russians; and liberalization in the political sphere, including more factory democracy and popular control of the economic plan. Barely stated, this is the professed program of Titoism, although it is certainly carried through only in part in Yugoslavia. Gomulka, returning to power after some years in a Stalinist prison, outlined this program in essence in his take-over speech to the Polish Central Committee. These demands formed the body of the program of the Hungarian workers, students, and intellectuals at the start of the rebellion there, also.

The Titoist-Gomulka stage, if such it can be called, is not democratic socialism, as is plain to see from the numerous elements of dictatorship which its exponents publicly avow, not to speak of the ways in which these regimes do not live up to their declared aims (witness the arrest of Milovan Djilas in Yugoslavia). But the new set-

up abandons Draconian measures on the economic field in response to popular pressure; it follows popular sentiments in opposing Russian domination; it gives way a bit to the demand for some factory democracy; and it loosens the iron bonds of Stalinist dogma in every field. While the new "independent communism" is a way station on the road to a new and higher evolution, it is clear that even in itself it represents an entirely different relationship with the mass of people than Stalinism.

BOTH the Polish and the Hungarian revolutions flared up around the Gomulka-type program we have described, but in one case the victory was bloodless, while in the other, a bitter armed battle blew up which drew upon the magnificent fighting resources of an entire people and shed more blood on European soil than any event since the second World War. Stalinism must take the full responsibility for the blood bath in Hungary. The only reason that popular insurgency assumed such uncontrolled violence is simply that Stalinism was more successful, more tenacious in Hungary, and political opposition to it weaker or more completely wiped out.

In Poland, the past experiences of the Communist Party had left a lingering resentment against Moscow. The memory of the dissolution of the Polish Communist Party in the late thirties by Stalin, and the execution of its en-



Warsaw youths, avid for news of the Polish Communist Party's showdown with the Kremlin, stand, sit, or squat as they gobble up latest reports in the Sunday, October 21 papers. Armed guards meanwhile protected the Soviet embassy in Warsaw following a militant youth demonstration there the night before.

tire leading staff (then in Russia as exiles from the Polish White terror) in the purges, probably helped the Polish Communists to resist when Stalin ordered Gomulka tried and executed as a Titoist. Stalin's chief agent in Poland, Boleslaw Bierut (who died of a heart attack after the Khrushchev report to the 20th Congress about Stalin's crimes), is reported to have sent word to ignore the Kremlin's demand for a purge at that time.

Poland was, together with Hungary, in the forefront of the de-Stalinization ferment of the past year; it was in that country that some of the sharpest criticisms were voiced, some of the most savage satires written. But the decisive event loosening the Stalinist grip on the party was the Poznan rebellion, when the workers forcefully stepped into the political arena, which up to this time had been dominated by the intellectuals and students. The Poznan events were the real beginning of the Polish revolution, and threw the entire economy into a crisis as the "Poznan mood" spread from factory to factory and city to city.

Under the great popular pressure the Gomulka wing of the Polish party, suppressed and imprisoned up to a few months ago, began a swift comeback, and found allies in the dominant Ochab-Cyrankiewicz leadership, which had been shaken to the marrow by Poznan. It was this combination which isolated the Stalinists, called upon the workers and youth to defend the new regime, faced up to the Kremlin, and in rapid order mobilized enough power to successfully challenge the Russians. The key to the bloodless victory of Poland was that the Communist Party itself went through a timely upheaval and took leadership over the forces of independence, liberalization, workers' initiative, and "consumerism"; this double victory gave the revolution both a program and an organized leadership.

IN Hungary, Stalinism was far stronger, and the forces of independent communism much more disorganized. Up to Poznan, the evolution of Hungarian Communism had been almost identical with that of Polish. The de-Stalinization ferment was equally great, the rebellion of the youth and intellectuals as fiery, the workers in a sullen opposition mood. But when the

Poznan warning sounded in Poland, the Hungarian Stalinists grimly held on. Rajk, the Hungarian Gomulka, and by all accounts the most popular leader



of unpopular Hungarian Communism, had been murdered together with a host of others in 1949-50. The stand-in for the role of a new Hungarian Gomulka was a pale and watery oppositionist: Imre Nagy had no solid group in the party and his record of anti-Stalinism was limited to a flurry as a consumer-goods advocate in the Malenkov period, after which he had been expelled.

The number-one Stalinist of Hungary, Rakosi, was sacked, but Erno Gero, his right-hand man, took over from him and warned the country that there would be "no Poznans" in his domain. Instead of heeding, as the Polish leaders did, the warning of Poznan, taking responsibility for the discontent of the people and seeking to give it coherent expression, the Gero group tried to tighten up still further. Instead of defying Moscow and forming itself into a viaduct over which the nation could pass to the liberalization which the people were demanding, the party became a wall against it.

What a mighty flood it was that smashed that wall and rolled against the Russians themselves! And how blind were those who thought the people could be dammed up indefinitely! The calling out of the Russian troops was only the most criminal act in a homicidal play which led inevitably to that final infamy. By taking its stand on Stalinism, the Hungarian Communist party had isolated itself and then broken itself completely. Its leaders spoke as though into dead microphones, its paper ceased to appear, its ranks

joined the rebels. The Stalinist leaders were left with no army but the Russian. It was the failure of Hungarian Communism to break out of the straitjacket of Stalinism in good time that made for the appalling contrast between Poland and Hungary.

THE Hungarian revolution in its opening days embraced all elements of the population including the army and the ranks of the Communist party, because of its strong national character. In the forefront, the gleeful heralds of the rebellion and some of its bravest soldiers, were the students and intellectuals. As in all revolutions, they had been most sensitive to the moods and feelings which were to produce the popular upheaval. They articulated the program in the resolutions and newspapers they circulated, calling for freedom from the Russians, an end to police tyranny, and the other slogans that have resounded around the world.

The workers were a bit slower, but they soon moved into the battle. The general strike took hold about a week after the initial demonstrations. Workers' centers like Csepel Island—the industrial heart of Hungary and the main center of working-class Communism—became strongholds. Workers' councils were formed throughout Hungary, took over the functions of local governments, articulated demands for a better living standard and control in the factories, and directed the fighting in many places. Right down to the present writing, three weeks after it started, the general strike continues in many parts of the country, and workers' committees continue to negotiate with the Kadar regime.

The peasants broke violently out of the collective-farm system; this was their main interest in the rebellion and they acted upon it. They continued to feed the cities where the workers were on strike, but politically they responded to the capitalist-church combination that was beginning to raise its head.

Mushrooming into the political vacuum, the old parties of the peasant, the church, and the capitalist began to take shape. Cardinal Mindszenty returned to Belgrade in triumph and smiled smugly when reporters told him that all Hungary was looking to him. The next day he launched a new Popu-

lar Christian Party. Zoltan Tildy, leader of the reconstituted Smallholders Party, had been taken into the disorganized government by Premier Nagy, but he now revealed over the Budapest radio a "surprise" demand that Mindszenty be included in any new government as he was "the only man who could unify the country." An ex-Premier of Hungary waited at the Austrian border for a call to the seat of government.

MEANWHILE, the revolution in the streets was virtually leaderless. In a November 1 dispatch from Budapest, headed "Rebels Seek Leadership," John MacCormac of the *N.Y. Times* wrote:

Two prominent Communists who were asked in Parliament whether there was still a Communist party in Hungary said that it had virtually ceased to exist. They did not try to conceal their fear for the future.

The two said not only the Communists but the entire Government of Premier Imre Nagy feared that the revolution might turn into another anti-Communist terror. They believed that only Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty, who has just been released, could stop it. . . .

The unique thing about the revolution is that it was born without leaders and without organization. Such leadership as there was originated among the intellectuals, represented by writers, journalists, students. None had political experience.

Now that the revolution has been miraculously born and still more miraculously successful, it is looking for leaders and an organization and is wholly uncertain whether it will find them.

While the aspiration of the workers and youth who spearheaded the revolution was to duplicate what Gomulka had done, there was nobody around on the Hungarian Left who could assume leadership, as Stalinism had effectively destroyed all serious independent forces, and the revolution could not create authoritative leadership and organizations on the spur of the moment. This blind alley of the Hungarian revolution in its initial stage is symbolized

by the fact that although rebel groups are now demanding a return of Imre Nagy to power, they did not believe they could trust him when he *was* in power. Reaction took advantage of this vacuum of leadership to try to sidetrack the revolution into anti-communism, anti-Semitism and White terror.

Some are grasping at this last straw to justify the Russians' second intervention. It becomes pretty hopeless trying to argue with people who can't differentiate between strikers and fascists, between conquerors and liberators. Let's understand that the arsonist who started the blaze cannot be entrusted with the responsibility for putting it out. The crimes of Stalinism produced dangers of an uncontrolled reaction, but the savage repression only increases the dangers of a later and even worse explosion. You cannot cure a case of the DT's by hitting the bottle more unrestrainedly. And as the general strike subsequent to the bloodletting—with the workers' demand for free elections that embrace all parties that support socialism—shows, the workers would possibly have straightened out the mess if the Hungarian people were left alone to solve their problems.

The butchery has done untold damage to Russia's prestige and has given socialism the world over a black eye. Time and again throughout its history, Stalinism has undercut the moral position of socialists abroad, especially in the West. The Hungarian atrocity is probably the worst blow it has delivered. It was barbaric and reactionary, and socialists everywhere ought to rise up against it and erect a moral barrier that will try to prevent its ever being repeated.

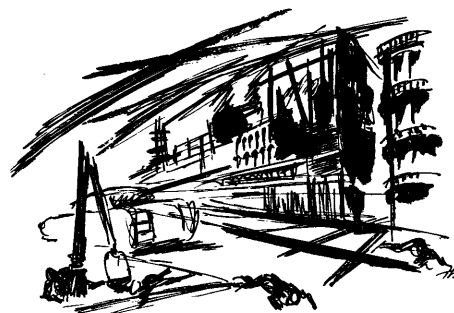
BUT on balance the Hungarian revolution will prove far from an unrelieved tragedy. It will probably win a considerable victory, even if not a complete one. The Kadar regime installed

by the Russians had to use as its figurehead a Hungarian dissident who was in disgrace with Moscow not many months ago. The program of the new government yields almost all the demands of the insurgents except the withdrawal of Russian troops. This is not just verbiage, as no government can rule Hungary today in the old way. The new regime all but admits that the rebel committees continue to exercise more real authority in the populace than the government.

Beyond that, the Hungarian revolution set ablaze a great new struggle in the Soviet bloc. Tito, who had remained silent during the revolt and its crushing, formally promulgated the battle when he renewed hostilities with Moscow in his Pula speech of November 11 in which he revealed the existence of a deep division within the Russian Communist leadership itself, blamed the Hungarian events on a continued policy of Stalinism on Russia's part, and drew a bitter reply from *Pravda*. The battle thus announced will break out in all Eastern Europe and will sooner or later come into the open in Russia itself. When it does, it will no longer be restricted to the top oligarchy. Titoism was organized rigidly from the top down in Yugoslavia. Gomulka, in contrast, was swept into power by a swirling mass movement from below. The next big Russian changes will probably look more Polish than Yugoslav.

The crisis in world Communism has also been taken out of the realm of vagaries and slick formulas by the Hungarian and Polish revolutions. Historically speaking, the death knell of Western Communism has been sounded, regardless of the duration of organizational inertia in this or that country. Communism will not long survive in its old forms. Its moral collapse opens the possibility of new Left socialist formations, far superior to the old, by a process of regroupments, reorientations, fusions, and the like.

In other words, the long-run result of the Hungarian-Polish revolutions and the events which will come in their train can very well be a re-awakening of the spirit of peoples elsewhere and a resurgence of the international socialist movement on the path of both militancy and democracy.



Adventure in Egypt

WHEN an empire is doomed, its princes and rulers get bathed in a sickly light, as if the curse of the fates has been fastened upon them. If they temporize and procrastinate, their policy appears as one of cowardice and retreat. If they try to act bold and aggressive, their performance resembles the antics of a violent fool. So it was that a fatuous Tory politician from Britain and a yellow Socialist from France had to bring the world to the brink of another war in order to demonstrate to themselves, their peoples, and to the whole world, that Britain and France are no longer first-class powers and incapable of pursuing an independent policy against the wishes of Russia and the United States.

Neither Britain's withdrawal from India, nor France's departure from the Near East, were as costly to their prestige as their short-lived victory over Egypt; neither so humiliatingly exposed that their inglorious greed is no longer adequately paced with the requisite armed might to grab and to hold.

How was it possible for seasoned political figures representing two of the craftiest ruling powers of the world to have so atrociously miscalculated the situation, and found themselves forced to call off a war thirty-six hours after starting it? It is because the British and French rulers are getting desperate in their losing battle to hang on to part of their ancient glories and privileged preserves; desperation is bringing on fevers and chills; and with the body's resistance thus lowered, the fever-racked brain tends to weaken its hold on the cold realities and succumb to the gambler's psychology. Eden and Mollet look like a pair of prize jackasses today, but just last week they had a majority of their parliaments supporting their crazy plunge! Demoralized classes, just like individuals, sometimes take to smoking the pipe.

THEIR affairs in truth were in grim shape at the end of October. Three months had passed since Nasser had nationalized the canal, and all the high-level international conferences and

high-flown resolutions notwithstanding, he seemed to be getting away with it. With Egypt's authority on the rise, Nasser's drive to create a unified Arab state, or at least an Arab bloc, seemed to be proceeding successfully. Military juntas favorable to him were rearing their heads throughout the Near East and had already crowded Britain out of Jordan. French North Africa was up in flames and the Paris government had concluded that its chance of stamping out the Algerian uprising was practically nil if it could not destroy Nasser. To add to the desperation of their plight, dread Russian influence had definitely become something to reckon with in Egypt after the arms deal, and Russian popularity was growing by the hour due to her resolute defense of Egyptian rights after the nationalization of the Suez Canal.



Their cup finally ran over when they got convinced that they were being double-crossed in their hour of mortal peril by their dear ally, good old Uncle Sam. Immediately after the July 26 nationalization announcement, they began concentrating military forces in the Mediterranean and talked bellicosely of a decisive counter-stroke, but the United States would not join them in the war threats and Dulles pressured them into acceding to his slow-moving propaganda and economic campaign.

First, he headed them off into the London conference and futile negotiations with Nasser. Then, he concocted the formula of a Canal Users Association, which Britain thought would be

the instrumentality for either an economic blockade of Egypt or the organizer of a series of provocations leading to war, but which Dulles promptly converted into an innocuous scheme to cooperate in maintaining effective service through the canal.

UP to this point, the friction between France and England on the one side and the United States on the other remained blanketed by the facade of essential Big Three unity to re-establish international control over the canal. It was exasperating enough for the bleeding European imperial powers when they believed Dulles was full of philosophical patience only because America was not immediately dependent on the canal—as they were—and only because America had the gold—which they did not—to pursue a leisurely program of eventually squeezing Nasser in an economic vise. But their mounting frustration turned into fury when they suspected that Dulles might be working up a private deal with Nasser at their expense.

American maneuvers certainly lent themselves to this interpretation. American pilots were granted passports to go to work on the Canal. The U.S. representative cast the deciding vote to hear Egypt in the UN Security Council. Then on October 2, Cairo announced that the Egyptian Suez Canal Director General was on his way to the United States seeking American technical assistance. On the same day, Dulles tossed out his little diplomatic bombshell that the United States had to play a "somewhat independent role" and could not identify its policy with the "so-called colonial powers."

Two days later, the *N.Y. Times* carried the front page story that U.S. oil and shipping company executives were going to discuss with Egypt a project for financing Suez Canal improvement to the tune of \$1½ billion. A few days later, the *Times* explained: "The idea is that Egypt would assign, by contract, the responsibility for operating and developing the Canal, to an international consortium of private business interests, including U.S. oil and shipping companies, as well as private companies of other countries."

Claire Sterling of *The Reporter* wrote from Tel Aviv: "This convinced Ben Gurion that the United States was preparing to make a deal with Nas-

ser whereby the Egyptian ruler would get American moral, diplomatic and financial support, and America would, in exchange, be permitted to occupy the freshly vacated seats of Britain and France in the Middle East." A week later French Foreign Minister Pineau declared to the National Assembly that "French public opinion would not understand if the Suez Canal Company were replaced purely and simply by an American company." In other words, in the midst of the effort to break the national independence movement in the Near East, the imperialists began squabbling over the loot—before they had even brought their victim to heel.

IT is tragic that Israel permitted itself to get sucked into this filthy business. Of course, her situation was not only bad, but deteriorating steadily. The Arab nations were united in their hatred of the little state, they wouldn't make peace with it, they blockaded it and harassed it, they were resolved to secure its destruction. Cairo Radio announced: "We want revenge and our revenge is Israel's death."

With time, Egypt would absorb the new arms that the Soviets had shipped in, perfect its system of alliances, and at a propitious moment, move in to drive the Jews into the sea. The prospect of waiting for their doom did not appear too inviting to Israel, and her leaders probably wondered whether they would ever again be granted such a magnificent opportunity to wage war. Egypt was preoccupied with her Suez Canal troubles; Russia was busy with Poland and Hungary; the United States was in the midst of an election campaign; and Britain and France were not averse to her adventure. Israel struck and her military victory was overwhelming; but the question arises whether she has not committed the worst blunder in her whole history.

Israel has no future as a state if she stays dependent on the support of one or another of the Western imperialists, thus necessarily remaining an imperialist outpost in the Middle East. The Jews have a tragic fate in store for them if they remain surrounded by a hostile enclave of forty million Arabs thirsting for vengeance. As a minimum, Israel must shift to a neutral policy between the two major world powers,

and make an impassioned effort to come to terms with Arab nationalism.



This policy will prove very difficult to consummate in practice, but the course she is now on will lead to eventual disaster.

BRITAIN'S and France's military exploits around the Suez have gained them even fewer laurels. If the two countries were in bad shape before, they are in worse shape now. They beat a panicky retreat in the face of Bulganin's near-ultimatum and have thereby admitted that they can no longer be independent arbiters of international policy. They set out to destroy Nasser, but Nasser is still around, and despite Egypt's poor military showing, remains a symbol of resurgent Arab nationalism. They tried to seize the Suez Canal, but the canal is blocked, not under their control, and it will take at least six months to get it back into operation.

Several days of war have only underlined their economic vulnerability. The Iraq pipelines across Syria are sabotaged and out of action, major fires have been reported at the pumping stations on the Kirkuk-Homs pipelines, popular disorders flared up in the British-controlled sheikdoms, Kuwait, Bahrein and Qatar, Saudi Arabia has banned exports into British and French tankers and has stopped supplying the Bahrein refinery. The net result is that Europe can expect right now to receive less than half of its normal supplies from the Near East. Moreover, British and French standing throughout the area is in such a horrendous state that the *Economist*, voice of Britain's Wall Street, politely suggests that Eden resign for the good of the country's future.

Already, Europe's "Big Two" of yesterday, their alliance with the United States bruised and battered, have had to swallow their pride and come to Washington hat in hand, pleading for credits to get Venezuelan and U.S. oil to tide them over the emergency period. And out of the stinking mess, Russia—which was supposed to be hurled out by the military strike—has emerged as the veritable benefactor that saved Egypt, and stands as the protector of Arab national rights against the depredations of the imperial pirates.

RIGHT now, Britain and France are maneuvering to force through some variety of so-called international control of the canal under the UN facade, so that something may be salvaged out of their ill-starred venture. Egypt's leaders are trying to trip the light fantastic between Russia and the United States, without getting hugged to death in either giant's embrace, avoid the tragic fate of a Korea, and pursue withal their national ambitions and goals. Russia, by throwing its weight behind Egypt, provides Arab nationalism with its ability to maneuver and fight, and it is increasing its own specific weight in this vital area while weakening world imperialism.

The United States is continuing the difficult balancing act begun by Dulles on October 2. On one hand it seeks a discreet flirtation with Arab nationalism to help the Near East shake off the bonds of wicked, outlived, nineteenth-century British-French imperialism for the up-to-date, virtuous, twentieth-century American-style imperialism. On the other hand, our moralistic State Department will re-establish its alliance with England and France, and continue shoring up these disintegrating powers, although the two will probably be relegated now to a more servile role. Dulles said a while back that "brinkmanship" was an "art." The juggling act between the "nineteenth-century imperialists" and the "twentieth-century nationalists" will take artistry plus. It will be something to behold.

Ahead is a lengthy period in which an uneasy, uncertain peace will be balanced on a knife's edge. A new stable equilibrium will not be forthcoming for a long time, as there is no single dominant force strong enough to impose it. The imperialists are divided in

their purposes and interests, and now confront resurgent nationalism and the formidable power of Soviet Russia. They no longer have a free hand. The inflamed Arab peoples are not yet organized strongly enough and do not have the authentic leadership for a decisive victory, but their passion for independence and a modern life is growing irrepressible, and will erupt again and again until it finds satisfaction.

A NUMBER of political analysts have correctly pointed out in recent months that the East and West military blocs are disintegrating with the thaw in the cold war, but have drawn the incorrect conclusion that military blocs are now due to disappear and that a new sunny era of peaceful co-existence is in the offing. Conflicting interests are not that easily resolved in this world. It is true that both NATO and the Warsaw alliance are

being shaken to their very foundations, and crises will continue to reverberate in both blocs for years to come. But at each juncture, and after each breakup, alliances will be refashioned anew in consonance with the lineups and relationships of that time. Even with a major war avoided, mass pressure and economic in-fighting, peoples' uprisings and blackmail and threats, will remain the weapons of the contest between capitalism and anti-capitalism, imperialism and colonialism, Stalinism and democratic socialism, and all contestants cannot help but avidly seek allies for their cause.

There exists a definite balance of terror which is keeping peace between the major powers right now, and there is no alternative to co-existence. But we have not arrived at the millenium yet, and the fight for peace is not helped by pretending that the danger is passed.

Breakdown of Stalinist Planning

MORE than any other single factor, the collapse of Stalinist-type planning was behind the outburst in Eastern Europe. "The leaders of the national economy did not manage to do their job properly," Wladyslaw Gomulka, the new head of Polish independent communism told the people after he had taken the helm. "The whole nation has to pay for the erroneous economic policy. . . . The Poznan workers demonstrating in the streets called with a loud voice: Enough of this, one cannot live like this, we must return from the wrong way."

In a remarkable article appearing in the Warsaw press on July 16, Oscar Lange, an economist who used to teach at the University of Chicago and is now part of the Polish government, wrote a devastating exposé of what Stalinist-type planning adds up to in practice. Calling for an emergency program, he characterized the situation as one of "the growing process of disintegration of the national economy," which he attributed in the main to the "disproportion between the powerful increase of productive forces and the small increase of the people's

standard of living." Gomulka was to echo him three months later and call Poland "an insolvent bankrupt." In Hungary, as we shall show below, the silence of the leaders covered an even more critical situation.

What was wrong? The essentials of Stalinist planning were threefold: 1. A feverish tempo of industrialization and concentration on basic industry without regard for the people's living standards; 2. A rigidly bureaucratic apparatus which imitated everything done in Russia, cared more for paper quota-fulfillment—as bureaucrats are wont—than for genuine results, and thought everything could be accomplished by harsh commands, infantile "socialist competition" schemes, and punishments; and 3. The absence of any check, recourse, or control over the plan by the people and particularly the workers, who were being driven hardest.

THE Eastern European regimes started their careers with a lot of popular support, considering that in almost every case the new governments were imposed by Red Army bayonets. The workers were attracted

by the idea of a new setup which would industrialize in the interests of their well-being, and welcomed the destruction of the old institutions and of exploitation by foreign capital. The peasants likewise, welcomed the expropriation of the big estates, and the parcelling out of the land to them. For a while, the people put their shoulders to the wheel, bore hardships and worked long hours without too much complaint.

But when their sacrifices produced no tangible benefits, when they were given little besides confused and distorted statistics to digest, when the peasants were forced into collective farms without any benefit accruing to them, and over-taxed for the over-extended industrialization, when whispers of Russian exploitation in the form of "mixed companies" and one-sided trade agreements reached the people, they became more and more dissatisfied. Boy-scout sloganeering and bonuses failed to rouse them, from apathy they passed to sullenness, and then to a growing bitterness.

An article in a Cracow (Poland) publication by a worker last March 25 portrays the trend and some of the reasons:

During the first postwar years, our tempo was indeed great. Factories, cities and settlements were raised out of ruins, thousands of villages electrified, hundreds of schools and hospitals built. The so-called "Warsaw tempo" was famous throughout the world. The miners were disproving the old concepts of the potential of human productivity, the foundry workers were amazing the outside world by the tempo of their work, the cloth weavers were turning out millions of yards over and above the plan. . . . Recently, however, all these things have disappeared from our newspapers and radio broadcasts. Recently, we have suddenly started to stammer that our situation is bad. . . .

Our high labor productivity, the base of all progress, has ceased to be profitable to the people. Labor productivity increases only if the people employed in the production field can draw from that increase some profit for themselves. Otherwise, no highflown slogans and ideas

will help. Nobody is willing to work hard for small wages. . . .

Way back in 1947 I was employed in an electric motor factory. The norms there were not computed too strictly so that it was possible to exceed them easily, and to earn good wages. The demand for our factory's products was great. There were no malingerers, there were no "empty" machines in motion, i.e. machines wasting fuel, tearing and wearing out bearings for no purpose.

Later on, in 1950, when I came back to that factory after completing a course for steel workers at a vocational school, I found an entirely different situation. My former colleagues, who previously used to bet a quart of vodka that they would be the first to turn out a series of shafts for electric motors, or a hundred motors, were now trying to work as slowly as possible. I noticed that the machines lathing cast-iron frames for electric motors were moving four times slower than they should. Cast iron requires slow turning, but not as slow as that. It was clear that it did not pay my friends to work faster and produce more because the norms would be raised. . . .

In this situation, all the big words about material incentives remain empty words, and they stick like bones in people's throats. And if one has a bone sticking in his throat, no force is able to make him speak. How can it be otherwise, if for long years there has been no need for the worker's voice, his advice, if his role has been reduced to foolish prattle at meetings about what a noble worker and co-owner he is.

Many of the spectacular successes of the early years of planning were made possible by the reserves of labor and machinery which were brought into operation after the wartime standstill of the economic machine. With typical bureaucratic grandioseness, the giant projects for economic growth became the center of attention, and the maintenance requirements which can hardly be known, let alone planned from the center, were neglected. As a result, the bureaucrats thought they were running an economy in which the workers

would forever remain cheerful and willing, machines needed no attention but would go on running forever without repairs, and great increases like those of the immediate postwar period could always be chalked up. Instead of foreseeing what they were heading for, they slapped each other on the back in jovial congratulations, and boosted the norms for the workers and the plan target figures.

HUNGARY is an example. The Hungarian five-year plan of 1950-54 went through three versions. Under the original plan, put out in 1949, a 10 percent cumulative increase in national income per year was projected. In the first year, a 15 percent increase was actually achieved. Prodded by Moscow, the overjoyed bureaucrats promptly raised the planned increase per year to 19 percent, and doubled the heavy-industry quota. But by 1953, another revision, this time downward, was required. The tally of national income, as plotted by UN economists from official Hungarian sources, is as follows: In 1949, the first version of the plan had figured on raising national income by 1954 by 63 percent. In 1951, this was boosted to 130 percent. In 1953, the goal was lowered to 60 percent, and when 1954 had ended, it was seen that the actual achievement of the five-year plan was a 50 percent increase in national income, or less than any of the plans had called for! The national income during 1954 was actually lower than the year before; the last years of the plan appeared to have been a rout for the planners.

Stalinist planners, parroted over the years by ignorant and naive apologists the world over, have talked as though an economy could be industrialized by pure fiat, and the cost in human suffering waved away, suppressed, or covered up with jargon and chatter. While there is no question the industrialization of these countries is a tremendous thing, equally fine from the point of view of world socialism and of the people who live in them, the mere decision to industrialize leaves much unanswered. The precise rate of industrialization cannot be forced faster for very long than the people are able and willing, and the people are likely to resent any rate of industrialization

if they have had nothing to say about the matter.

IN Eastern Europe, another factor had great importance. After Tito's unsuccessful foray at unifying the Balkan countries, squelched by Stalin shortly before the Russian-Yugoslav break, Moscow was fearful of too close a collaboration between the satellite countries. The plans in each of the countries were therefore independently mapped out, with Moscow as the center of information and decision.

The results were macabre. Since each of these nations is too small an area in terms of resources for large-scale industrial planning, some kind of division of labor is essential, and in a socialist-type economy the only way to get such a division of labor is by cooperation. But since real cooperation was not permitted, each of the nations tried to duplicate the Russian economy within its tight borders. They built steel mills where they had neither the ore nor coking coal to supply them, and worried later about how they would keep them running. They produced for trade in the Eastern bloc without knowing whether other countries of the bloc needed what they were producing.

Thus Walter Ulbricht, head of the East German regime, lamented in *Neues Deutschland* of June 10, 1955: "We do not know sufficiently exactly what kinds of machines are most wanted and in which countries and therefore on what sort of equipment we should concentrate more." East German foreign trade agencies learned only when there was a special technical exhibit in Sofia that the high-tension electrical apparatus they hoped to sell in Bulgaria was already being produced for export—by Bulgaria itself. There was much duplication in investment programs, and few long-term trade agreements between the countries of Eastern Europe. Their plans were coordinated to some degree only to the Russian economic plan, but this "coordination" often took the form of barefaced exploitation and big-power gouging of its dependencies.

The bureaucratization became almost unbelievable. Jerzy Putrament, a Polish writer who was criticized most bitterly by *Pravda* during the recent crisis, described the situation in an



Warsaw students, clearing a main street shortly after the end of World War II, eagerly volunteered their labor for one day a month. Enthusiasm later soured in the face of industrial mismanagement, lack of consumer goods, and suppression of free thought.

earlier article (*Przegląd Kulturalny*, April 5, 1956) about what he called "the cult of office"; it is easy to see what the Russians had against him:

Recently *Trybuna Ludu* published two articles by Edda Werfel—*not on building technique but on the technique of acquiring the necessary building permits. These are appalling articles. We have bred a special race of men. In ancient Egypt, there were specialists who explained the will of sacred animals such as cats, crocodiles, or scarabs. . . . How much more difficult it is to comprehend the will of clerks working out the regulations concerning investment matters! It takes a few years of hard work to learn how to overcome all the difficulties with which a would-be builder is faced in People's Poland!*

The people from the State Commission on Economic Planning have entangled our economy in a web of contradictions and restrictions. They have hampered initiative, restricted and mixed up the responsibilities of various directors; in short, they have created a horrible economic bureaucracy which is most difficult to bear for the ordinary citizens. . . .

The people from the State Commission on Economic Planning got an idea: the bigger the premiums for fulfilling the plan, the more willing people will be to fulfill it. . . . Obviously, the high premiums have had one simple result: non-

fulfillment of the plan has become a major disaster for the whole working crew. Let's not deceive ourselves; in Poland, people do not live exclusively on their wages; they do not spend premiums on extras and luxuries.

Non-fulfilling the plan has become something so terrible that people are ready to do anything to avoid it. A mason foreman reports artificially increased results of his crews' work because otherwise he will not receive any premium. The bookkeeper accepts this data because he is also interested in avoiding the catastrophe of non-fulfillment. The building director pretends not to notice anything! The same thing also goes on within the higher organs. . . .

It is high time for us to learn that the best tactic in dealing with our nation is to tell the truth, even if it is a painful truth. . . .

TO summarize the result, we may return to the article by Oscar Lange mentioned earlier, and cite a few of his conclusions: The economy is shot through with "producing for reject" and "the pursuit of purely quantitative indices attained at the expense of low quality and high overhead costs." There is "fictitiousness in the fulfillment of industrial production plans." The peasant, for his part, "has been confronted with difficulties in obtaining industrial articles, especially building materials and the equip-

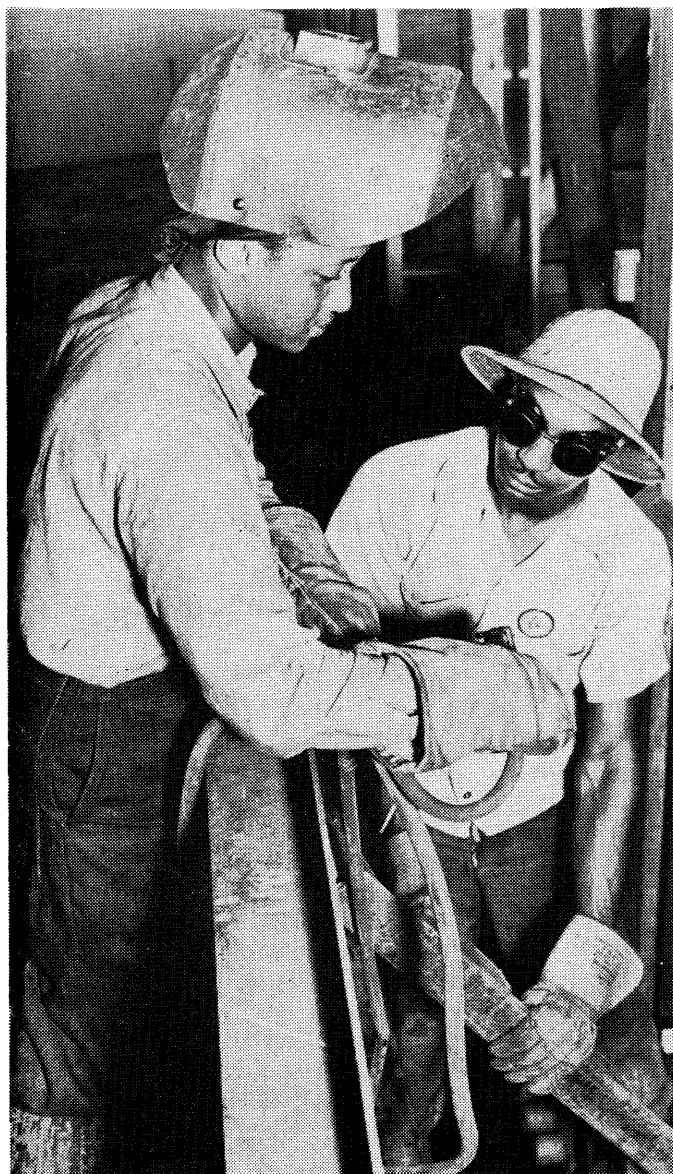
ment necessary for his agricultural holding and household. This has limited his interest in selling his products. . . . Administration of the national economy by means of moral-political appeals and legal-administrative orders has come to the end of its resources. . . ." In another paragraph, Mr. Lange reveals a decisive flaw of the structure:

The disintegration of the national economy which has taken place in the course of the last years could have occurred only because the working masses lacked control. . . . The lack of democratic control within the Party, trade unions, workers' meetings, and within the administrative apparatus prevented the timely revelation of the growing process of disintegration of the nation and economy. The bureaucratic apparatus, favored by the personnel policy described above, has been systematically misleading the Party and State administration through its optimistic reports on the situation in various fields of the national economy. Persons possessing better knowledge of the subject and evaluating more realistically have lacked the courage or opportunity to inform the administration of the real state of affairs. In addition, the growing disintegration of the national economy has been carefully protected against possible criticism by means of the excessively strict adherence to the principle of State secrecy. Under these conditions, the timely checking of the growing disproportions and other difficulties have become impossible. . . .

Thus we see that democracy in a planned economy is far more than the decorative frill that the "hard-headed" Stalinists thought it to be. Taken together with the steep rate of industrialization, the bureaucratic rigidity, the stupidly dogmatic ideology foisted on the country, the caste privileges grabbed up by the bureaucrats who had their own special stores, villas, autos, entertainments, and who lived apart from the people in a privileged sanctuary—and all the ingredients for an economic deterioration and finally an explosion were present.

Acid Test Of American Democracy

by Conrad Lynn



The revolt of colored peoples has become one of the central facts of our century. And so great is the power of this revolt that it boils up in our own South by way of hundreds of spontaneous actions on the part of unorganized Negroes.

“THE most important moral issue facing the United States during the next four years is that of racial integration on a basis of full freedom and equality.” So speaks C. L. Sulzberger, the perceptive foreign correspondent of the *New York Times*. His opinion is colored by the reactions he has noticed in Europe, Asia and Africa to the frenzied efforts of American racists to hold back the rising demands of darker peoples within and without the Western hemisphere.

As always, the struggle over the moral issue reflects a grim resolve to preserve an economic system which divides the working class by race and exploits the labor of the Negro far more ruthlessly than that of the whites.

It was prayerfully hoped by the politicians of both the major parties that civil rights could be played pianissimo in this campaign, but the single-minded resolve of an obscure black farmer in Elloree, South Carolina, to keep his name on a petition for school desegregation, despite the shutting off of the crop loans that mean his livelihood, the knocking on the doors of white schools in Kentucky, Tennessee and Texas by fearless Negro children as the fall term opened, ended all such hopes. Once before the conscience of the nation had tried to evade this tremendous issue and the poet, James Russell Lowell, was impelled to point out the inescapable necessity of choice in the transcendental language of his day.

*Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood
For the good or evil side.*

*Some great cause, some mighty issue
Causing each the bloom or blight
And the choice goes by forever
'Twixt that darkness and that light.*

The acid test of American pretensions to democracy has always been the American Negro. And he has always realized, however lowly his status and however imperfectly formulated his ideas, that his salvation in American society

Mr. Lynn, New York attorney, has written previously for the American Socialist.

would begin with education. His oppressors also knew that. Small wonder, then, that in the Southern states before the Civil War it was a criminal offense to teach a slave to read and write. So, Frederick Douglass was compelled to learn his three R's by poring over the lettering on billboards on the streets of Baltimore. On other occasions particularly fortunate slave children were taught to read by their young master-playmates under cover of some leafy hideaway in the woods.

PERHAPS the crowning achievement of the Reconstruction legislatures in the South was their creation of a public education system in that region. For a brief period the freedman from seven to seventy attended integrated schools with the majority race. But in 1883 the United States Supreme Court struck down the Civil Rights Bill of 1875 in so far as it referred to social discrimination by individuals. Jim Crow legislation ensued and Negro children were expelled from the integrated schools.

By 1940, Mississippi was spending \$7 on every white child's education for every dollar it was spending on the



education of a Negro. In Georgia school boards were authorized to "excuse" children from school during the crop season. And the permission was so interpreted during cotton-picking time as to forbid Negro children from going to school at all.

In the changing world climate of the second World War the Supreme Court, in successive decisions, began to erode the doctrine of segregated schooling. Considerable effort was made by most Southern states to improve the Negroes' educational facilities in order to forestall integration. But the 1954 ruling outlawing all school segregation placed the struggle on a new plane.

The first reaction of Southern officialdom, conservative and liberal, was to warn the Negroes not to press for implementation of the court's decision on pain of losing their existing facilities. This admonition has been heeded in some communities but history is being determined elsewhere. The little boy who asked his mother, Louise Gordon, why he couldn't go to the white school in Clay, Kentucky; the pitifully few Negro teenagers who braved the menace and taunts of the overwhelming white majority in Clinton, Tennessee; the college students who dared to join their enlightened white classmates in the Junior College at Texarkana—these indicate the profoundly new basis of the current struggle.

Louise Gordon didn't notify any organization before she took her little boy and girl by the hand and led them up the steps of the white school. That anonymous Negro veteran of Korea in Tuscaloosa who admitted to a reporter that he didn't know what he'd do with his gun if anything happened to Atherine Lucy showed no inclination to consult the NAACP. Every day some hitherto despised black in a cane field of Louisiana, in a mine of Alabama, or in a swamp-clearing of Florida, decides to make the break and strike out for freedom.

What does he know about educational integration? What has been his instruction in the sociology of segregation? Who can tell how the message of liberty seeped down to him? The great surprise and the great hope of our era is this developing struggle from below. The intellectuals among the Negroes have for generations talked about the leadership of their "talented tenth." But here are people who, in large part, cannot read themselves, ready to risk their lives that their children might gain the opportunity for liberating learning.

Their discipline in the face of every provocation, privation and cruelty has been extraordinary. Only the revolutionary situation brings out such potentialities in ordinary men and women. A Negro traveling through the South these days takes new pride in his brothers and sisters. No longer does he see the downcast head and the furtive look. Now he is greeted with a warm smile and an upright carriage. Not the swagger of defiance but the bearing of free men.

YET the battle has only begun. September 1956, witnessed many setbacks. The NAACP has been banned by court order from operating in Alabama and Louisiana. In the Mississippi delta the NAACP can only work underground. Many a black is secretly done to death down there by the cowardly mob, operating in the dead of night, but the resolution of the Negro does not weaken. The end is foreshadowed by the very desperation of the opposition. The great world of color beyond our shores looks on in wonder and joy at the tenacity of these Negroes. They accept no compromise. Indeed, some of their white friends despair over the simple absolutes by which they guide themselves. They do not leave any room for stabilizing their status on any rung short of full citizenship.

On this relatively small sector we are witnessing a part of that decisive conflict foretold by the great Israeli philosopher, Martin Buber, after World War II. "For the last three decades," he said then, "we have felt we were living in the initial phases of the greatest crisis humanity has ever known. It grows increasingly clear to us that the tremendous happenings of the past years, too, can be understood only as symptoms of this crisis. It is not merely the crisis of one economic and social system being superseded by another, more or less ready to take its place; rather all systems, old and new, are equally involved in the crisis. What is in question, therefore, is nothing less than man's whole existence in the world."

At this juncture in America the Southern Negro has joined the crucial struggle for men's minds. The outcome of his travail may foreshadow the fate of free men everywhere.

During the war it was federal borrowing; since the war it has been consumer and mortgage credit—for fifteen years, debt pile-up has helped sustain the economy. Can it go on indefinitely?

Prosperity on Easy Payments

by Harry Braverman

*Let us all be happy and live within our means,
even if we have to borrow the money to do it with.*
—Artemus Ward

FOR fifteen years, the American economy has resembled the tippler who staggers on a daily round from pawn shop to bar. In 1940, the total net debt, public and private, was \$189.1 billion. By the beginning of 1955 it had risen to \$605.5 billion. That is more than three times the valuation of federal government property; it is far more than double the value of all one-to-four family homes in the country. Never in the field of human economics was so much owed by so many to so few.

Contrary to the prophecies of amateur radical economists, money cranks, and lunatic fringers, there is not necessarily a point at which debt becomes bankruptcy, and our government or economy “collapses” like a fly-by-night appliance dealer. The matter is far more complicated than that. It may be stated this way: The whole problem of prosperity in a capitalist economy is to keep production profitable so that it keeps going and growing. But the innate trend of capitalist economy is to provide consuming power at too slow a rate to sustain full production at a profit. In the past fifteen years, the monster growth of debt, both public and private, has been the chief supplement to the “normal” market.

First, in massive wartime doses, roughly \$200 billion of public debt piled up in the years 1941-45 got us out of the depression and brought full employment. Then, in the ten years following, another \$200 billion, this time of private debt, has kept the economy at or near top speed. The danger to the economy is not the debt itself, but what will happen when it is not possible for either the public or private debt to grow at the pace that has been set for it over the past decade and a half.

Our federal government at present owes roughly \$280 billion as compared with \$1 billion in 1902, \$19

billion in 1932, and \$72 billion in 1942. Let us delve first into this situation and see what is disclosed.

KEYNESIAN economists theorized during the last depression that deficit spending on the part of the government could lift an economy out of the doldrums. While Keynes himself did not elaborate the subject too greatly, followers like Alvin Hansen and A. P. Lerner (with his “functional finance”) took up the thread of the argument. We must break, they said, with the concept of a balanced budget. It is far healthier for the budget to be unbalanced. In bad times, the government should spend what it hasn’t got, in order to inject more purchasing power into the economic bloodstream. Then, when times are good and an inflationary and speculative boom threatens, the government should spend less than it takes in, so that the tendency to frenzy is dampened and the national debt is reduced. In that way, the extreme peaks and valleys of the economy will be leveled out, and likewise the federal debt will even itself out. What is lost in bad times will be made up in good.

The theory has been put to the test of a certain big experience. It is amazing how economists who above all pride themselves upon their “pragmatism” and “experimentalism” have been loath to face the test of experience and sum up its meaning. Undoubtedly, the reason is that if the experience is summed up coldly and objectively, it opens such a void before contemporary economics that the fear of confronting it overrides the scientific instinct.

What has happened? Rooseveltian deficit spending during the depression years was large by any previous standards: an average increase in the federal debt of about \$5 billion a year. But it was only when war spending came along, and started boosting the debt by more than \$40 billion a year—an amount equal to half of our 1929 national income—that we pulled sharply out of the depression and everybody had a job. Evidently the principle discovered by the Keynesians was sound, but in the application the massiveness of the problem had been underestimated. The sickness of the capitalist imbalance between productive capacity and consumer demand was more extreme than any in control of governmental policy had dreamed.





Then what happened? Did the new theory of the budget work out in good times, with a reduction of the Federal debt so that it could be ready for a new upward leap when depression came again? No, in actual fact the Federal debt, huge as it was, proved to be a permanent encumbrance which *has grown by another \$30 billion since 1945*. A growing national debt is shown to be a condition of keeping consumer buying power up *whether in good times or in bad*, and no one speaks seriously any longer of reducing it by considerable amounts in the foreseeable future. Here was further and still more striking proof that the capitalist economy has been, since 1929, permanently and organically out of whack. Furthermore, when the growth of public debt slowed down, private debt started zooming at an unprecedented pace; but we will return to that later, and for the present restrict ourselves to the national public debt.

WE have seen that the first defect of the Keynesian theory is that it assumed that the debt could be a kind of revolving fund which would pour into the economy when needed and be siphoned out when no longer required. But the Keynesians thought in terms of a *business cycle*, with its ups and downs, and experience has proved that things are much more serious than that. There is a business cycle, but there is also a long-term trend downwards, *a tendency to stagnation*. This is plainly shown by the national debt, a category which Keynesian economists above all others ought to be able to read clearly. It does not move up and down, it moves up only, or at best holds its own in periods of great affluence.

Let us go on: We are now the proud possessors of a national debt seven times as large as in 1939, and far bigger than anyone foresaw in the pre-war years. While most have treated this subject either with flippant lack of seriousness or with the elaborate disregard which mankind seems to reserve for calamities about which nothing can be done, there is no question that some important results follow.

In the first place, while nobody can set a limit to the national debt beyond which we will be "bankrupt," still

it is clear that new depression troubles can not be met with the same kind of debt expansion that took place after 1941. The burden of interest would become very heavy; the political resistance would be huge (if the borrowing were to take place in peace time by voluntary decision and not in war time under constraint of military decision); and the consequences of so vast a cheapening of the federal financial structure in terms of inflation can not be easily foreseen.

In the second place, the debt, as it now exists, is a sizable burden. Of course, much that is said and written on this aspect of the thing is nonsense. The nation as a whole is not impoverished by the existence of the debt, because if the government *owes* it, others in the country *own* it. Were it a foreign debt, owed to other countries, then we would be in real trouble right now. This can be seen from the huge difficulties Britain has had in managing her relatively much smaller foreign debt; income and resources are, in such a case, siphoned *out* of the country's grasp. Our national debt is owed by Americans (or American institutions) to Americans (or American institutions).

But this undoubted fact does not change the equally clear fact that those who owe the national debt are not the same people as those who own it. The government owes it, and that means that each of us, in our capacity as taxpayers, has to carry the load. One of Marx's famous epigrams is appropriate: "The only part of the so-called national wealth that actually enters into the collective possessions of modern peoples is their national debt." And who owns it? The following table shows the distribution of total federal securities outstanding in April 1954:

Individuals	\$ 65.8 billion
Commercial banks	62.5
Federal Reserve banks	24.6
Insurance companies	15.6
Mutual savings banks	9.2
Other corporations	18.9
State and local gov'ts	12.8
U. S. gov't accounts	48.2
Miscellaneous	13.5
Total	\$271.1 billion

Source: Treasury Department

Miscellaneous includes savings and loan associations, corporate pension trust funds, dealers and brokers, etc.

We do not have a breakdown of the individuals who own government bonds, and so cannot show the distribution according to rich, middle, and lower income brackets, but even without that, if it be assumed that all the individual owners are people in modest circumstances, it is still clear that the federal debt is held overwhelmingly by financial institutions out of the reach of the average man. Thus the piling up of the huge national debt has meant a shift in the claims on the future produce of the economy in the direction of the banking and corporate world.

THE federal debt is managed by periodical issue of new securities in order to get the money to pay off the old. In this way the government is able to get away with not

really paying off the debt; it is doubtful that it will ever be paid off. Many have drawn the conclusion that it has no meaning for that reason. Here again, another important fact is overlooked. To sustain the debt, interest payments must be made to its owners, as patriotism has hardly ever been known to extend to the making of interest-free loans. In 1939, the government paid out under a billion dollars as interest, but in 1955 it paid out 6½ billions, some ten percent of the federal budget. Again, it is too slick to say that the money is taken from the people in taxes and paid back in the form of interest. It is taken from all, or most, of the people, but in its great bulk it is paid back to a concentrated few, as the above table shows. This means that the national debt has become a huge siphon for redistributing national income.

The irony of this is not appreciated as it should be. The very Keynesian mechanism which is designed to help consumer demand has saddled the nation with an automatic device for shifting money out of the hands of the consuming public and into the hands of capital-accumulating institutions! The amount of money involved is by no means negligible. As a matter of fact, it is so large that it pretty well cancels out the spreading of consumer income down among the people by such devices as social security benefits and unemployment compensation.

Thus far we have been discussing the federal debt. The major part of that debt was piled up during the second World War. But let no one imagine that the debt problem came to a halt when the war ended. As we have indicated, an ever-growing debt of all kinds has become a permanent feature. Leland F. Pritchard, Professor of Finance at the University of Kansas, has written an unusually good article in the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* of Nov. 10, 1955, in which he points out: "Prior to 1929 profit expectations, operating within the framework of a system that was basically capitalistic, were apparently adequate for the achievement of high and rising levels of production and employment. Increasingly since 1929 government deficit financing or government guarantees or other inducement to private debt expansion have been relied upon." So well has Prof. Pritchard stated the framework of the problem, it would be best to cite fully from his article:

The sharp and unprecedented expansion in the Federal debt after 1940 was virtually the sole force which finally pulled the country out of the slough of the Great Depression. Even so it was 1942 before a condition of full employment had been achieved. During the 1940-45 period total real debt expanded by approximately \$193.5 billion. Thus in the short space of five years the total cumulative net debt in existence at the end of 1940 was more than doubled. Practically all of this expansion, or \$185 billion, was accounted for by the expansion of the Federal debt.

The post World War II period has been chiefly characterized by an unprecedented expansion of private debt. From the end of 1946 to the end of 1954 total net debt increased by \$208 billion of which \$187.7 billion can be accounted for by the expansion of private debt. Thus it may be seen that the postwar period al-

most duplicates, in aggregate terms, the war period but with the roles of the Federal Government and the private sector reversed. . . .

The evidence seems to suggest that any real slowing down in the rate of debt expansion will produce an intolerable level of unemployment, and make the existing structure of debt insupportable.

The merit of Prof. Pritchard's broad canvas here is that he has clearly shown the deficit-financed character of the economy for an entire period since the Depression, with private debt taking up where federal debt left off in 1946. The average expansion of our indebtedness to the tune of some \$25 billion a year since 1946 shows that the problem was by no means overcome by the one glorious wartime burst of government spending.

PPRIVATE debt, to which we now turn, means in its major aspects consumer debt in the form of installment buying of cars and other hard goods, plus mortgage debt in the form of low-down-payment home buying. These two forms of debt were exhaustively covered by *Fortune* in two articles last year (March and April issues). A few facts show the dimensions of the trek to the hock-shop.

In the twenties, consumer debt was in the range of \$5-6 billion, about 8 percent of disposable income. Today it is over \$36 billion, more than 14 percent of disposable income. And let us not forget that the twenties have been looked back on as a time of rash installment buying! Mortgage debt shows a similar comparison. In the notorious twenties, it increased in the five years 1925-29 from \$13 billion to \$19 billion, or by 46 percent. But in the depression-proof fifties, mortgage debt went up (1951-55) from \$45 billion to \$89 billion, or nearly 100 percent. And the rate of increase is accelerating from year to year, so that the line on a graph looks like a mountain peak that is getting so steep it is nearly vertical.

It should be noted that this enormous growth of consumer indebtedness also carries with it a tendency, because of interest payments, to shift a portion of national income away from the consumer and into the hands of the commercial banks, sales finance companies, and, to a lesser degree, retail outlets and loan sharks. And here the figures are staggering. The consumer has been habituated to think of his installment purchase not in terms of how much it costs in interest and service charges, but how much it will cost him in monthly payments. He is therefore being flayed alive by usurious interest rates that make Shylock look like a philanthropist. The cost of borrowing money to buy a new car is from 12 to 24 percent, and up to 36 percent for used cars. Other goods may be bought with hired money at a charge of from 9 to 43 percent. These are the "responsible" and regulated rates; illegal or unregulated rates may run as high as 200 or even 1,000 percent!

HOW much consumer income is being shifted out of consumer hands by these interest charges? In 1955, outstanding installment debt was about \$28 billion, and the carrying charges plus interest on this debt came

to the fabulous amount of more than \$4 billion, or about 16 percent. Thus we have the spectacle of a befuddled nation putting itself into hock at a feverish pace and paying medieval interest rates for the privilege, in order to keep a system going it could well do without. This goes by the name "the soundest prosperity we have ever had."

As is usually the case with pious thieves, a bit of tongue-clucking is done on Sundays, but the chief lament is that the racket can't possibly keep going. Thus *Fortune* grieves: "Inevitably there will come a time when the economy must be deprived of this extraordinary stimulus it got from the soaring growth of debt in the past few years."

If we look back now on what has been shown, we see the following: To get out of the Depression, a huge debt had to be accumulated by the government at the rate of about \$40 billion a year during the war. When the war ended, consumers had to take over the job by accumulating a debt at the rate of about \$25 billion a year. But these giant debts on our heads tend to lessen consumer income by shifting money out of mass hands into corporate and banking hands. The debt stimulates the economy only as it is being piled up, by providing each year an additional market to make up for the hole which the normal process of American capitalism has left between consumption and production ever since 1929.

Nor can this pile-up of debt continue indefinitely. The government, in the absence of another major war, is unlikely to be able to get back into the indebtedness business on the scale required to make a dent in the economy. And the private consumer, already up to his neck, will have a hard enough time keeping his monthly payments going on the present level without increasing his indebtedness much more (for the factual demonstration of this, see the articles in *Fortune*).

IF debt stops rising, or if its rise slows down, what will take its place? The three major markets in the economy are the government, the consumer, and the capitalists who buy new plant and equipment. Some are already putting their money on an expansion of the capital-goods market to take up the slack left by the flagging consumer who has gone so deep into hock doing his part. *Fortune*, for instance, hopes that capital goods and commercial construction will fill in the gap.

When put in cloudy economic terminology, this, or any other, solution can have the ring of authority and practicality. But let us try it out in plainer words: When consumer demand starts to level off, finds it impossible to grow at its former rate because of the impossibility of going deeper into debt, the economy will find a solution by building up the country's capacity to produce still more goods than ever before. That is what the capital-goods solution means in simple terms. And it is not so senseless as it sounds—for capitalism. As a matter of fact it is generally the inherent trend of a boom, and a factor prolonging the boom. But it also points inexorably to the fact that the boom must eventually bust.

If it be finally objected that most authoritative leaders in the fields of business, finance, government and economics expect things to go along as they are, with some easily handled dips at worst, that too is part of the usual pattern.

The Economists: Not too Sure

A HIGHLY interesting survey of the opinions of leading economists on the subject: "The Boom-Bust Cycle: How Well Have We Got it Tamed?" appeared in *Business Week*, Nov. 3, 1956. The magazine summarizes the opinions expressed collectively: "Although they recognize that the U.S. has conquered three postwar recessions, economists are getting more skeptical about government's ability to control swings in the business cycle. The real test, they think, is still to come. Yet most remain convinced that the U.S. has seen its last, serious, prolonged depression." This is an accurate summary; what is remarkable in the light of current propaganda is the extent to which many economists reject the notion that the economy is now safely depression-proofed. The following selected comments along this line are illustrative.

* * *

● William McChesney Martin, Chairman Federal Reserve Board: I don't believe we have perfected the tools or have enough knowledge to control the business cycle.

● Everett E. Hagen, MIT: I believe that a number of partly independent sources of high demand will sooner or later weaken at the same time, and a serious depression would follow if government took no action. . . . But I think that next time economists would speak concerning general principles almost, though not quite, in unison.

● Wassily Leontief, Harvard: Fiscal and monetary measures are to an economy what tranquilizer pills are to a patient. They reduce discomfort, and minimize the danger of sudden full collapse, but if resorted to steadily and in large amounts they will produce functional disorders and structural distortions.

● Edwin G. Nourse, Former Chairman, Truman's Council of Economic Advisers: I would guess that the majority of economists and businessmen today are convinced that we need not and will not have another depression that is "serious" in the sense of the 1930's or the 1890's. I believe I am myself in a minority in believing that we can and probably will see recessions more serious than the 1948-49 and 1953-54 dips.

● Solomon Fabricant, Director of Research, Nat'l Bur. of Eco. Research: It is possible that economic conditions could deteriorate with extreme rapidity. In the ensuing scramble, especially if—indeed because—the preceding boom had been characterized by considerable and widespread speculation, values might tumble rapidly and drag down production and employment. Should events move so rapidly . . . automatic or administrative action might not be sufficiently powerful or rapid to prevent a rather severe contraction.

● Harold B. Dorsey, President, Argus Research: Among people outside the field of business analysis, a very large majority believes that the problem of the business cycle has been licked. . . . The very fact that so many people believe this is, in itself, one very good reason why we will probably continue to have business cycles.

● Geoffrey Moore, Nat'l Bur. of Eco. Research: The possibility of a change in the nature of the business cycle in which adjustments are no longer "general" but occur separately in different sectors is still a point to be proved.

● Daniel B. Suits, Univ. of Mich.: Sizable business fluctuations will persist, I believe, until our ability to forecast the need for compensatory action enables us to anticipate fluctuations with greater certainty than we now possess. Whether this will ever prove possible is an open question.

In East Europe, the people are demanding a change to easier terms of existence. What about Russia? Are not many of the same pressures latent there?

Trouble Ahead in Russia?

by William Mandel

SOVIET policy is contradictory by the standards of the Soviet Union itself—the 20th Congress, the Soviet-Yugoslav Party agreement, the policy statement of October 30 admitting errors by the USSR in East Europe, and the declaration of Moscow's Kadar regime in Hungary promising independence as Soviet troops crushed the fighters for independence.

Those contradictions reflect developments at cross-purposes within the USSR itself. And because those developments arise out of economic and political policies and problems similar to those pursued in Poland and Hungary until the recent upheavals, there are possibilities which are grave indeed for the future of socialism and of world peace.

Some will call it ridiculous to compare the mighty Soviet Union, standing 39 years as the result of a revolution made by its own people, with the fragile Communist regimes of Poland and Hungary. These governments are less than ten years old and were imposed by Stalinist methods upon people who, at least in Hungary, were ready to give only 17 percent of the vote to the Communists. If so, why then has Soviet *home* policy since Stalin been so sensitive to events in Eastern Europe?

Recall the events after the East Berlin strike and demonstration of June 17, 1953. First, Moscow shipped in food, cotton and other supplies, returned reparation plants to German nationalized ownership, and announced that all reparations would cease at the end of that year. The

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East German government was reshuffled, and diverted two million marks from heavy industry to raise the living standard. All the East European governments followed suit, and the USSR itself, in August, under Malenkov, adopted a crash program to raise living standards sharply in two to three years.

The reason for that internal Soviet change was simple. At that time there were a million Russian troops in East Europe. They were not theoreticians, but mainly farm boys with public school education or less. (It is only this year that compulsory *high school* education is beginning to be extended to the countryside.) They wrote home, or they said when rotated home: "If the people we saved from Hitler in the war can live better, why not we?"

WHEN Malenkov was ousted as Premier in February, 1955, the programs to raise food production and speed housing remained, but the planned rise in manufactured consumer goods, from clothing to cars, was cut way back. The food situation is so improved as greatly to affect possible dissatisfaction, and also to make possible immense aid in basic necessities to Hungary and Poland. This year's Soviet grain crop is 50 percent above the previous record high, thanks to Khrushchev's policy of planting, in three years, virgin lands as large as France and Italy combined, and of greatly raising prices paid the peasants, while cutting taxes. Milk is up 30 percent in the one year. All types of livestock except cows are now at the highest level in Soviet history. However, housing space per person in the cities is, according to the official Soviet statistical handbook, less than thirty years ago, and barely more than before the Revolution. While this is chiefly the result of wartime destruction and an incredible increase in urban population proceeding faster than the housing program, this doesn't make people any more comfortable.

The return to a heavy industry priority has meant that the total increase in retail sales of consumer goods for the first nine months of this year over the first nine of last has been only \$12 per person in the USSR, reckoning the ruble generously at 10 cents, in terms of Soviet and American prices of comparable consumer goods. (Calculated from *Soviet News*, October 25, 1956). This \$12 increase is not per week or per month but the total for 9 months.

The purpose of the heavy-industry program was, first to prepare against World War II, then to rebuild and balance off immense U.S. strength in the Cold War. Today, its long-term purpose is to make it possible ultimately to prove socialism more productive and therefore capable of yielding a higher living standard, than capitalism. It is undoubtedly true that the only way to do this is to reach and surpass our per-capita output of the steel, electricity, gasoline and other industrial products on which our consumer goods' output is based.

The question is whether the Russian people want to wait twenty years for our living standard, which is what the Khrushchev-Bulganin program will give them, assuming that the present tremendous rate of progress continues all that time. (That is how far behind Russia was, a fact that is no fault of the Soviet regime, any more than

is the destruction they suffered in World War II, or the progress we have made since then.) But is it not possible that the Soviet people may prefer a sharp rise in their standards right away, even if this slows the later increase to our level?

THIS is the crux of the political danger in Russia today. The Soviet people are simply not consulted on any matter of *basic policy*. We have just seen, for the hundredth time, how they were spoon-fed information on vital situations: this time the developments in the Near East and in Hungary.

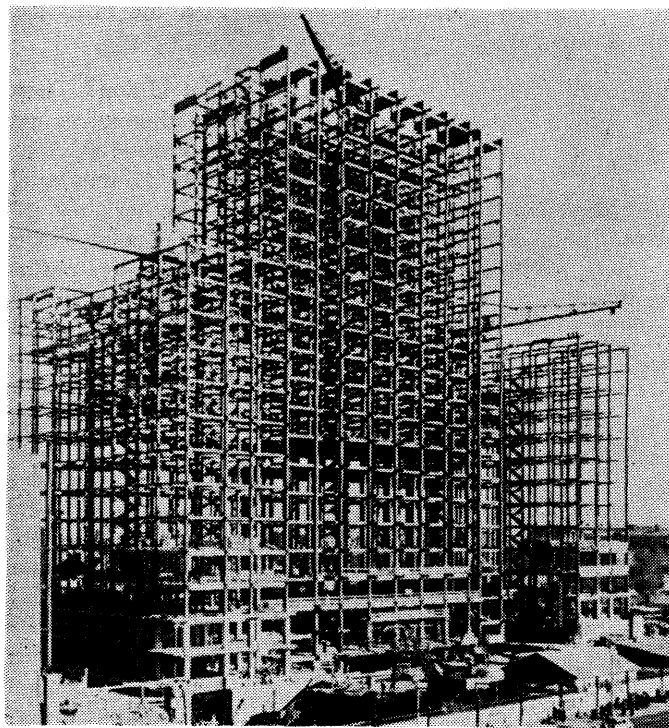
What happens when those hundred or two hundred thousand boys come home, and report that they were hated by the workers and peasants of Hungary, and Russia's millions learn that they were lied to? Long before they are home, letters and the grapevine will have spread the story. The lower-rank Soviet officers are no different than the men in basic attitude, in this army where class origin makes no difference in advancement. The *class* freedom of the Soviet worker, who like the Hungarian, has no capitalist above him, is one of the most explosive factors in the situation. He has been raised to believe himself the salt of the earth. It seems to me that the strength of the Hungarian general strike reflects this. The prewar fascist Horthy regime was economically and politically worse than the Rakosi regime. But the worker had not believed in his own dignity under the old regime. Now, for ten years, he had been taught it, and those who taught it tried to take it away. That can't be done any more, and that's why the talk of a return of fascism was so preposterous.

Is it not true, then, that things have been easing in the Soviet Union, as far as political liberty is concerned, since the 20th Congress? It certainly is. But so was it under Gero in Hungary (the famous meeting of the Petofi Club; the macabre rehabilitation of Rajk). It went even further in Poland, where, according to the *N. Y. Times*, the Poznan rioters got a fair trial *before* the October upheaval that brought Gomulka back to power, and the same newspaper was using the word "free" to describe the Polish press.

The trouble is that just a little freedom is truly a dangerous thing, cliché or no. When the Poles got some freedom, they wanted to *do* something with it: They wanted to be free to change *policy*.

BUT how can Khrushchev and Company understand this: they who made their peace with Stalin for so many years, the while they hated him? They learned to rule with contempt for the people, and they still show this in the crudest kind of "explanations" in home affairs. When Malenkov was ousted, it was officially stated that he lacked business experience. Yet any Russian who followed the newspapers knew that was false, because Malenkov had been granted the country's highest honor for getting 100,000 aircraft produced during the war, and had then been given, and had carried out, the Herculean task of putting the war-ravaged areas back on their feet.

In February 1955, Bulganin said the reason for the return to the heavy-industry emphasis was the increased war danger due to French approval of German rearma-



A Moscow skyscraper, 26-story office building, is typical of projects that have been under fire as needless diversion of resources from more pressing wants.

ment and also the crisis in Indo-China. A few months later, after the Geneva meeting, he claimed credit for the prospects of an era of peace, but made no offer to change the industrial plan. This is not lost on the Russians, nor is the fact that at Belgrade in 1955 Khrushchev gave Beria all the blame for the break with Tito, while a year later he blamed Stalin.

While you don't automatically go to jail in Russia any more for speaking your mind on politics different than the Party's, you may if you try to put it in print, as was the case with some Zionists tried in Leningrad this summer. Yet there are those who do speak out. *Pravda* raged against an economist, Yaroshenko, calling him a "renegade" for his opinions of the Khrushchev explanations about Stalin, but it did not tell its readers a word of what he said! What must be the reaction to this of a country that now has 2,500,000 college graduates, and adds over a million high school graduates every year?

Just this September, the official magazine of the Soviet college system compared some philosophy students at Moscow University to delinquents for questioning precepts of dialectical materialism, but gave the reader only the students' bare conclusions, with no idea of their reasoning. A leading Soviet writer has just been hauled over the coals for sticking to the belief that Matisse contributed something to the art of painting.

Is it logical to suppose that the Russians want a rubber-stamp parliament (Supreme Soviet) any more than the Poles or Hungarians? Can one seriously believe that no member of that body wished, at its July meeting, to ask Prime Minister Bulganin for an accounting of his share in Stalin's crimes, or to form an investigating committee to look into this? Do the Russians wish to be ruled by hold-

overs from the Stalin era, any more than the Poles and Hungarians?

WHAT then will happen in the Soviet Union? There will be no solution until the people themselves can make such basic decisions as whether to continue a heavy-industry (versus a light-industry) policy. It is immaterial, in my opinion, nor can it be predicted, whether they will solve the problem by restoring freedom of dissent within a single party, as in Poland, with an outspoken parliament, and the government itself doing the governing, instead of the party, or whether some other solution will be found.

The elimination of the "cult of the individual" from historiography has led to the finest historical writing the Soviet Union has yet produced, with a proper emphasis on the vital role of the common people without discounting the contribution made by leaders and organizations. Soviet officials—judges, for example—are actually permitting themselves to be quoted as having personal opinions. The top party leadership is consistently and specifically exposing and correcting rigged elections, browbeating, and bureaucracy in Party branches; but nobody of lower rank has yet criticized any Presidium member (or this has not been reported), and no running difference of opinion among the leaders has been permitted to become a matter of public discussion.

On the other hand, *Izvestia* has gotten to the stage of admitting that criticism is a pure waste of time with some "autocrats, who think they are feudal lords and that their imperial persons have nothing to do with the common folk." There are still at the lower and middle rank the very same encrusted vested interests that proved unable to change in Poland, and are still keeping the situation in a state of tension.

The courts are becoming more vigorous in protecting workers against overly production-minded and bureaucratic managements. While the Soviet courts themselves have always been good at this, and appreciated by the workers, the organizations that should have done the job—the unions—have decayed. Presently, the party is seriously trying to stimulate them back to life, but the question is whether they may not show too much life.

The unions are vigorously alive in the type of activity we associate with fraternal organizations and non-political civic associations, but not in fighting managers whose only concern is output, and not the workers' welfare. There have been concealed strikes in the form of all-day meetings. There are many stoppages ordered by union-paid safety inspectors, and there have been a number of recent cases of top plant executives being fired due to lack of consideration of the workers.

THE various Republics constituting the USSR have been given added autonomy of real significance. Here, too, the question is whether it is enough, or whether they will not wish to set basic policy. Thus, Estonia now has its own railway system and its own merchant marine, thus far only for trade along its own coast, so far as I know. This has stimulated a higher level of responsibility in government offices, but the Estonian Premier, in an article in *Izvestia*, is coming back for more. He wants greater au-

thority to dispose of industrial output in Estonia when needed within that country.

This pattern of development—and there is lots more—is the positive side of the picture. I cannot refrain from citing the excellent discussion of the improved pensions law—I know of nothing like that law in the world—in which people made all kinds of business-like proposals at citizens meeting and in the press, and "Congressmen" (members of the Supreme Soviet) fought for the particular needs of their constituents with the typical sectional narrowness that we have come to associate with parliamentary democracy, and that seems to be necessary to get an overall picture in the national interest. But the bill itself was an administration bill, proposed by the Cabinet, not the Congress. I have never heard of any Soviet bill that did originate in Congress, nor has an administration bill ever failed of passage. Nor has any group of Congressmen ever stalled for time to give public opinion a chance to build up behind them. Nor do delegations come and buttonhole their Congressmen in the corridors. As a matter of fact, in this process of teaching democracy from above, the Cabinet officers call in Congressmen living in Moscow, but representing out-country districts (England also has this), to urge them to go back to their constituencies and get to know the people! Needless to say, competition on the ballot would eliminate the need for such little lectures completely.

IT is clear from the foregoing that the USSR has a functioning machinery of government that is by no means completely out of touch with the people, and that, at the local level, is quite often very admirably intertwined with the people, with citizens taking part in standing commissions in a manner far superior to our open hearings. But the contact with the people is much more at the executive than the legislative level, and therefore is not responsible. And over and over and over again, there is the fact that policy-making is a blank wall.

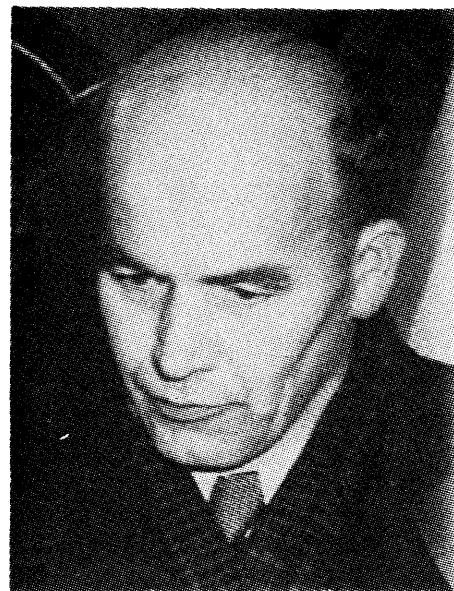
The crux of the matter, at this moment, is whether the tragedy of Hungary has taught Khrushchev and associates that they must not bring the Soviet people to that same stage. Let no one think that it is merely a matter of Hungary and Poland being in economic difficulties, while the USSR is not. Man does not live by bread alone, and no people has ever been taught that so consistently as the Soviet people.

The Soviet people have been tremendously disciplined, self-disciplined, as well as disciplined from above. But the Germans, also disciplined, have never made a successful class revolution in their history: not against feudalism and not against capitalism. The Russians have, and there are millions alive who remember this. Soviet discipline was based on a threat from without, in which they sincerely believed. Now their own leaders have told them, at the 20th Congress, that the "camp of peace" is stronger than the camp of war. The events in the Middle East, it would seem, are proving this before their very eyes. Why, then, hold off action to add democracy to the Soviet version of socialism? This, it seems to me, is the reasoning in the minds of loyal Communists that lead to the Polish events. And this is why events in the Soviet Union may develop rapidly.

One of the most significant statements of the "independent communists" of the Soviet bloc was made by Wladyslaw Gomulka the day he took over in Poland. All the major themes of the emerging program were sounded and argued in his four-hour talk.

New Look of Polish Communism

by Wladyslaw Gomulka



We here make available extensive excerpts from the four-hour speech of Wladyslaw Gomulka, new head of the Polish Communists, to his Central Committee on October 20, hours after he took over. The translation is supplied by the press office of the Polish Embassy.

Noteworthy in the talk are: 1. The line of national independence, which has already received much attention in the press; 2. The emphasis upon "a new model of socialism," featuring a slowdown of industrialization and a voluntary collectivization in agriculture, together with a number of moves towards loosening up the political structure.

WHEN I addressed the November Plenum seven years ago of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party, I thought that it was my last speech to the members of the Central Committee. Although only seven years have elapsed since that time, or eight years since the August Plenum, where an abrupt change occurred in the Party's policy, these years constitute a closed historic period. I am deeply convinced that that period has gone into the irrevocable past. There has been much evil in those years. The legacy that that period left the Party, the working class and the nation is more than alarming in certain spheres of life.

My reservations to the Seventh Plenum resolutions, as concerns the evaluation of the past, cover economic and political problems. The reservations concern both the merits of the evaluation, as well as the responsibility of people for errors and distortions made—a responsibility stemming from this evaluation.

Generally speaking, after the conclusion of the Six Year Plan which according to its premises was meant to raise high the standard of living of the working class and of the entire nation, we are faced today, in the first year of the Five Year Plan (1956-1960) with immense economic difficulties which grow from day to day. We contracted important investment credits for the expansion of industry, and when the time came for the payment of the first installments we found ourselves in the situation of an insolvent bankrupt. We had to ask our creditors for a

moratorium. In the meantime, a considerable part of these credits in the shape of machines and installations has so far found no application in production and will not find any such application for long years to come, and a part of which one has to consider as irretrievably lost.

IN our conditions, just as in the conditions of every country which does not have at its disposal a surplus of land, the rural policy should be characterized by a sustained effort to intensify agricultural production. Poland can nourish its population from its own resources only through increasing yields, through increasing agricultural production per hectare of land.

When estimating the value of overall production per hectare of arable land we arrive at the following picture (in terms of constant prices): individual farms, 621.1 zlotys; cooperative farms 517.3 zlotys; and State Farms 393.7 zlotys. Thus, the difference between individual and cooperative farms amounts to 16.7 percent, while in comparison with State Farms, individual farm production was higher by 37.2 percent.

This, in brief outline, is the economic picture of cooperative farms. It is a sad picture. Despite great outlays, they had smaller results and greater production costs. I do not mention the political aspect of the problem.

In examining our economic reality we find in it also other features giving cause for profound concern. The practice in implementing the Six Year Plan was that on certain selected sectors a maximum of investment outlays were concentrated, without taking into consideration other fields of economic life. And yet, the national economy constitutes an integral whole. It is impossible to favor excessively certain branches of the economy at the expense of others, for the loss of proper proportions brings harm to the economy as a whole.

Particular concern must be aroused by the housing problem in the countryside. Whereas in towns and settlements, where the housing situation is also very difficult, a great effort is being put into new housing, house repairs and maintenance, in the countryside matters are simply

alarming. The position is not much better in the field of public services, health resorts or sanatoria.

THE working class gave recently a painful lesson to the Party leadership and the Government. In seizing the strike weapon and in demonstrating in the streets on the black Thursday last June, the Poznan workers shouted in a powerful voice: Enough! This cannot go on any longer! Turn back from the false road! The working class has never resorted to the strike, as a weapon of struggle for its rights, in a thoughtless manner. Particularly now, in People's Poland, which is governed in its name and in the name of all working people, this step was not made by the working class thoughtlessly. It is obvious that the cup had flowed over. And one can never exceed the measure with impunity. The Poznan workers did not protest against People's Poland, against Socialism, when they went out into the streets of the city. They protested against the evil which was widespread in our social system and which was painfully felt also by them, against the distortions of the fundamental principles of socialism which is their ideal.

The working class has connected with the idea of socialism all its hopes for a better life. It has fought for socialism from the first days of its conscious life. And when the course of history made it possible for its representatives to assume the reins of government in Poland, the working class devoted all its enthusiasm and all its forces to the implementation of the idea of socialism. The working class is our class, our unflinching strength. The working class is ourselves. Without it, that is without the confidence of the working class, each of us could not in fact represent anything more than his own person. The clumsy attempt at the presentation of the painful Poznan tragedy as the work of imperialist agents and provocateurs was very naive politically. There can always and everywhere be agents and provocateurs. But never and nowhere can they determine the attitude of the working class. If agents and provocateurs were able to inspire the working class to action, the enemies of People's Poland, the enemies of socialism would have a much easier task and could easily attain their goals. But the point is that this is not so.

The causes of the Poznan tragedy and of the profound dissatisfaction of the entire working class are to be found in ourselves, in the leadership of the Party, in the Government. The inflammable materials were accumulated for years. The Six Year economic plan advertised in the past with great energy as a new stage of the high growth in living standards, disappointed the hopes of the broad working masses. The juggling with figures which showed a 27 per cent rise in real wages during the Six Year Plan proved a failure. It only exasperated people even more and it was necessary to withdraw from the position taken by poor statisticians.

THE Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union stimulated a turn in the political life of the country. An animating, sound current went through the Party masses, the working class, the entire community. People began to straighten their backs. The silent, enslaved minds began to shake off the poison of mendacity, false-

hood and hypocrisy. The stiff clichés, previously predominant on Party platforms and at public meetings, as well as in the press, began to give place to creative, living words. Sometimes a false note was perhaps heard, but it was not this note that gave the general direction. There came a powerful wave of criticism of the past, the criticism of violence, distortions and errors by which no sphere of life had been unaffected. Everywhere, above all at Party and general meetings in work establishments, the demand was voiced for an explanation of the cause of evil and for appropriate measures to be taken with regard to the people bearing the main responsibility for distortions in economic and political life. Above all, the working people wanted to know all the truth, without any embellishments and omissions.

In the situation which arose following the Twentieth Congress, when it was necessary to act quickly and consistently, to draw conclusions from the past, to go to the masses with all frankness and to tell them the whole truth about the economic situation—the causes and sources of distortions in political life—the Party leadership failed to work out quickly a line of concrete action. It was necessary to recognize without any delays the just claims of the workers; it was necessary to say what can be done today and what cannot be done; it was necessary to tell them the truth about the past and the present. There is no escaping from the truth.

The leadership of the Party was frightened of it. Some were afraid of responsibility for the results of their policy; others felt more strongly linked with their comfortable posts than with the working class because of whom they occupied these posts; and still others—and these were the most numerous—feared that the working class would be unable to understand the most profound essence of the truth it demanded from its representatives, that it would not interpret properly, as it should be interpreted, the causes and sources of the errors, distortions and provocations which had taken place. The weakening of faith in the working class became widely apparent in the central and provincial Party apparatus.

The working class could have withdrawn its credit of confidence from certain people. This is normal. And it is also normal that such people leave their posts. To change all the bad features of our life, to change the state in which our economy is at present, it is not enough to replace this or that person. This is even easy. To remove from our political and economic life all the bad things which are hampering its development and which have been accumulating for years, it is necessary to change a great deal in our system of People's Government, in the system of the organization of our industry, in the methods of work of the State and Party apparatus. It is necessary, in short, to replace all bad parts of our model of socialism, to replace them with better spare parts, to improve this model by means of the best existing patterns and to introduce into it our own, still more perfect designs. And this is much more difficult. This requires both time and work, it requires courage coupled with wisdom.

WHAT is it that limits today our possibilities in this field? First of all, the impatience of the working



Huge crowd of Warsaw workers listen to radio broadcast by Wladyslaw Gomulka, reappointed Communist head in defiance of Russian leaders. At same time Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky (above), Russian head of Polish army, was ousted.



class, stemming largely from its living standards. And these are closely connected with our economic situation. Not even the greatest wizard can pour water out of an empty jug.

The question of change in industry management is profoundly structural in character. What matters here precisely is to improve our model of socialism. The problem of workers' self-government currently discussed by the workers in work establishments and by various Party and State organs boils down mainly to what I was saying about production and the living standards. To put the whole economic machinery upon new tracks without having thoroughly tested the efficiency of the functioning of the new mechanism which we want to create is a dangerous thing. Every new mechanism must undergo tests for, as a rule, it has various defects and shortcomings. No work establishment can put on the market a new machine without building and testing the prototype of this machine. One should greet with great appreciation the initiative of the working class concerning the improvement of industrial management, concerning the participation of workers in the management of their work establishment. This proves the great and justified faith of the working class in socialism. The leading economic, political and State organs must work intensively in order to help the workers' initiative so that wherever it is possible, a generalization of proposed forms should be made. But one should make haste slowly in so far as broadscale practice is concerned.

AGRICULTURAL policy also calls for certain corrections. I see prospects for the development of the cooperative farm movement only under the following conditions:

(1) The joining of cooperative farms is voluntary. This means that excluded are not only threats or psychological compulsion, but also economic compulsion. Tax assessments and the establishment of the size of quota deliveries could also be an instrument of compulsion; (2) The members of the cooperatives govern themselves. The cooperative is nothing else but a self-governing agricultural production enterprise. The board is elected by the free will of the

members. The management of the resources of the cooperative should also be according to the will of the members; (3) The cooperatives have the right of acquiring for their own means, or, under given conditions, for State credits, any machines which they need for agricultural production or for auxiliary work establishments existing at the cooperatives; (4) The State grants to the cooperatives indispensable credit assistance for investment purposes, gives them priority during the conclusion of contract purchase agreements for the delivery of the most profitable agricultural raw materials, guarantees to them priority in the delivery of artificial fertilizers and applies other similar forms of assistance.

If as a result of the abolition of various forms of grants, the development of the cooperative farms is perhaps slowed down, we shall not lose anything as a result of that either economically or politically. We can only gain, both at present and in the future.

HOW did it happen that our Party which advanced, and advanced sincerely, to the fore the watchword of the people's power, whose aim it is to implement the most humanitarian idea—the idea of socialism—that this Party of ours, at the helm of people's power in Poland, permitted so many distortions to take place in the recent past? We shall long look for an answer to this question. It is contained in the problem of the roads leading to the construction of socialism as well as to the shaping of the model of socialism.

What is constant in socialism boils down to the abolition of the exploitation of man by man. The roads of achieving this goal can be and are different. The model of socialism can also vary. It can be such as that created in the Soviet Union; it can be shaped in a manner as we see it in Yugoslavia; it can be different still. Only by way of the experience and achievements of various countries building socialism can there arise the best model of socialism under given conditions.

The cult of the individual cannot be confined solely to the person of Stalin. The cult of the individual is a certain system which prevailed in the Soviet Union and

which was grafted to probably all Communist parties, as well as to a number of countries of the socialist camp, including Poland.

The essence of this system was in the fact that an individual, hierarchic ladder of cults was created. Each such cult comprised a given area in which it functioned. In the block of socialist states it was Stalin who stood at the top of this hierarchic ladder of cults. All those who stood on lower rungs of the ladder bowed their heads before him. Those who bowed their heads were not only the other leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the leaders of the Soviet Union, but also the leaders of Communist and workers' parties of the countries of the socialist camp. The latter, that is the First Secretaries of the Central Committees of the Parties of the various countries who sat on the second rung of the ladder of the cult of the individual, in turn donned the robes of infallibility and wisdom. But their cult radiated only on the territory of the countries where they stood at the top of the national cult ladder. This cult could be called only a reflected brilliance, a borrowed light. It shone as the moon does. Nonetheless it was all powerful in the sphere of its action. Thus in each country there was a ladder of cults from top to bottom.

The bearer of the cult of the individual was omniscient, knew how to do everything, solved everything, directed everything and decided everything within the sphere of his action. He was the most intelligent man, regardless of his personal knowledge, capacity or other personal qualities. It was not so bad when a reasonable and modest man was dressed in the robes of the cult. Such a man usually did not feel well in this attire. One can say that he was ashamed of it and did not want to wear it, although he could not completely take it off. For no leader of a Party organization could work normally, even when he worked collectively with the whole leading body, for in such a system, that is in the political system of the cult of the individual, there were no conditions for such work. But it was worse, and even completely bad, when the honors of power, and thus the right to the cult was seized by a mediocre man, an obtuse executive, or a rotten climber. Such people buried socialism thoughtlessly and with precision.

ALL that we call today distortions and deformations in our life in the past period could not but have profoundly shaken the entire Party, the entire working class, the entire nation. Various currents have swept the country but the most powerful is the slogan calling for the democratization of our life, the demand to put an end to the system which we call the cult of the individual. It must be said that the Party leadership has not always been quick enough to take its place together with the Party at the head of this sound movement and to guide it. And if the Party leadership could not keep pace with this movement then it is understandable that neither could Party organizations. There even arose confusion which is exceptionally harmful for the course of the democratization itself. All the opponents of socialism, all the enemies of People's Poland cannot but take advantage of this situation.

That is why it is necessary firmly to tell ourselves, the Party, the working class and the entire nation that the road of democratization is the only road leading to the construction of the best model of socialism in our conditions. We shall not deviate from this road and we shall defend ourselves with all our might not to be pushed off this road. And we shall not allow anyone to use the process of democratization to undermine socialism. Our Party is taking its place at the head of the process of democratization and only the Party, acting in conjunction with the other parties of the National Front, can guide this process in a way that will truly lead to the democratization of relations in all the spheres of our life, to the strengthening of the foundations of our system, and not their weakening.

It will be necessary to change a great deal in the practical work of our Party and in the methods of its activity. The principle that the Party and the Party's apparatus do not govern but guide, that the task of governing belongs to the State and its apparatus, must be expressed in concrete substance and in practical work and not only in words as is still the wide practice today.

It is also necessary to ensure adequate control by Party bodies over the Party apparatus, beginning first of all with the central apparatus.

AMONG the many ailments of the past period was also the fact that the Sejm (Parliament) did not fulfill its constitutional task in our State life. We are now facing elections to the new Sejm which ought to occupy in our political and State life the place assigned to it by the Constitution. The elevation of the role of the Sejm to that of the supreme organ of State power will probably be of the greatest importance in our democratization program. The foremost task of the Sejm is to exercise the highest legislative and controlling power. Conditions should be created which are indispensable to enable the Sejm to fulfill this task. This includes both political conditions which are created by the process of democratization of our life and legal conditions which would guarantee to the Sejm its constitutional powers.

The elections will be carried out on the basis of the new electoral law which allows the people to elect and not only to vote. This is a very important change. Grouped within the National Front the parties and the social organizations are putting forward one common election program. But any program is implemented not only by the parties, but also by people acting on behalf of those parties. Those candidates who enjoy the greatest confidence will be elected. It is clear that those who do not enjoy the confidence of broad sections of electors will not be elected to the future Sejm.

We can but rejoice at the ardor of our young comrades. For it is they who are to take over from us the posts in the Party and in the State apparatus. But we are fully justified in demanding from them that they should join their enthusiasm and ardor to the wisdom of the Party. Our Party should say clearly to the young people: March in the vanguard of this great and momentous process of democratization but always look up to your leadership, to the leadership of all People's Poland—to the Party of the working class, to the Polish United Workers Party.

A Zionist-Socialist Looks at the Middle East Crisis

by Chicago Reader

THERE are many ways to look at the present state of affairs in the Middle East and what led to it. It behooves all socialists to give the greatest thought to their appraisals of the situation.

The British and French governments claim that Nasser is a would-be Hitler, endangering the freedom of the world and most imminently that of North Africa and Israel. They further contend that Nasser unlawfully seized the Suez Canal and thereby threatens free use of the waterway.

The official Israeli claim is similar to the above except that Israel has remained silent on the issue of Suez ownership and control, only demanding its right to use the Canal.

The Soviet stand is that three warlike governments aggressed against the peace-loving Egyptians to re-impose their dying colonial power.

The feeling of most American socialists is probably something like this: Whatever his shortcomings, Nasser represents an anti-imperialist force. His actions in nationalizing the Canal company are to be fully supported; as is his anti-French policy in North Africa. He is to be mildly frowned upon for his threats against Israel, but Israel is only an imperialist creation anyway and Zionism is bourgeois nationalism. Israel, living up to expectations, acted as an imperialist tool of Britain and France in a clearly aggressive colonial move.

Now let us view this situation from the standpoint of those who sympathize with the Israeli Mapam (left-wing socialist) party. If one projects himself into Israel, he will find himself unimpressed by an argument which states

that Israel is at best a minor consideration in the Middle East whose security needs are less than important beside the tremendous anti-imperialist blow struck by Nasser in nationalizing the Suez Canal. It is hardly realistic to suggest that Israel applaud the act. How can a nation welcome an act of a regime dedicated by its own declaration to the destruction of that nation? Could Israel have cheered an act that heightened the power and prestige of a government that considers itself at war with Israel, that murders her populace, boycotts her trade, blockades her southern port, and prohibits the passage of her ships through Suez?

The most an Israeli socialist could say is that he supports nationalization *theoretically*; he cannot blind himself to the possible ramifications to his country of this nationalization.

AMERICAN socialists must understand that Nasser's Suez policy and his Israeli policy are *not* separable as they would believe. It is unfortunate, tragic, but Nasser forsook the possibility of a peaceful anti-colonial move by simultaneously acting to endanger Israel. Any serious reasoning will result in the conclusion that Nasser bears the responsibility for the possible failure of his Suez move (we do not yet know the outcome) even though Israel provided the pretext for the Anglo-French attempt to regain Suez control.

The fact should be considered that Indonesia could not have gained her just national aims if she had coupled them with a policy directed to destroy Australia. The same applies to Egypt-Israel.

Carefully screened from most of the American press, which painted the attack on Egypt by Britain and France as a relatively bloodless lark, pictures such as this testify to the slaughter caused by bombing planes. Photo shows civilian children and adults killed by sea and air attack in Port Said, the Egyptian port which is the terminus of the Suez Canal on the Mediterranean side.



Israel has proved that she is *not* a minor consideration in this area, and like it or not this must be recognized. Evidence is great that a deal was made in the Egyptian action. It is likely that the deal was between France and Israel, with Eden brought in by Mollet. Israel's action for her own *valid* reasons, in effect aided Britain and France in accomplishing their *invalid* ends. This is true and it is sad. But Israel clearly could not have acted without an assurance that any urging of sanctions against her in the UN would be vetoed. Still it is important to realize that the goals of Israel and those of the colonial powers were not synonymous.

What brought about this situation? How did it evolve that Israel could only meet her vital security needs in conjunction with those forces which seek to re-impose colonialism on the Middle East?

For one thing, Israel is Western-oriented. This is due as much to necessity as to inclination. At the time of the establishment of the country, the economic aid she required could come only from the U.S.; not from Russia. In the ensuing years, both power blocs sought friendship with and influence among the Arabs. It is naive to think that Russia's coolness towards Israel is due to Israel's Western orientation. When it suits what they regard as their interests, the Russians find it politically and temperamentally easy to court the blackest of reactionary regimes.

ISRAEL could not gravitate to that orbit which had the Slansky trials, the "doctors' plot." Israel was aware

of Soviet anti-Semitism well before the Communists of the non-Soviet world realized it. Israel could not consider Russia a bastion of peace when it armed her declared enemy to the hilt. (Obviously, Egypt was armed far beyond its capacity to use those arms.)

Nor could Israel have joined the neutralist bloc, for that bloc would not have her. Nehru will not exchange legations with Israel for fear of losing his influence with the Arab states. Israel was not invited to Bandung. Only with Burma among the Asian nations does Israel have cordial relations.

This isolation was not primarily Israel's fault. Furthermore, Israel tried to break the isolation. The Arab states officially would not have peace. Unofficially, Israel was in the process of negotiating with Abdullah—he was assassinated. Israel was coming to an understanding with the Egyptian Wafd party. This party, representing the growing Egyptian middle class, was outlawed by Nasser, who represents *nothing* other than the military.

So Israel acted to break this isolation by force and to end her threatened position. She acted in conjunction with the only powers with which she had at least *one* common goal—to destroy Nasser.

Socialists must realize that colonialism will end in the Middle East only when the Arabs *and* Israel act together to end it. This is the present necessity. Peace *must* be made between Israel and the Arabs. Israel must be allowed to become a member of the Asian community. To this end we should all work.



To Secure these Rights

THE BIRTH OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS
by Robert Allen Rutland. University
of North Carolina Press, 1956, \$5.

ARATHER colorless account of the passage of the Bill of Rights—the first ten amendments to the Constitution. The framers originally contemplated a Constitution without a Bill of Rights; popular pressure made the amendments necessary to ensure adoption of the whole.

Federalists generally opposed, and anti-Federalists generally favored express protection of individual rights in the Federal, as distinguished from the state constitutions. Patrick Henry's comment is probably the most incisive: Arbitrary men might "call anything rebellion, and deprive you of a fair trial by an impartial jury of your neighbors. . . Old as I am, it is probable I may yet have the appellation of *rebel*," he continued, and he hoped to see the threat of "congressional oppression crushed in embryo."

The author has made a fairly thorough study of both the enactment of the Bill of Rights, and of the theoretical writers from whom it was drawn, although he is inclined to rely on secondary sources. But the analysis ends almost before it has begun: There is no attempt to explain why the Federalists took the negative and the anti-Federalists the affirmative of the civil rights debate. Mr. Rutland favors civil rights; otherwise he has no particular point of view.

Some practices which have cropped up in recent years were originally seen in a different connection. Restrictions now imposed on Communists were then reserved for Catholics: Oaths of office were required to exclude those who did not disclaim "those principles of Spiritual Jurisdiction which Roman Catholics in some Countries have held, and which are subversive of a free Government established by the People"; or those who acknowledged "supremacy ecclesiastical or civil in any foreign power, or spiritual infallibility or authority to grant the Divine Pardon to any person who may violate moral duties or commit crimes injurious to the community."

IN a concluding chapter entitled "Since 1791," Mr. Rutland perks up a little, and traces the historical trend of civil rights, instead of restricting himself to a bare narrative. He resolutely declares that the "presumption" is that the permanent

values of the Bill of Rights will not be chipped away. At the same time, he ventures the opinion that no contemporary has matched Jefferson's first inaugural:

If there be any among us who wish to dissolve this Union or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it.

The book is well intended, and one wishes that one could say more and better of it.

George Olshausen

Of Human Strife

THE FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT, by Lewis Coser. The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1956, \$3.50

IN an interesting introduction, Lewis Coser, who is one of the editors of *Dissent* and Assistant Professor of Sociology at Brandeis University, traces the changed orientation of American sociology in the recent decades. The classical figures at the turn of the century, Ward, Small, Ross, Veblen and Cooley, however disparate their views, were all reformers of one sort or another, and largely addressed themselves to an audience that was critical of the

status quo. Actually, American sociology was too genteel and dominated by middle-class influence to wade into an analysis of the class struggle which time and again swept over this country like a fierce gust of wind. But, as Coser rightly indicates, "for all of them conflict was a central category. When they felt that certain types of social conflict contained negative features, destructive of the social matrix, they stressed the need for structural reforms rather than 'adjustment' to existing structural requirements.

"In contrast. . . the majority of sociologists who dominate contemporary sociology, far from seeing themselves as reformers and addressing themselves to an audience of reformers, either have oriented themselves toward purely academic and professional audiences, or have attempted to find a hearing among decision makers . . . They center attention predominantly upon problems of adjustment rather than upon conflict; upon social statics rather than upon dynamics." Hence, the concentration upon studying "tensions," alleviating "psychological mal-functioning," and the like. Conflict is viewed and treated as a pathological condition due to the inability of individuals or groups to properly adjust.

The sharp turnabout in American sociological orientation did not take place in a social vacuum. There has been a startling change in the personal position of the sociologist, who has increasingly gone to work for industrial management, private foundations, or government social services. Coser says, "the new audience. . . is often not only an audience but also an employer," and this employer is generally interested in the solution of only those problems that concern "the preservation of existing institutional arrangements."

WE seem to be off to a promising start. But after giving us this hasty sketch, Coser's work precipitously drops into the labyrinth of "pure sociology" of the German academic variety, than which there is no more pedantic and barren. The book, from this point on, is laid out as a commentary and critique of Georg Simmel's ideas on conflict. In line with an earlier German professional tradition of pure reasoning, Simmel discusses not the conflict of classes—or if you prefer, of groups—in ancient Greece, or modern Germany, in 16th-century England, or 20th-century India, or the evolution of class conflicts from ancient times to the present, but group conflict in general, as an abstract philosophical category.

Of course, *homo sapiens* has changed very little as a biological species over the last several thousand years. The human animal—whether it be the Egyptian slave toiling under the Pharaohs, or the American steel worker laboring in a big plant at Pittsburgh—eats, seeks clothing and shelter, quarrels, copulates, and eventually dies. In that sense, certain so-called eternal truths—or, if you are a denizen of one of the college campuses, you may prefer to designate them by less controversial language as "valuable

insights"—can probably be worked out which apply for all human society. But do these really go beyond some ABC truisms, such as that there is a certain amount of discord in all social systems; or the thin gruel of common sense, that a conflict that affects parties fundamentally will have a far more profound impact on their relationship than a conflict over secondary matters? Are we really any wiser after having read several dozen saws of this sort than we were before?

The sterility of this sociology becomes apparent the moment its practitioners descend from the heights of nebulous generalities to a discussion of some concrete matter of the mundane world. Thus, after dutifully absorbing an assortment of such "insights," we are suddenly brought short by Coser's pronouncement that "one reason for the apparently decreased combativeness of American management in labor struggles today, as compared with fifty years ago, can perhaps be found in a decreased belief in the absolute righteousness of maximizing profits both in the society at large and in the business community itself." If author Coser had taken a little time out to study the financial statements of our great corporations, or Department of Commerce digests, or the movement of New England textile plants into the South, or the problem of the runaway shop in the clothing industry, he would have been spared this *gaffe*. In extenuation, he might point out that Simmel was often guilty of worse ones.

COSER tries to supplement his master with some of the findings of Freud and modern psychoanalysis. Being apparently of a sensible disposition, he does not permit his synthesizing to go too far afield, and his reasoning reads fairly well. Unlike some present-day social psychologists, he does not attempt to demonstrate that all the troubles of Russia come from the practise of swaddling infants, or that strikes blaze across an industry because of the Oedipus Complex of a labor leader or corporation official. Nevertheless, his synthesizing cannot proceed very far because of the unfortunate framework in which he has elected to place his work.

The grand finale of the opus is the conclusion "that conflict tends to be disfunctional for a social structure in which there is no or insufficient toleration and institutionalization of conflict. . . What threatens the equilibrium of such a structure is not conflict as such, but the rigidity itself which permits hostilities to accumulate and to be channeled along one major line of cleavage once they break out in conflict." Which proposition is all right, but how much does it say? It brings to mind one great historian's statement that "few indeed of the many wise apothegms which have been uttered, from the time of the Seven Sages of Greece to that of Poor Richard, have prevented a single foolish action." But "wise sayings," if not useful, are, at least, generally witty. College sociology, on the contrary, is dull.

B. C.

Unionism in the Food Trade

UNION HOUSE, UNION BAR, by Matthew Josephson. Random House, New York, 1956, \$5.

SUBTITLED "The History of the Hotel & Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union, AFL-CIO," this book records the events of one of America's ten biggest unions from its nineteenth-century embryonic stage to the present. Actually, the book is more biographical than historical. Its well-known author has skimmed analysis and evaluation, leaving the reader with a simple chronological accounting related from the vantage of the lives of the union's leaders.

The first local of workers in the catering trade was formed in Chicago in 1866 as an affiliate of the National Labor Union. The latter being short-lived, the local emerged fourteen years later as an affiliate of the Knights of Labor. Meanwhile, other locals of culinary workers sprang up in cities from New York to San Francisco.

With the Knights starting to fold after 1886, dissatisfaction with its leadership became widespread. Waiters', bartenders' and cooks' locals were among the first to align with the just-formed AFL, the first AFL charter being granted to a local of New York waiters in March, 1887. Three years and one month later Gompers granted a national charter to a union framed to take in all catering crafts. The HRE (under a different name) was born.

The raw materials for unionization were far from favorable. Most of the people in the catering trades were immigrants from all over Europe. Meetings often had to be held in three or four languages. Clannishness of racial groups impeded organization. The educational level was low. The trades themselves were low on the labor scale. Movement in and out of the trade was fluid. Potential union members were not concentrated in particular areas. Contrasting working conditions and pay scales existed throughout the country. And so on.

Add to these difficulties the pressure of the terrible depression of 1893 from without, and a factional fight for leadership from within, and the infant union had a hard time of it. However, economic recovery came, and Jere L. Sullivan was lifted on the saddle while Gompers held the horse.

FROM the turn of the century to 1914 the union became predominantly a bartenders' organization. This was in keeping with Jere L.'s emphasis on organizing along craft lines. The bartenders had more prestige, were steady workers, liked joining for social reasons, and, together with their employers, kept an eye on politics. In 1901 they made up 75 percent of union membership.

In the meantime large hotels and oversized restaurants had become part of the national scene. Little wonder that the desperate and neglected waiters, waitresses,

cooks, and helpers became the militants who led waves of strikes and literally forced themselves upon Sullivan's union. However, "the 'class struggle,' Secretary Sullivan complained, was costing the International Union too much money." More new union members were lost than gained and the movement was set back for long years to come.

Jere L. was forced to turn his energies and his scrupulously accumulated treasury in another direction. Since 1907, Prohibition had been spreading in the country. A decade later the Eighteenth Amendment declared the bartender contingent of the HRE unconstitutional. While other unions mushroomed, Sullivan's withered. Twenty thousand union members gave up their cards.

There were two consequences. As Prohibition made for illegal liquor, so large-scale crime made for labor racketeering. Dutch Schultz and Al Capone became identified with sections of labor as closely as was John L. Lewis.

A healthier effect of Prohibition was that the composition of the HRE changed, and the thinking of its leadership as well. Cooks and waiters became the backbone of the union. Furthermore, new corporation-owned cafeterias and hotel chains opened fertile fields for organizing all service workers "from the roof down." Gradually the HRE was departing from craft-union methods.

WITH the death of Sullivan in 1928, the reins were taken by the more forward-looking Ed Flore. His 1932 convention passed the "industrial union" resolution which reflected the change of temper. So much so that in the 1938 convention the delegates flatly rejected contributing a tax to the AFL's "war chest" to fight the CIO. Were it not for its close relations with the Teamsters and Building Service Employees, and the International leadership's restraining influence, the HRE might well have gone over to the CIO.

The book definitely suffers because of the author's omission of analysis of the union situation.

When Mr. Josephson in the first pages of the book correctly emphasizes the evils of the Saloon Hiring System (also known as the "Vampire System") for waiters, but barely alludes to the union's solution to the problem in a single sentence one hundred and seventy pages later, he has failed to provide the wherewithal for any understanding. In fact, the reader is left hopefully to assume that a solution to the question of hiring has been found. Such failures to discuss how the union actually operates undermine the value of the book.

Mr. Josephson's study was officially commissioned by the union, and that probably accounts for his avoidance of certain aspects in the growth of food unionism. But this evasion makes the book two-dimensional in some of its history. For example, for many years, the main impulse to organize the unskilled workers came from radicals of one or another variety, as no

one else would bother with such a transient group of workers, many or most of whom were foreign-born, very low-paid and unable to pay high dues. The running battle between Leftists who wanted to organize the unorganized, and the conservative and sometimes venal AFL officialdom, which wanted to keep the union restricted to a small skilled section, constitutes an important element of the history of this union.

Moreover, at various periods, especially in the early thirties, food workers, often led by Socialists or Communists formed independent unions time and again, as they were repelled by the exclusive policies of the AFL setup. It was only when the craft bars were broken down after the NRA days that these unions merged with the AFL union to produce the big organization that it is today.

R. R.

All Men are Equal

THE LEVELLERS, by Joseph Frank. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1955, \$5.00.

THE English Revolution of 1640-1660 was the second European capitalist revolution, following by about a hundred years the Dutch, and preceding by a hundred and fifty years the great French Revolution. Most of it was fought out in the terms of religious controversy between the Puritan reformers and the Bishops of the Church of England, or of a political controversy between the Parliament and the King. But though the religious and political issues were in the forefront at the time, historically the important outcome of the English Revolution was the establishment of the necessary social conditions for the full-blown development of capitalism.

On its fringes, the English Revolution—as did all the capitalist revolutions—bred its own extreme groups calling for extension of the revolutionary gains. Such a group was the Leveller Party. Led by John Lilburne, Richard Overton, and William Walwyn, the party called for what were then extreme reforms in the penal system and in the law code, for freedom of religious belief and practice, the separation of church and state, for a republic, and for the end of monopoly and other impediments and restraints to the freedom of trade. In its brief period of existence from 1646-1649, the party drew up several petitions, containing the proposals for these reforms, which were presented to the Long Parliament.

However, the chief activity of the party leaders was the production of an endless stream of pamphlets poured into the general flood of free expression attendant upon the Puritan Revolution.

John Lilburne, born in 1615, was a trader in cloth. It was he who actually created the national Leveller Party in 1648. For a brief few months it rose to the point of negotiating with Cromwell's New Model Army.

William Walwyn, born about 1600, was a silk merchant and belonged all his life to the upper middle class. The social background of these Leveller leaders indicates, and accurately so, that the Leveller movement was basically a liberal middle class movement, and represented that section of the bourgeoisie that later dominated the French Revolution.

THE real extremists of the English Revolution were the Diggers, whose leader was Gerrard Winstanley. These Diggers advocated a form of agrarian communism, and in April 1649 tried to carry out their doctrine by the digging up of the English Common.

The Leveller movement collapsed with the establishment of the Commonwealth under Cromwell after the beheading of Charles I in 1649. By 1654, Overton was in Flanders recruiting for the restoration of Charles II and the overthrow of Cromwell. Walwyn wrote his last pamphlet in 1652 on free trade, and afterwards devoted himself to his silk trade so that when he died in 1680, he was a respected and well-established member of the London community. Lilburne, perhaps deeper of conviction than his co-leaders, remained in trouble with Cromwell and the Commonwealth and died in prison in 1657. A year or so before he died, he embraced religious mysticism.

But before these men had passed from the scene, they had gained permanent repute as the forerunners of greater levelling movements, and bequeathed to the literature of equalitarianism such vibrant thoughts as this: "To every Individuall is given an individual property by nature, not to be invaded or usurped by any. . . . No man hath power over my rights and liberties, and I over no man; I may be but an Individuall, enjoy my selfe and my selfe propriety, and may write my selfe no more than my selfe, or presume any further; if I doe, I am an encroacher and an invader upon an other Mans Right. . . . For by naturall birth, all men are equally and alike borne to like propriety, liberty, and freedom, and as we are delivered of God by the hand of nature into this world, every one with a naturall, innate freedome and propriety (as it were writ in the table of every mans heart, never to be obliterated) even so are we to live, every one equally and alike to enjoy his Birth-right and priviledge.

"For really I think that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest he; and therefore truly, sir, I think it is clear that every man that is to live under a government ought first by his own consent to put himself under that government."

Mr. Frank's book is an extremely scholarly analysis of the chief writings of the three leaders of the Leveller Party. While not particularly exciting reading, it is a good reference work on the subject. There is also an extensive bibliography of writings in and on the period.

H. H.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Preventing Depression

In your "Reply" (in the October issue) to a correspondent inquiring about depressions, you suggest that a "typical economic crisis" can theoretically be "avoided with a constantly stepped-up arms program." This is not correct. The crisis may occur in spite of increasing expenditure for armaments; but the severity of the ensuing depression could possibly be minimized through government spending, for armaments or for any other purpose. Nor is it correct to say, as you do, that another type of crisis with runaway inflation and skyrocketing taxes would develop. As the last few years have once more demonstrated, government spending, even of large magnitude, is possible without runaway inflation or skyrocketing taxes. Runaway inflation in times of peace is more than unlikely; moreover, runaway inflation and skyrocketing taxes are antidotes: If you have skyrocketing taxes, you won't have runaway inflation, and vice versa.

Other parts of your "Reply" may also be questioned. Since almost any type of government expenditure "yields profits to private interests," public spending has been attacked not because of its alleged unprofitability, but for quite different reasons. Public works, to be effective as anti-depression policies, should not be covered through increased taxation, but should be based on deficit financing, augmenting the public debt. The government does not need "to go into the economic business" on an ambitious scale to promote a volume of public works large enough "to suck up unemployment." There is no need for the government to compete with private industry in the process.

A great deal of confusion exists with regard to booms, depressions, government expenditure, inflation, etc. It is unfortunate that you have not used the opportunity to help in dissipating that confusion.

Otto Nathan *New York*

Little in Advance

I am sending my renewal a little in advance as it is common knowledge that periodicals of the American Left usually operate on a shoe-string. Will come through with a contribution from time to time to help along.

Your magazine is just what the independent socialist-thinking people of America need. The articles by George Shoaf and Bert Cochran are excellent. I pass my copies along whenever I can. Yours for success.

V. P. *Massachusetts*

You will find enclosed my renewal to the *American Socialist* for one year. I feel as though it will mean longevity for me to have it coming, for to go to sleep with world events shaping as they are today would be a tragedy. I don't want to be with-

out the one magazine to give a clear analysis of the march of progress.

W. P. *Washington*

After 45 years, I know it is a waste of time and money; but the last issue was so good I am sending three dollars.

Think of the money I have wasted and lost due to my efforts as a socialist. Imagine I could have made \$50,000 and not done manual labor as I have most of my life. My wife and kids at one time hated me because I was sacrificing them to a hopeless cause. It has been rough to be a social outcast.

J. H. M. *Texas*

"Oil and Suez" by Harvey O'Connor in your November issue is so good I suggest it be put into a pamphlet. The most melodramatic features of the current Suez business will likely soon be at a climax so that only a few short paragraphs would have to be added to round off the article as one of permanent interest for some years to come. The pamphlet should contain a coupon for new subscribers to the *American Socialist* and be less in cost than single whole copies.

N. L. S. *Boston*

Some Questions

When the last depression hit the U.S. the more conservative of the two parties was in power. The political result was that the people moved slightly to the left and rallied around the more liberal Democratic Party.

Neither party could have really licked the depression, but I wonder just how things would have developed had the more liberal of the two parties been in power. Would this have encouraged Americans to swing even farther to the left, or in desperation to the right? What could happen, say in five years, if we were to have a depression under the Democrats? With the precedent of 1929 behind us would we swing even farther to the left than if the Republicans were in office? What has been the European experience in relation to these questions?

These questions are written with the hope that you will do an article on the subject soon.

A. R. K. *Baltimore*

Politically, I think the *American Socialist* is doing a great job in presenting the Left side of the issues of the day to the American public. There is always room, or should be, for differing views on politics.

F. F. *Alabama*

I am renewing my subscription because of my interest in hearing all possible points of view in contemporary political and economic questions.

I had dropped my subscription because I felt that your arguments (with a few exceptions) were the same as those offered by both of the political parties, i. e. those that are able to receive more than a handful of votes. I already subscribe to a Republican and a Democratic paper. But I am accepting your word that you have in the last year dusted off the cobwebs and come into the forefront.

P. C. L. *Milwaukee*

If there is a "moral crusade" in politics it would appear that the socialists have a virtual monopoly on it. It is heartening to see the *American Socialist* working for a united and more effective American Left. I would hope, however, that the realization might grow that Communism belongs to the Right. It is difficult to see how anyone who has been blind to Soviet state capitalism with its gross misuse of power to intimidate can qualify as a socialist.

Rev. E. K. *Illinois*

The *American Socialist* is a grand journal as an outliner of the principles of socialism. What it needs is an organization to back it. . . .

It appears that the young generation has gone berserk and pays very little attention to the world's development. They are educated only to cut each other's throats by punching cash registers. . . and have no inclination to think for themselves.

J. H. S. *Michigan*

Having joined the Social Democratic Federation in London in 1900, I have begun to wonder "what happened to socialism?" Apparently nothing went the way it was supposed to go. It is kept alive by a few intellectuals and about the most it has produced is the welfare state in England that now perpetuates capitalism. . . .

E. W. *Louisiana*

Wonderful and Needed

Enclosed find payment to start my subscription to your wonderful and needed publication. Would you give me the name of someone whom I could contact that could put me in touch with persons or organizations where one who firmly believes in the program could go? It seems that if one lives out of the city, socialist contacts are nil and the will to study and work for the cause dies of starvation.

G. H. *Mount Vernon*

Concerning the fluoridation issue: You did print both sides, which is good. It seems obvious, though, that Mr. Friedman is very prejudiced against any one who happens to disagree with his viewpoint. Because they do, that does not make them fuzzy-minded nitwits, damn fools, nor egocentric, to use his own brand of name-calling.

Fortunately, there are a great number of MD's who do not approve of fluorides in drinking water either. They are most likely as scientific as is the Doc. . . .

Gene Smith *Washington*

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To Our Newsstand Readers

DURING the past year, a lot of new readers have joined us via the newsstand route. Our sales reports show this, and our correspondence indicates that many of these readers are just as interested in socialism and a new Left as are our subscription readers.

For this reason, we want to stress again in this space the important advantages of a subscription. Regular mail delivery, assuring unbroken readership, is an advantage; so is the saving (\$1.20 a year).

Subscribers receive notification of meetings, discussions and social events in their localities. At times, these are not advertised in any other way, as the time schedule may not permit a notice in this magazine, or because the gathering is simply intended for subscribers and supporters only.

Also, subscription income is important as a regular source of sustenance which we can plan on in our budget; a consideration which will count for those who like the AMERICAN SOCIALIST and want to help. Subscribe today!

* * *

NEW YORK READERS, NOTE: On Friday, January 18, the AMERICAN SOCIALIST will hold a meeting on Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Harry Braverman, one of our editors, will speak on the former topic, and Conrad Lynn, New York civil rights attorney, on the latter. The meeting will take place at Adelphi Hall, 74 Fifth Avenue (near 14th St.); contribution \$1. Be sure to note the date.

NEW YORK READERS

Socialism and Democracy— East and West

A panel discussion on the anniversary of the Bill of Rights, which will address itself to our basic freedoms and their safeguarding. Participants include speakers representing "Liberation," "Labor Action," "American Socialist," "Monthly Review," and the "Militant." The meeting is sponsored by "I. F. Stone's Weekly," and Mr. Stone will serve as chairman and moderator.

Community Church

40 E. 35 St.

FRIDAY, DEC. 14

8 PM

Contribution: \$1

Students: 50 cents

DETROIT READERS

Which Way to Peace?

A discussion of Eastern Europe, the Middle East, American politics, featuring the following five viewpoints:

Norman Thomas
Socialist Party

A. J. Muste
Fellowship of Reconciliation

Carl Winter
Communist Party

Max Shachtman
Independent Socialist League

Bert Cochran
American Socialist

MONDAY

DEC. 10

•
8 PM

Moderator: Dr. Henry Hitt Crane

**United Dairy Workers Hall
15840 Second Boulevard
(One block north of Sears parking lot)**

Auspices: Fellowship of Reconciliation • Adm.: \$1

CHICAGO READERS

Two Important Meetings

FRIDAY, JAN. 11, 8 PM

"East Europe Revolt"

What caused it and what does it mean for world socialism?

HARRY BRAVERMAN
Editor: "American Socialist"

FRIDAY, JAN. 25, 8 PM

"Russia Today"

An eyewitness report of an 18,000 mile trip to the Soviet Union

MORRIS RUBIN
Editor: "Progressive"

Midland Hotel
172 W. Adams

Auspices: American Socialist

Contribution: \$1

Students: 50 cents