

Fourth International

Lessons of the East German Uprising

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Stalinism in the United States Today

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Problems of Farm Labor

By Allen Winters

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Lending Comfort To McCarthy

A Review of Sidney Hook's "Heresy, Yes -- Conspiracy, No"

By Tom Milton

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Vol. XIV - No. 3 May-June, 1953 (Total No. 122)

Published Bimonthly by the
Fourth International Publishing Association

116 University Pl., New York 3, N. Y. Telephone: ALsonquIN 5-7460.
Subscription rates: U.S.A. and Latin America \$1.25 for 6 issues;
bundles, 20c for 5 copies and up. Foreign and Canada: \$1.50 for
6 issues; bundles 21c for 5 copies and up.

Reentered as second class matter April 4, 1950, at the Post
Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Managing Editor: WILLIAM F. WARDE
Business Manager: JOSEPH HANSEN

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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME XIV

MAY-JUNE, 1953

 267

NUMBER 3

The East German Uprising

By THE EDITORS

The emergence of the East German masses as an independent socialist force on the world political arena caught by surprise the diplomatic chancelleries of world capitalism, the puppet rulers in East Germany and the Kremlin masters. All the intelligence services — those of the imperialists as well as that of the Kremlin, let alone Ulbricht's secret police — had no inkling of what was in store. Symptomatic of this ignorance is the fact that the first demonstrations of the construction workers were generally misunderstood. It was taken for granted that these demonstrations took place under official auspices, presumably staged by the regime to serve its own purposes. Police regimes always appear impregnable and omnipotent until the revolutionary masses appear on the scene.

The fact is that the movement of the East German workers, beginning with a number of scattered and short-lived strikes in various towns, advanced to a new stage with huge strikes and demonstrations in Berlin on June 16 and 17 and then erupted into a nation-wide general strike and insurrection. This political uprising of the German workers laid bare the irreconcilable conflict between the working masses and the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. The relations and conditions which produced the East German events are not limited to East Germany; they prevail throughout the buffer-zone countries and within the Soviet Union itself. East Germany thus foreshadows the revolutionary developments and struggles that lie ahead in the Stalinist-dominated countries.

Previous reports of working class ferment, discontent and opposition had come from Czechoslovakia and other East European countries. The German workers under the Stalinist rule went the furthest and their actions assumed the broadest scope and sharpest expression primarily because they are the most advanced workers in Europe, richest in socialist traditions, organization and combativity. Their action demonstrated the necessity for a political revolution against Stalinist rule which was predicted years ago by Leon Trotsky.

The basis of Trotsky's prediction was his analysis of the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a privileged minority. It has expropriated the Soviet workers politically, consumes and wastes a lion's share of the national income, perpetuates inequality and is unable to maintain itself except by totalitarian terror. This regime collides head-on with the needs, interests and aspirations of the

masses. The workers require the broadest possible democracy, otherwise it is impossible for them to defend their interests and move forward onto the socialist road. The workers need the decisive say in the management and planning of the economy and the distribution of the national income.

This irreconcilable conflict in the Soviet Union was extended into the satellite countries with the advent of Stalinist rule. Now it has flared for the first time into the open in East Germany. That is the essential meaning of the East German events as it will be recorded in the annals of history.

Scope of Movement

First and foremost it is necessary to understand the scope of the movement. The German revolutionary socialist periodical *Pro and Contra* reported that involved in the struggle were not only the workers of East Berlin but the overwhelming majority of the working class in the entire area. When the struggle in East Berlin had already started to slacken, the workers in the other industrial centers moved to the fore. "As early as the first morning hours of June 17 the flame of revolution had leaped over to the industrial centers of Central Germany and touched off explosions in this high-tension area," stated *Pro and Contra* in its July 7, 1953 issue. Affected was every major industrial city: Halle, Merseberg, Magdeburg, Erfurt, Gera, Leipzig, Dresden, Jena, Chemnitz. From these cities the movement spread to "the middle-sized and smaller industrial centers."

The working class had sensed the colossal potential inherent in itself . . . Since 1923, there has been no action of the working class which comes even close to approximating the power of this one. Neither the petty bourgeoisie nor the peasants can lay claim to an essential part in the insurrection," concluded *Pro and Contra*. These are the undeniable facts.

The rapidity with which this movement unfolded, its power and unity can be attributed only to the irreconcilable opposition of the working class as a whole to the regime and all its agencies, beginning with the ruling Stalinist party. This opposition, building up gradually through a molecular process and as if waiting a signal, exploded to the surface when the East Berlin workers took the initiative.

This was far from an "elementary" movement. It

started with economic demands (abolition of 10% increase in production norms, demands for reduction in prices, etc.) but it was not confined to these demands. Virtually from the beginning the workers raised political demands (dismissal of the most hated bureaucrats, free elections, democratic unions, unification of the country by the joint action of workers in both zones, etc.). In their totality these demands represented much more than a movement to reform the bureaucracy or its regime. For example, a demand for free elections under certain conditions could amount to nothing more than a reform demand. But under the Stalinist regime this, as other political demands, was a revolutionary challenge to the police state. The masses could gain their demands only by a victorious overthrow of the regime and replacing it by the workers' democracy. The nature of the regime determined the nature of the struggle. The masses engaged in a political revolution. The Kremlin rulers, on the other hand, engaged in a counter-revolution.

In the course of the struggle, the masses demonstrated in action that they *rejected* — and sought to eject — the regime, its party, its trade unions, in brief, the bureaucracy and all its agencies.

This repudiation of the Stalinist regime, the Stalinist party, the bureaucracy as a whole, comes as a climax to the countless crimes Stalinism has perpetrated over the years in Germany. What was at one time the most powerful party in the Communist International remains today nothing more than an administrative apparatus resting on Russian bayonets. This is the new interrelation between the masses and the Stalinists which has been established in Germany.

The methods employed by the regime against the insurgent workers were typical of the methods of all counter-revolutionary regimes: a) the use of armed force; b) promises of concessions; c) police action against the advanced elements and d) a campaign of slander against the movement.

The armed forces used to suppress the revolution were formidable. Some 300,000 Russian troops, including armored divisions, were deployed against the workers. The size of this armed force is, in its own way, a gauge of the scope and power of the uprising. It has been said that the armed forces did not do much shooting and in some instances even fired over the heads of the insurgents. If this is supposed to show that there was something merciful about the intervention of the Kremlin troops, it misses the mark completely. Confronted with workers in revolt, military commanders prefer to accomplish their ends with a minimum of bloodshed.

The Russian commanders knew that excessive bloodshed might only provoke the unarmed masses to fight all the harder. They knew, for example, the consequences of Bloody Sunday in St. Petersburg (Jan. 22, 1905) when Czarist troops fired on unarmed workers and caused the revolution to sweep over the entire country. The counter-revolutionary role of the Kremlin troops consisted in their confronting the unarmed working class with a display of overwhelming force, which saved the shattered regime

from decisive defeat. The revolution was thereby blocked, and the workers who entered the political arena were compelled to retreat.

The promises of concessions similarly differ in no essential respects from the ruses employed by other counter-revolutionary regimes under similar conditions. Let us recall that the Russian Czar made extravagant promises of concessions in 1905 in order to create the illusion that his regime would reform itself.

Actually the German Stalinist regime never went far in its concessions. Their promises were confined to measures to improve living standards, but at no time were any democratic rights granted. One official, the Minister of Justice, Fechner, said on June 30th that "the right to strike is constitutionally guaranteed. Members of strike committees will not be punished for their activities as strike leaders." A week later Fechner announced the arrest of 50,000 strikers and was dismissed from his post and expelled for his expression of "liberalism." This one case tells the story of the real connection between the concessions, repressions and purges.

The touchstone of concessions for Marxists is whether or not in their totality they give the workers an opportunity to assert themselves politically; permit their voices to be heard and create a fissure in the totalitarian system which can then be extended. In a word, the test is whether the workers' struggle for power is enhanced by the concessions. In East Germany the promises of concessions were intended for the opposite purpose, namely, to enable the regime to continue holding the workers by the throat.

Typical Methods

The immediate aim was to divide the revolutionary ranks. To separate the "softs" from the "hards" among the insurgent masses so that the police could deal more quickly and effectively with the "hards," that is, the most militant, resolute and class-conscious elements. Far from representing the dawn of a new era in East Germany, that is, the beginnings of self-reform of the totalitarian regime, these promises of concessions were kept down to a minimum and combined with military and police repressions in the methods of the counter-revolution.

The slander of the movement as a "fascist adventure" is something which the Stalinists have typically made their own. They cannot imitate the capitalists who, as is well known, do not hesitate to denounce even spontaneous movements for elementary demands as "Communist inspired." Even when completely false, such denunciations constitute only partial frame-ups. Because it is true that every struggle of the masses, even for elementary demands, contains in it a potential socialist challenge to the capitalist system. As one Prussian Minister of Internal Affairs long ago said, "Every strike discloses the hydra-head of revolution."

But the defamation of the East German uprising as Fascist-inspired is without a grain of truth. It is a frame-up of the basest sort. The movement was anti-capitalist through and through; its aim was to establish a democratic workers' power. Expressed in this charge is the

bureaucracy's fear that the East German events have torn away the Kremlin's mask of passing itself off for "workers' representatives." The Stalinist bureaucracy dares not admit that it has been openly challenged by the East German working class in their bid for power. By slandering the uprising as fascist, the Stalinist bureaucracy pursues above all the aim of retaining its demagogic disguise.

The immediate aim pursued by this slander is to serve as a cover for further repressions. If the state is indeed threatened by such formidable "fascist" forces, it means that terror against the "fascist underground" must be intensified. It means an even greater growth of the police state, more terrible repressions. By his call to "strengthen" the secret police issued in the middle of September, Grotewohl has expressed precisely this need. That is the logic of the slander.

In this case the charge of fascism is hurled at the working class which was itself the worst sufferer from fascism. The German workers fought Nazism bravely before Hitler's rise to power and could have won the fight were it not for the betrayal of the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders. These workers had endured 12 years of fascist rule and as a result when the Russian troops first marched in they were greeted as liberators. Given half a chance by the Stalinists, they could have become staunch supporters of the regime. It is the harshest condemnation of the Stalinist overlords that their tyranny imposes such intolerable living and working conditions, coupled with a total absence of democratic rights, on the workers as to leave them no resort other than revolution to break the chains of Stalinist enslavement.

But that is not all. The infamous slander of fascism means that the Stalinists have lost hope of winning over the German workers. They propose to resort to more terror to maintain themselves in power. This is further borne out by the purge of that section of the East German bureaucracy that favored or is suspected of favoring a softer attitude. It is borne out most of all by the sweeping firings and arrests of worker-militants in the factories since the open struggle subsided.

Divide Ranks

Although the workers had to retreat, from all indications they have been neither crushed nor cowed. On the contrary, having measured strength with Grotewohl's government, they remain in a militant and confident mood. They continue to voice demands, particularly for the release of political prisoners and renewed strikes in some places to reinforce their demand.

The regime was openly defied by hundreds of thousands who went to West Berlin for food packages. The Stalinist leaders fear another uprising and are taking "preventive" measures to forestall it. While seeking to refurbish their repressive apparatus, they are making promises of improvements in living conditions such as an end to rationing within a year.

But no matter what measures they take, the basic causes which provoked the uprising will not be eliminated. The workers will be impelled to rise again. The struggle

launched on June 16 can end only with the downfall of the Stalinist dictatorship.

In the very first open test of forces the regime exposed itself as lacking any support among the masses. It was opposed by a united working class and saved only by the intervention of foreign troops. Concessions, even if forthcoming, cannot possibly save the regime because it is alien to the needs and aspirations of the masses.

All Political Tendencies

There has been much speculation about the political complexion of the insurgent German masses. The fact is that in their political composition the masses represented all the political tendencies within the working class. There were Social Democrats, there were also many members of the Communist Party, along with members of the SAP, an old split-off from the German CP, and there were Trotskyists. The touchstone of the mass uprising is that they were all united in action. But at the same time it is perfectly correct to say that in its aims and tendencies the insurrection expressed the Trotskyist program.

The worker members of the CP, the SD and other parties and groups actually broke in action with the parties and programs they had adhered to. The political revolution against the bureaucracy is not inscribed in the program of any party other than the Trotskyist party. The Trotskyists are the only ones who have correctly analyzed the nature of Stalinism and elaborated the methods of struggle against it.

As far back as 1936 Leon Trotsky proclaimed "the inevitability of a new revolution" against the Stalinist regime. The Transition Program, the foundation document of the Fourth International adopted in 1938, calls for this revolution. The 1940 Manifesto of the Fourth International — *The Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution* — states that "The preparation of the revolutionary overthrow of the Moscow ruling caste is one of the main tasks of the Fourth International." This was reaffirmed in 1951 by the Third World Congress of the Fourth International. The East German events have not only brought with them the verification that this political revolution is historically necessary and inevitable, but they have demonstrated the forms and methods it must take.

The test of forces in East Germany revealed not only the remarkable power of the workers but also what is lacking to bring that power to victory. The revolutionary perspective opened by the June events is bound up with the unfolding struggle of the workers throughout the East Europe Soviet zone. East Germany was the most advanced expression of the mass upsurge in all of Eastern Europe. At the same time the East German events posed the burning question of the unification of the entire German working class, East and West, on a new plane.

To realize the great revolutionary possibilities opened up by these events the organization of a revolutionary party of the German proletariat becomes imperative. In outlining the conditions for a successful political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy, Trotsky said in 1934, "We must set down, first of all, as an immutable

axiom — that this task can be solved only by a revolutionary party." Today this is truer than ever. And the cadres for such a party have already made their appearance and demonstrated their capacity in the crucible of the general strike uprising of June.

The iron necessity for a revolutionary socialist party — that is, the Trotskyist party — has been confirmed once again by historical events. We are confident that the German workers, both in the Eastern and Western zones, will begin drawing this lesson from the East German events.

* * *

In the light of the foregoing, we wish to make a few remarks on the discussion article on the East German

events in the March-April issue of *Fourth International* by Comrade George Clarke. His presentation plays down the counter-revolutionary role of the Kremlin as well as of its puppet regime. He takes careful note of the moderate conduct of the occupying forces, but fails to characterize and bring out their counter-revolutionary part in blocking the workers' bid for power.

Further Comrade Clarke's presentation minimizes the scope and meaning of the East German events. Nowhere in this discussion does he bring forward the inescapable necessity of the mass uprising to get rid of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Nor does he assert the need of the revolutionary socialist party in order to lead such a mass uprising to victory.

American Stalinism -- And Our Attitude Toward It

(Resolution adopted by National Committee of Socialist Workers Party, May 1953.)

The Communist Party of the United States is different from its sister parties in such countries as France and Italy. It has all their vices — cynicism, opportunism unrestrained by any consideration of class principle, readiness for any treachery — without their virtue: A firm base of support in the mass movement of the most militant workers which deprives the leadership of a free hand and compels them to take sentiments of the workers into account in every turn of their policy, especially under conditions of war and social crisis and a revolutionary upsurge of the masses.

By contrast, the Communist Party of the United States is isolated from the main mass of the living labor movement, exerts very little influence upon it, and is not regulated or restrained in its policy either by the interests of the workers or their sentiments at any given time.

The leading cadres of American Stalinism are not labor bureaucrats in the ordinary sense: that is, officials of mass organizations in which they exert an independent influence as leaders, and are restrained, and to a certain extent regulated, in their policy by this relationship to the mass. The top cadres of the American CP are functionaries of the Kremlin whose task is to serve the aims of its foreign policy on every occasion. They have no independent power or influence as authentic leaders of an organization or movement.

They depend for their positions on the favor of the Soviet bureaucracy and can be dismissed at its will with hardly any more fear of repercussions than the dismissal of managers and clerks of a local branch office of a national business firm. The case of Browder, who long served as "leader" by appointment, and then was dismissed and disposed of without difficulty when his services were no longer required, was only the most public-

ized and most dramatic illustration of the actual relationship of the official leaders to the party and to the Moscow bosses and paymasters.

Lacking any serious independent influence or mass base to which they would have to be responsive, and being free from any real control by the ranks of the party itself, the leading functionaries of American Stalinism are obliged to carry out any turn of policy required by the momentary interests of Soviet foreign policy, and at the same time are free to do so.

II

The original cadres of the C.P.U.S. originated as a left wing in the Socialist Party in the course of the struggle against the First World War, and gained a powerful impetus from the victorious Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in November 1917. The left wing of the SP adopted the program of Lenin and Trotsky, came out for the Third International immediately upon its formation in March 1919, and split with the SP reformists and centrists over that issue in December 1919.

The young Communist Party suffered far more severe repressions in the period of the post-war Palmer raids than have yet been invoked in the current witch-hunt. Virtually all the most prominent leaders were indicted, a number of them were convicted and imprisoned. Thousands of rank and file members were arrested in wholesale raids. The party was driven underground right after its formation and did not emerge into full public activity as a legal party until 1923.

The persecutions of the early period decimated the ranks of the party, but its leaders and cadres stood firm and gained thereby a strong moral authority in the eyes of all radically-inclined workers and intellectuals. Armed with the program of the Russian Revolution, and rein-

forced by its prestige, the CP soon swept all rivals in the radical movement from the field — IWW, Anarchists, Socialist Party — while assimilating their best elements, and met the outbreak of the 1929 economic crisis with a monopolistic domination of the whole field of American radicalism.

III

The degeneration of the party leadership and cadres, manifested by their unspoken but nonetheless actual renunciation of the perspectives of the socialist revolution in this country, brought them easily and logically to Stalinism, with its theory of "Socialism in One Country." The expulsion of the initiating nucleus of Trotskyists in October 1928 dramatically signaled the definitive transformation of the Communist Party of the U.S. from a revolutionary organization into a controlled instrument of the Kremlin's foreign policy, and the simultaneous transformation of its entire staff from independent leaders of an organization of their own construction into docile functionaries of the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy.

This basic transformation of the character and role of the party remained unnoticed by the general mass of workers and intellectuals, newly awakened to radicalism with the onset of the economic crisis. The American Stalinists appeared to be the most radical, even only "revolutionary" grouping. They also profited enormously from the enhanced prestige of the Soviet Union, resulting from its economic advances under the first five-year-plan. The pioneer Trotskyists were isolated and their criticism ignored in the first years of the depression, when the mass forces for the great radical upsurge were assembling.

The paralysis of the ossified AFL bureaucracy and the Social Democrats on the one side, and the isolation and poverty of forces of the Trotskyists on the other, left a vacuum into which the Communist Party moved without serious obstruction or competition. It gained a monopolistic domination of leadership in the newly-assembling vanguard — first in the unemployed movement and in the imposing body of students and intellectuals radicalized by the depression; and later in the great labor upsurge which culminated in the formation of the CIO. Even the weak rival movements, the Socialist Party and the Muste organization, which experienced a growth in this period, were heavily influenced by Stalinism and offered no serious resistance to it.

IV

The American Stalinists cynically exploited the new mass movement of radicalism, which had come under their influence and domination, in the interest of Kremlin foreign policy, betrayed the struggle for socialism as well as the immediate interests of the workers, and were directly responsible for the demoralization and disorientation of the richly-promising movement. The Rooseveltian social program was the decisive factor in heading off *the mass movement* and diverting it into reformist channels. But the Stalinists, who supported Roosevelt for reasons of Kremlin foreign policy, miseducated, betrayed, corrupted and demoralized *the vanguard* of this movement — a vanguard which numbered tens of thousands of the

best and most courageous young militants — and thus destroyed the first great prospects to build a genuine revolutionary party in America on a mass basis.

The American CP reached its peak of membership and mass strength and influence in the early period of the CIO. Its influence began to decline in the latter period of the war, and has been declining steadily ever since. The Stalinists have lost nearly all the influence and control they once held in the unions. Today they are an isolated sect in the labor movement, and the extent of their isolation is steadily increasing.

V

War and post-war events, which have pushed mass-based Stalinist parties in some other countries into class battles and even into revolutionary actions, have not had the same effects on the American Stalinist party. Their policy, dictated by the Kremlin's aim to influence American public opinion in favor of a "co-existence" deal, has been that of a pacifistic nuisance and pressure group. The post-war events have not invested the functionary-leaders of American Stalinism with any revolutionary virtues. The whole post-war course of their policy, centered around the treacherous formula of "co-existence" — which implies an offer to support American capitalism in return for an agreement — has been and remains a policy of class-collaboration. This has not been changed by radical phrases or in the least, sanctified or mitigated by the refusal of American imperialism, up to the present, to accept it.

The latest turn of the American Stalinists to the Democratic Party, which they ardently supported in the war-time era, and their opposition to an independent labor party — is not a revolutionary demonstration, but a continuation of their policy of class treachery. Neither can it be excused as a mere device to seek "cover," for an honest class party of the workers never seeks "cover" in the class party of capitalism.

The formal modification of the American Stalinists refusal to support the civil rights of Trotskyists — demonstrated in their demand for the prosecution and imprisonment of the SWP leaders; their opposition to the defense of Kutcher; their disruption of the Civil Rights Conference in 1949 over these issues — is not in any respect whatever a sign of "Trotskyist conciliationism." It is merely a temporary lip-service concession to liberal elements whose support they need for the movement in their own defense cases. And this lip-service concession was forced upon them by the independent struggle of the SWP for its own civil rights and the effective united front policy of the SWP directed at the CP as a supplement to our independent struggle.

VI

The Stalinists have suffered heavily from the intimidation of the witch-hunt, which began with the start of the cold war, and the prosecutions and imprisonment of their leading functionaries. But persecution is by no means the sole cause of their precipitous decline. The persecutions of the CP in its first years, which were far

more extensive and severe, drastically cut down its numerical strength, but only strengthened its own morale, and enhanced its moral influence in wide circles. The same was true of the IWW, which was savagely persecuted in the First World War period, and its aftermath. Far more leaders of the IWW were imprisoned in those years than is the case of the CP up to the present. But the IWW came out of it with an enhanced reputation and a greater sympathy than ever in socialist, liberal and progressive labor circles. It was its theoretical and tactical errors, not the persecution, which brought about the decline and eventual eclipse of the once-popular IWW, despite the admirable bravery and self-sacrifice of its cadres.

The decline of the American Stalinists began before the witch-hunt started against them. It got well under way in the latter period of the Second World War when they were still basking in the favor of the government and doing all their dirty work of supporting the war and the no-strike pledge, promoting incentive pay, speed-up schemes, fingering militants for the FBI, and cheering for the imprisonment of the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party.

First, the Stalinists over-played their hand in the fight in the unions around the no-strike pledge, and this brought a revolt of the genuine militants against them. Second, they were outflanked by the Reutherites, who sponsored the GM strike soon after the end of the war, while the Stalinists sabotaged it. Third, our effective campaign of exposure and denunciation during the war and post-war period alerted many militants to the true character and role of the Stalinists.

Our exposure and denunciation of their stool-pigeon role in the Minneapolis case — recognized far and wide as a violation of the traditional labor ethics — compromised them in the eyes of many thousands of liberals and trade unionists, and fixed upon them a stigma they can never erase. The Stalinists have also been compromised by their support of all the frame-up trials, mass-murders and slave-labor camps which informed American workers hate and despise, and justly so.

The decline of the American CP, which in some respects takes on the nature of collapse, comes primarily from its own moral rotteness. The Stalinists' cynical promotion of characterless careerists, while honest militants were expelled and slandered, finally boomeranged against them. At the first sign of danger these careerists — in the Stalinist unions and peripheral organizations, as well as in the party — began to desert them in droves, and to carry their bits of information to the FBI. Never in history has any radical organization yielded up so many informers, eager to testify against it. Never have so many rank and file workers — who wanted to be revolutionists — been demoralized and corrupted, and turned into cynical deserters and renegades. The most effective and enthusiastic participants in the witch-hunt and purge of the Stalinists from unions, schools, and all other fields of their operation, are former Stalinists or former fellow-travelers.

The moral rotteness of the CP deprives it of the

sympathy which has been traditionally given to persecuted groups, and at the same time deprives it of confidence in itself.

VII

The leadership of the next upsurge of labor radicalism in the United States is not assigned in advance, either to the new labor bureaucracy or the Stalinists. Neither the one nor the other has any progressive historical mission, and both must be regarded as transitory obstacles in the path of the American workers' evolution, through struggles, betrayals and defeats, to the showdown struggle for power under a conscious leadership. Only through the leadership of a revolutionary Marxist party can the struggle for power conceivably be led to victory in this stronghold of world capitalism.

As far as the American Stalinists are concerned, our differences with them are differences of principle which cannot be compromised or blurred over at any time. Our basic relation to them, now and at every stage of the further development of the class struggle, is and will be that of irreconcilable antagonism and struggle for the leadership of the new movement of labor radicalism.

The necessary approach to the Stalinist workers was correctly prescribed by the Convention resolution as a tactic supplementary and subordinate to our main orientation and work among the politically unaffiliated militant workers in the unions. It requires both a policy of united front for action on specific issues consistent with our principles, and fraction work in Stalinist organizations and peripheral circles, where opportunities for good results may be open and we have the necessary forces to spare for such activity.

The absolute condition for effective intervention in the continuing crisis of the CP or any work in this field is a sharp and clear demarcation of the principled differences between our party and perfidious Stalinism, and an attitude of irreconcilability in our struggle against it. Our work in the Stalinist milieu comes under the head of *opponents' work*, as traditionally understood and defined in Leninist theory and practice.

Such work in Stalinist organizations and circles, as in any other milieu dominated by political opponents, requires a certain *tactical* adaptation on the part of individual party members assigned to such work. But it must at all times be understood that this tactical adaptation is not the *line*, but a method of *servng* the line.

The united front with Stalinists on specific issues consistent with our program is not a form of friendly cooperation, such as that between two political organizations whose programmatic differences are diminishing to the point where fusion can be contemplated. The united front activities of the American Trotskyists and the Muste organization in 1934 were of this type. The united front with American Stalinists, like that elaborated by Lenin against the Social Democrats, has a two-sided character. On the one hand it is a joint action, or a proposal for joint action, against the capitalist class on specific issues of burning interest to the workers. On the other hand, it is a form of struggle against the corrupt

and treacherous Stalinist functionaries for influence over the workers involved in the actions or proposed action.

The absolute conditions for successful work in this field are sharp and clear demarcation of program and independence of our own party organization.

VIII

The struggle of tendencies in the next upsurge of labor radicalism will have the double aspect of continuing struggle for the leadership of *the broad mass movement* and a simultaneous and continuing struggle for leadership of *the vanguard* — that is, of the unprivileged, younger, more militant and aggressive workers (and intellectuals) who will be seeking a programmatic formulation of their instinctive revolt.

The three forces which can now be foreseen as the main contenders in this coming struggle are the neo-Social-Democratic labor bureaucracy, the Socialist Workers Party and the CP. It is probable that the labor bureaucracy (or a section of it) will head the upsurge in its initial stages. Even that, however, is by no means predetermined; it depends on the depth, sweep and speed of the radicalization, which in turn will be determined by objective circumstances. In any case the SWP, remaining true to itself and confident of its historic mission and its right to lead, will be an important factor in the situation from the start, and will have every possibility to extend its organization and influence with the expansion and deepening of the workers' radicalization.

The key to further developments will be the struggle for *the leadership of the vanguard* who will eventually lead the whole mass. In this decisive domain, as far as can be foreseen and anticipated now, our direct and immediate rival will most probably be the Communist Party. (The notion that some previously unknown and unheard of tendencies and parties, without a body of ideology, experience and cadres, can suddenly appear as leaders of the vanguard finds little support in the experiences of the great radical upsurge of the 30's in the United States, as well as in the postwar upsurge in Europe.)

It is by no means predetermined that the CP will have the advantage, even in the first stages, of the struggle for leadership of the newly-forming vanguard. And, given a firm and self-confident independent policy of the SWP, its victory over the Stalinists in the further development and unfolding of the struggle can be expected.

In the upsurge of the 30's the Stalinists held the key to every development in every field of radicalization (workers, Negroes, intellectuals) because they monopolized the leadership of *the vanguard* from the start. It would be absurd to assume that this performance can be easily repeated next time. And it is impermissible for Trotskyists to say that it is predetermined — for that is tantamount to saying that the Stalinists are endowed with a progressive historic mission; that they represent "the wave of the future" in the United States, which we must accept in advance and adapt ourselves to; and therefore that the right of the SWP to exist is in question.

It is true that the Stalinists outnumber us numerically, that they have more money, more paid functionaries, and a more widely circulated press than we have. This gives them indubitable material and technical advantages which are by no means to be discounted. Nor is it to be excluded that the continuing persecution of the government can have the effect later on of arousing the sympathy of wide circles of workers unacquainted with their past record of crimes and betrayals, although the persecutions have not noticeably had this result up till now.

In the course of a world war the U.S. Stalinists may gain a certain credit in the ranks of the opponents of the war because of the hardship and privations it imposes. On the other hand, it is not excluded that the Kremlin's demands on the American CP — at any stage of the pre-war period, or even during the war itself — can propel the CP into flagrant opportunist or adventurist policies which would add to its discreditment and isolation.

Against the CP, as contender for the leadership of the new vanguard, is its record which has been most effectively exposed and denounced by the SWP (Moscow Trials; monstrous bureaucratism and betrayals of workers' interest in unions they controlled; strike-breaking and stool-pigeon role during World War II; eager support of the government in the prosecution and imprisonment of the SWP leaders; betrayals of the Labor Party, etc.) This infamous record lies deep in the memory of wide circles of workers and will not be forgotten when the new upsurge begins.

The discreditment of the Stalinists has been in no small degree due to our unrelenting, unceasing and systematic exposure and denunciation, which are remembered in wide circles and rise up to confound the Stalinists at every turn. Our exposure and denunciation of the record of the Stalinists has been more effective in this country than anywhere else. It was in this country for example — and due in the first place to the work of our party — that the Moscow Trials were discredited before world public opinion.

The relation of forces between organized Stalinists and organized Trotskyists is more favorable to us in the United States than in any other major capitalist nation. Our cadres are far superior to the cadres of the American Stalinists in quality, and our reputation in the labor movement stands out in shining contrast to theirs. It is a downright insult to the intelligence of the workers who will come forward in the new radicalization — if it is not cynically disloyal — to assume that the criminal record of the Stalinists, which we have advertised far and wide, in some way qualifies them to gain the confidence of the vanguard in the new radicalization, while our unsullied revolutionary record will count for nothing in our favor in direct struggle and competition with them.

Allegations that the American Stalinists are now "in the same class camp with us," and have become our dependable allies in the fight against American imperialism

are false in fact and an impermissible painting up of the real face of American Stalinism. In reality, the American Stalinists at the present time preach a class collaboration policy of "co-existence;" follow an ultra-conservative, cowardly, and treacherous policy in the unions; and betray independent political action through a labor party by herding their members and sympathizers into the Democratic party of U.S. imperialism.

Assertions that the American Stalinists "can no longer betray" are misrepresentation of reality which can only help perfidious Stalinism. Such sentiments disclose an attitude of conciliationism to American Stalinism that is alien and hostile to our traditions. The Plenum of the National Committee stresses the urgency of educating and re-educating the party in the basic principles of Trotskyism on this vital question.

Problems of Farm Labor

By ALLEN WINTERS

This is the concluding article on peonage in the Southwest.

Solutions that have been offered to the bracero problem in the Southwest — or as it is commonly and incorrectly termed, the "wetback problem" — have come from two major sources. On the one hand are the corporation farmers, the farm associations, and all their representatives in government. The other major source, groups opposed to the growers and the government, includes social agencies, church groups, liberal writers and sociologists, and the U.S. labor movement. Though different organizations with different purposes, they all desire reform and present much the same proposals.

The interests of the corporation farmers have been of course to maintain the bracero system — and they have defended it as they would their very lifeblood. In reality it is their lifeblood: their source of profits and the basis for the expansion of their industry and for continued control over Southwestern agriculture. So they have not retreated in the face of the blasts of protest directed at them and the government. Instead they have gone on the offensive.

The Bracero System

While voicing their opinions and making their own demands on the government, the growers have continued their exploitation of the braceros and have ever more firmly entrenched the system in the Southwest. Since the first hue and cry over the traffic in illegals the growers have never slackened their use of illegals, but have instead expanded the system by ever greater use of contract workers. And the tactics of the growers — a continual howl about labor shortages and a constant use of illegals — have been successful.

As a basis for their other demands and as a counter to public sentiment against exploitation of Mexicans the growers have continually claimed a labor shortage and have demanded of the government ever greater supplies of cheap foreign labor. In November, 1951, a convention of the California Farm Bureau Federation passed the expected resolutions favoring importation of braceros, and also passed one calling for a study of "labor pools of Japanese and Korean farm laborers at present unemployed" to be imported for field work in California.

The growers have also demanded an almost complete

legalization of the existing system. To free themselves of the "burden" of guaranteeing minimum wages, providing housing, or paying for insurance and transportation fees, they have invented the "crossing-card system." This procedure would give the braceros crossing cards at the border, allowing the workers to come into the United States for work in specified areas for limited periods. Thus the bracero would not only come to the employer under his own power as does the illegal but he would be under government control and as easily deportable as is the contract worker. As the growers themselves say, a more "practical" system cannot be imagined.

Most of the concrete demands made by the anti-employer groups have centered upon the findings and recommendations contained in the reports of President Truman's Commission on Migratory Labor and Governor Warren's Commission to Study the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley. The President's Commission concluded among other things that the problem was one of large rather than small farms, that the growers were often directly to blame for the conditions suffered by the migrants, that government agencies were generally one-sided in favor of the farmers and aided them against the workers and unions, and that the government's failure was due largely to the fact that social legislation exempted agricultural workers on the largely fallacious assumption that they worked on small family farms.

The recommendations of the President's Commission were mainly for a program to coordinate rather than change or replace existing agencies, and for a series of reforms in agricultural legislation and its enforcement. The reforms they proposed included laws governing the recruitment of domestic and foreign workers and the suppression of hiring of illegals, the extension of collective bargaining rights to farm workers, new laws for minimum wages, social insurance, and unemployment compensation, for public housing programs and health and welfare facilities, and for the extension and enforcement of child labor and education laws.

Recommendations from non-government groups have stressed more strongly the exclusion of illegals and slowing or stopping the government recruiting program. The National Farm Labor Union of course approaches the

problem from the viewpoint of union organization. But its proposals are based on the theory that if the government will only rid the country of illegals and enforce a new set of farm labor laws, then the union can organize American and Mexican-American workers and thereby force the growers into providing higher wages and better working conditions. In actuality the government has done nothing and the American labor movement has been very lax in organizing farm workers, taking a "benevolent" rather than an actively organizational interest, particularly towards Mexican-Americans.

The NFLU Program

The NFLU has attacked the government for the USES's hiring of illegals for use as strikebreakers, their authorization of labor shortages where they didn't exist, and on the conscious deception of the union by government officials. Its main criticism has been that the government has done nothing to stop the hiring of illegals and continues to recruit Mexicans for the growers. At the same time the union has always relied on the government to stop the entry of braceros and has even asked the government to arbitrate union disputes with employers.

The NFLU's organization policies have never been militant. The growers have of course accused union organizers of being "agitators and thugs," but the facts show just the opposite. The growers have perpetrated the violence while the union has relied almost exclusively on legal procedures. It has offered to bargain and agree on wages in advance of the harvest, and has offered to submit disputes to arbitration. The union's policy, when it has struck, has been to pull its members out of the fields and then appeal to the authorities to remove contract workers in accordance with agreement provisions. In most cases such tactics have resulted in loss of the strikes. By the time the "impartial" authorities have made an investigation, have submitted recommendations, have received word to act, etc., etc., the crop has long since been harvested by braceros.

At one time the union did take direct action against illegals, but this resulted in three of their own members being arrested by the local authorities. During an Imperial Valley strike in 1951 the union began a policy of lawful citizen arrests. The union rounded up illegals and took them to Immigration Service Headquarters in El Centro for deportation. For this action the union men were in turn arrested on the charge of "kidnapping."

The union's policy with regard to foreign workers, illegals and contract workers alike, has been to demand that the government drive them out of the country. The union has made no attempt to organize the braceros, but has instead driven them into strikebreaking. This anti-bracero attitude has even resulted in the NFLU advising other AFL unions to "police their ranks" so that infiltration of illegals into organized labor could be stopped.

Before a solution to the bracero problem can be worked out the nature of the problem itself must be clearly understood. It is not temporary nor is it independent. It is one part of a larger social problem that

has inevitably arisen from American agriculture: the problem of migratory farm labor. The exploitation of all field labor at present rests upon the super-exploitation of the braceros.

The economic causes of this situation, rooted in the Southwest's agricultural economy, are being extended throughout all sections of the country. This fundamental change occurring in American agriculture, a change most clearly expressed in the farms of the Southwest, has produced as its social expressions first the migrant problem of the thirties, and today the bracero problem.

In general, American agriculture has been tending toward greater industrialization. It has undergone a large-scale invasion of advanced forms of capitalist production. These production methods, the same that have been used to organize industrial production, have recapitulated in another section of the economy the basic laws of capitalist accumulation. Capital investments are steadily increasing and becoming concentrated into fewer and fewer hands. Production methods are being rationalized and adapted to the needs of the body of capital itself.

The process of farm industrialization has had striking results both in mechanizing production methods and concentrating farm ownership. Farming operations have become mechanized, but more important, they have been rationalized into a factory-type mode of production. The type of ownership that has accompanied this process is the same as dominates all sections of our economy, corporate ownership and control.

Under this system farms are not farms at all, but businesses, owned and operated like factories. Production on corporate farms is managed in the same manner as in corporate industry, for profits alone. Unlike the small family farm which produces directly for consumption as well as for the market, the factory farm produces only for the market. Competition, profit, market conditions, but never immediate use are the determinants of production. One of the most striking examples of corporate farming, the vast DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation of California, has grown into a \$20 million enterprise today, and it rests in the hands of a single family group.

Farm Industrialization

But concentration in agriculture is not limited to ownership; it exists in forms similar to industrial cartels and trusts. Processing and shipping exchanges for particular crops usually exert almost complete control over the production of those crops. Under this system the largest growers dominate a protective or sales association which sets down policies for production, sales, and prices. While these associations are usually organized and controlled by the few large growers in any region, all the smaller growers are soon forced into the association or into compliance with its policies. The citrus fruit industry is almost completely controlled by this type of organization. The California Fruit Growers Exchange in 1950-51 made over 70% of all the fresh fruit shipments by the entire California-Arizona fruit industry.

Another type is the control non-agricultural industries

exert over farming. Processing and shipping industries are monopolies or near-monopolies for many crops, and buy and sell almost the total produce of some crops. The control they exert over production is enormous, both in direct form over the growers and indirectly by pressure upon legislatures.

1945 Census Figures

While farming in many sections of the United States is not mechanized, and corporate farming is not universal, industrialization is the dominant force in farm economy. The following figures taken from the 1945 Census of Agriculture will illustrate a few aspects of this.

The dominance of large-scale farms — those farms whose production in 1944 was valued at \$20,000 or more — is shown by the fact that for the United States as a whole large-scale farms, composing only 1.7% of all farms, own 16% of all farm capital and sell 24.2% of all farm products. As in industry, large-scale production almost completely separates the owners from production. The Census showed that for all large-scale farms only 1.1% were managed by their full owners, while 28.4% were completely run by hired managers. The importance of wage labor in large-scale farming is illustrated by the fact that for the entire United States this 1.7% of all farms paid out 38.7% of all farm cash wages. Of the labor they used, 79.8% was hired.

Impressive as they are, these figures do not fully indicate the importance of large-scale farming, particularly in the West and Southwest. Large farms are not equally distributed throughout the country but are concentrated heavily in the West. While these farms are less than 2% of the nation's farms, they constitute 8.9% of all farms in the Pacific States. The statistics are also distorted by dilution with figures on the great number of farms which contribute nothing to social production. Of the 5,860,000 farming units upon which the figures are based, 1,590,000, or over one-fourth, are part time and nominal units which produce almost entirely for home consumption.

Just as production in the factory is concentrated upon one particular product or series of products, so too is factory-farm production concentrated upon one crop. One-crop farming is efficient, and so it has become economically dominant. Today the production and sales costs of the large one-crop farm set the scale for all the smaller farms. But alongside specialization, industrial farming permits the most diversified system of crops over a wider but geographically similar area. Irrigation systems, machine cultivation, pest control — all made possible only by heavy capitalization — permit many crops to be grown in an area that once could only support a few crops. The agriculture of California is a classic example of this contradictory but unified form of agriculture.

Industrialization has not only revolutionized production methods, it has greatly changed the social position of the farm worker, with the same effects factories had upon the artisan of the middle ages. The artisan who once owned his tools and the product he created was divorced from both when he entered the factory. In the same man-

ner today's farm worker is divorced both from the land and the crop he produces. The organic tie which in the past bound him to the soil has been broken by large-scale farming.

But the farm-factory not only divorces the worker from the soil and its product, it also proletarianizes him. It makes him simply a wage worker, little interested in the land, the crop, or the success of the farm, but interested only in his paycheck and working conditions.

Migratory Labor

One of the most important consequences of mechanization, the demand for many manual workers for short periods of time, has resulted in the creation of a permanent migrant labor class. Unlike the small farm which employs a few workers for a long period, the large-scale farm demands many workers at one time, works them intensively for a short period, and quickly throws them out of work.

While he works, the migrant is subjected to the most intensive form of exploitation. This is particularly true of the foreign migrant, today the *bracero*, who is continually brought in to expand the domestic labor force. Profit from their labor is made from the long hours and starvation wages that earlier were associated with factory sweat-shops. The factory on the farm has recreated this brutal exploitation in its worst forms.

The theory that mechanization will automatically solve the manual labor problem is commonly accepted in both agriculture and industry. This theory is used by the growers who benefit from the dual process — mechanization associated with sweated labor — to rationalize their opposition to social benefits for farm workers. Mechanization, they say, will soon eliminate the need for manual workers. While this theory could actually be realized under scientific planning, at present under capitalism mechanization acts only to worsen the conditions of farm labor.

Mechanization has not been a uniform process. It is unbalanced today; that is, the various operations in farming are unequally mechanized. Machines for pre-harvest work such as plowing have been invented and produced much faster than have harvesting machines. The inevitable result has been an intensification of the seasonal nature of farm work. Large numbers of workers are still necessary, but for shorter periods. Mechanization also reduces the value of the final product. In general, the more machinery that is used in production the more cheaply can the final commodity be produced and placed on the market. The small farmer who cannot afford to mechanize experiences greatly increased competition. As a result he is forced to intensify the exploitation of his own workers, or is forced out of farm ownership entirely. This process results in ever greater advantages for the corporation farmer. The division between large and small farmers constantly becomes greater and the exploitation of the farm worker constantly becomes worse.

The problems of both domestic farm workers and *braceros* grow from the very nature of our agricultural

economy. Any basic solution to the bracero problem can lie only in a change in this economy. But the change occurring in agriculture today is one of more and more concentration and mechanization. Under capitalism this process is irreversible. No matter how loudly the small farmer and social reformer cry for aid to small farms, a small-farm economy cannot become dominant nor even recover from the blows dealt it by the corporations. The small farmer cannot compete with the factory-farmer. He can exist only through government subsidies and by submitting to the policies of the farm associations.

American agriculture has completed the series of economic forms possible under capitalism, both in its main line of development and in possible combinations and variations. It has done this by adopting at various times the forms of other social systems, slavery and feudalism, as well as capitalism.

In its early history American agriculture took the form of small private ownership in the Northeast and slavery in the South. At the same time bonded labor was common in the East. In time slavery passed into the semiserfdom of sharecropping and the tenant farm system which is still prevalent throughout the country. But even before the whole country was occupied by small farmers, big farms and corporation farming were born. Today corporation farming dominates agriculture. And in the bracero system it has even created another form of serf-like exploitation.

Toward Social Ownership

Qualitatively, American agriculture has completed its development. The middle-class development of agriculture which is being partially skipped over, partially rushed through in backward countries such as Russia, has gone through a natural and complete evolution in the United States. Today, American agriculture can move forward only into collective ownership of the land and its crops. As in industry, the period of social ownership of the means of production is at hand.

But even though fundamental economic change is necessary to a complete solution of the farm labor problem, and the bracero problem, possibilities still exist under capitalism for a partial solution. The only immediate possibility for achievement of better conditions lies in the struggle of the farm workers themselves. As the growers, the government, and the social reformers have all proved incapable of even slightly bettering conditions for the mass of domestic workers and braceros, the task falls completely upon the farm workers. As in industry, there is the possibility of achieving better conditions through unionization.

The fundamental requirement for solving the bracero problem is the conscious union of both braceros and American farm workers in a common struggle. This union is a necessity; a solution to the bracero problem can only be part and parcel of a solution to the American farm labor problem. The braceros today constitute the best anti-union weapon the farmers possess. If unions are to exist and grow in the field of farm labor this weapon must be taken from the growers.

But the present policy of the unions, the NLU in particular, is to seal the braceros out of their ranks and to drive them off the fields and out of the country. This policy plays directly into the hands of the growers: it antagonizes the braceros, drives them to the growers and the government for protection, and thereby increases their usefulness as strikebreakers. The unions can aid the braceros only by reversing their policy, only by bringing the braceros into the unions. Only in this way can the unions protect themselves.

The economic prerequisites for militant industrial unionism, the only type that can be successful in the Southwest, exist in this area today. Though industrial production and proletarian farm workers do not exist throughout the country, nor to an equal degree throughout the Southwest, these conditions are dominant in the economy and provide the necessary base for successful unionization.

Industrial production has socialized farm work, has created for the farm workers conditions qualitatively identical with those of factory workers. It has separated the workers from the land and its product, has made them simply wage workers, and has concentrated them at the point of production. Despite the short period they work together, despite the prevalence of migrancy, the workers come together in large numbers under conditions which create a strong consciousness of class interests.

Without a general upswing in the U.S. labor movement and a militant struggle by the farm workers, unionization cannot succeed in the Southwest. American farm workers alone, even if joined by the braceros, are hardly strong enough to successfully combat the growers. The long history of employer violence against farm unions indicates the type of struggle the farm workers will be forced to conduct. All the enormous forces of the growers, their wealthy associations and vigilante groups, the controlled legislatures, the sheriffs and their hoodlum deputies, the newspapers, and even the National Guard and the Army have been used in the past to crush farm unions. They will be used again.

When unionizing does begin in earnest the most militant type of organizing will be necessary. The growers and their police allies will drive the workers, as they have done so many times in the past, into the most militant struggles. To create their unions and protect them the workers must first defeat the vigilantes, and this is impossible without organs of self defense.

Difficulties of Farm Unions

The failure of militant unions in the past to successfully organize farm workers has long been used as an argument against such unions. But the truth is otherwise; the successes which they did achieve were due only to their militant radicalism. The two most important radical farm unions were the IWW locals which grew between 1910 and 1915 and the Communist Party-influenced unions of the thirties. In the reasons for their failure clues can be found for tackling the job more effectively today.

Poverty and migrancy have always been the major

weaknesses of the farm workers. Failure to remain in one place for any extended period and inability to financially support long strikes have always hindered the growth of permanent and strong locals. The isolation of the radical unions from the main current of American unionism was another factor in their failure. They were radical when most American workers were conservative. Not only did they receive no aid from the mass unions but they were in fact bitterly opposed by them.

The internal faults of these unions, isolation and the migratory character of the membership, made them difficult to build. But they were built. They failed because they were physically broken. The most vicious forms of violence, jailing, beatings, and even murder, were employed wholesale against the workers and their leaders. Not only physical violence but legal violence, criminal syndicalist laws, was directed against them.

It will take the big forces of the organized U.S. labor movement to support farm labor organization and build unions that could only painfully and over a long period be built from below. Geographical instability can be overcome by providing union halls and hiring halls, wherever migratory laborers work. To successfully combat the anti-labor forces the entire organized labor movement will have to join the struggle and support it. But such action can hardly be expected from the present union leaders. The conservative heads of the CIO and AFL have shown in practice that they will not lead an uncompromising struggle against the growers. A rank and file upsurge which will replace the bureaucracy or force it into militant action, is the only hope of the farm workers.

Correspondence

Editor:

I would like to say that the article, *Peonage In The Southwest*, by Allen Winters is a very good one which delves into the fundamentals of this complex social problem facing the American working class.

Undoubtedly, the next of the series will deal with the problems of the large minority in the Southwest, the Mexican-Americans, and its relations to the "Bracero" problem.

It is in this connection that one of the terms, "wetback," becomes objectionable.

The term "wetback" originated out of the antagonism between the Mexican-Americans and the "Braceros" and is permeated with hostility. When the "Bracero" became a threat and actually further increased the exploitation of this minority, even the term "Bracero" was tinged with hostility, though this term did not prevail in the majority of the Mexican-American population. However when the influx of the "illegals" began and became a real problem, the term "mojado" (wet) became a prevalent way in which the differentiation between themselves and the "illegals" took place. The Mexican-Americans wanted to get out from under the discrimination directed at them and found in the "mojado" a convenient scapegoat.

Undoubtedly the reporters of the American press picked out this word "mojado," and added to it, thus giving us the word "wetback." The press employs it extensively, much more than is justified for the sake of reporting. They will probably explain, as some people have explained to me, that this word properly describes the "illegals" since in two words it tells us that these people have waded the Rio Grande river, and thus tells us that they are illegals.

This is partly true, but like most half truths, it's a lie. The "illegals" also cross the border through the deserts of Arizona and California where there is no river but a wire dividing line. What term are we to use in this case? "Alambristas" (people skilled in the art of handling wire) which is also a chauvinistic term originating where there is no river to cross. Now, the nub of the question is not that these people may or may not have "wet-backs," but that they have crossed the border illegally. The proper term would, therefore, be **ILLEGALS, ILLEGAL ENTRANTS, or MEXICAN NATIONALS**. Any other word, no matter how quaint or picturesque, is inadequate and chauvinistic besides.

The American press is doing a great harm in employing this term "wetback" indiscriminately. It is popularizing a chauvinistic term which is picked up by many people and made an object of jokes. A worker goes over to a Mexican-American and says, "Hey, I heard that you were a 'wet-back.' Are you a 'Wetback?'" The popularization of chauvinism is no joking matter, and though the intent of the author of the article in the F. I. may have not been the same, nevertheless, the use of terms indigenous to this complex problem without any explanation of their total meaning is a touchy situation.

Leonard Sanchez
Oakland, Calif.

BOOKS

Sidney Hook, **HERESY, YES — CONSPIRACY, NO**. The John Day Company, New York, 1953. \$3.75. 283 pages.

In *Heresy, Yes — Conspiracy, No*, the ex-radical Sidney Hook, Professor of Philosophy at New York University, presents what he calls a program for "realistic liberals" as against that of the "ritualistic liberals" who continue to hold such hopelessly old-fashioned beliefs as the one that competent teach-

ers may not be dismissed for their political affiliations and that competence can only be judged by classroom performance. Hook's academic program has been adopted by the American Association of Universities, an organization of the administrations of the wealthiest and most powerful colleges, except that whereas Hook says that it is the right and the duty of faculties to expel members of the Communist party from their midst the AAU assigns this task to the administrations. Each insists that this concession to the congressional inquisitors is a form of defense against

them, since the academic community by purging itself is preventing the inquisitors from laying rough hands upon it.

In the world of today Hook plays the part of the self-confident clergyman in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, who esteems himself an expert on witches, gives advice on how to detect them and then finds to his dismay that the enemies of the local squire and the local minister are being apprehended for burning without him having been consulted. He is for the right to heretical opinion, says the professor; it is only conspiracy which he insists must

be cleaned out. But the contemporary witch-hunters are really after all those who are opponents or potential opponents — and this includes above all the labor movement — of American imperialism. They are making the Stalinists the focal point of their attack because, with their ties to the Kremlin, they are the most vulnerable.

“Free Trade of Ideas”

Unlike Miller's clergyman, however, Hook is not dismayed by the witch-hunt of the McCarthyists, whose significance he minimizes. By doing so, while joining with them in their onslaught upon the Stalinists, he is falling in with their strategy and permitting the attack to be extended to other sectors. Thus when Chancellor Heald, making a drive to collect funds for NYU, told the New York State Chamber of Commerce that they need not fear communism on the campuses, where it is studied only as cancer is studied, to be the better excised, Hook remained silent, although Heald's statement implied that the heretics who believe that not communism but capitalism is the cancer that requires a surgical operation have no place at NYU. As a matter of fact, Hook himself in his article in the NYU undergraduate newspaper implied that those opposed to the Korean War should not be allowed to teach when he said, “I cannot believe that even those who believe that members of the Communist Party should be permitted to teach would like to turn them loose on students who are to join the armed forces . . .”

The entire argument of his book in the last analysis serves the purpose of ruling out any effective fight against imperialism. It goes like this. A democracy is based on the free trade of ideas. The liberal, therefore, “stands ready to defend the honest heretic no matter what his views.” However, a conspiracy is different from a heresy. “The signs of a conspiracy are secrecy, anonymity, the use of false names and labels, and the calculated lie.” Such a conspiracy is the communist movement fathered by Lenin, who openly advocated the use of deceit, and brought to maturity by Stalin. As such, effective measures should be taken against it by the State and, within the teaching profession, by the teachers.

There are just three things wrong with this argument: it falsifies capitalist society, using the abstraction “democracy” without examining the concrete reality to see how the so-called free market of ideas works in the age of

monopoly; it falsifies Leninism; it falsely identifies Stalinism with Leninism. To use Hook's favorite marketing metaphor, in trying to palm off this stuff on the reader he is showing himself to be a cool customer or, rather, a slick salesman.

A free market of ideas — when press, radio, movies and television are monopolized by big business? Freedom of choice — when the ballyhoo artists systematically lie about their misleadingly labelled products? If the use of false names and labels and of the calculated lie is a sign of conspiracy, is not capitalist politics, with its election promises which Wendell Willkie once blithely dismissed as “campaign oratory,” a gigantic conspiracy? If secrecy is a sign of conspiracy, how are we to characterize the maneuvering by which, as the eminent historian Charles R. Beard irrefutably demonstrated, Roosevelt, behind the backs of the people, got the country into war against American capitalism's imperialist rivals?

Pardon us, professor. We'll take our stand and present our views despite the floods of hoopla thrown on the market by Big Business and despite its gangster tactics, and we'll fight for the right to keep presenting our views too, confident that the working of capitalism itself will demonstrate the truth of our ideas. But don't try to kid us that we're up against “honest competition.”

Distortion of Lenin

And talking of honest competition, let's get to Hook's discussion of Lenin's allegedly dishonest methods. Each of the three quotations from Lenin this teacher of ethics advances has been truncated by him to distort Lenin's thought. For instance, when Lenin speaks of the necessity of building fractions in mass organizations, “mainly open groups but also secret groups,” Hook cuts off after “secret groups” the words “which should be obligatory in every case when their suppression, or the arrest or deportation of their members by the bourgeoisie may be expected.” The impression Hook seeks to give is that Lenin desired to deceive the masses. In reality the Bolshevik party was the most honest party in its propaganda to the masses in history, and it was because of this that it gained their overwhelming confidence. It was Kerensky, whose government Hook idealizes, who used the big lie that Lenin and Trotsky were agents of the Kaiser.

What Hook calls a “strategy of infiltration and deceit” is the valid self-defense of revolutionists against the houndings of the government representatives and the labor lieutenants of the capitalists. He quotes Lenin that Communists should use, if necessary, evasions and subterfuges in the trade unions, but he neglects to include in the quotation the statement that these evasions and subterfuges are to be used to get into the unions and stay in them in spite of the efforts of the corrupt bureaucrats, who “will resort to every trick of bourgeois diplomacy, to the aid of bourgeois governments; the priests, the police and the courts, in order to prevent Communists from getting into the trade unions, to force them out by every means, to make their work in the trade unions as unpleasant as possible, to insult, to bait and to prosecute them.” Some AFL officials use gangster tactics; Tobin calls upon Roosevelt to smash the Trotskyist leadership of the Minneapolis Teamsters union; Curran welcomes the FBI screening of the maritime workers; the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists uses unbridled red-baiting. Overlooking this terror, Professor Hook, always a man for fair play, calls upon the militants to stand up and be counted — so that they can have their heads chopped off!

“There may be some justification for conspiratorial activity in undemocratic countries,” Hook magnanimously concedes. The heroic underground fighters against Hitler “may” have had “some justification” for struggling against him — it can't be said that they had every right to do so! However, he is more sure of himself in discussing the question of whether a bourgeois democracy may suspend its own laws: “Certain situations of emergency or crisis may lead to temporary restrictions upon freedom . . . There are many situations in which the necessity of saving the country is the overriding consideration.” In other words, it is wrong to struggle against the arbitrary regimes of the union bureaucrats, it is not even certain whether it was right to conduct a struggle against Hitler which Hitler had declared illegal, but it would be all right for Eisenhower to declare an emergency and set aside the Bill of Rights. Really now, professor!

Lenin and Stalin

On a par with Hook's description of Leninism and of democratic capitalism is his identification of Stalinism with

Leninism. Trotsky, affirming the dialectical interconnection of ends and means in *Their Morals and Ours*, showed why the methods of Stalinism, like those of capitalism, could not be the methods of revolutionists: "When we say that the end justifies the means, then for us the conclusion follows that the great revolutionary end spurns those base means and ways which set one part of the working class against other parts, or attempts to make the masses happy without their participation; or lower the faith of the masses in themselves and their organization, replacing it by worship for the 'leaders.' . . . The liberation of the workers can come only through the workers themselves. There is, therefore, no greater crime than deceiving the masses, palming off defeats as victories, friends as enemies, bribing workers' leaders, fabricating legends, staging false trials, in a word, doing what the Stalinists do. These means can serve only one end: lengthening the domination of a clique already condemned by history. But they cannot serve to liberate the masses."

Similarly, the organization form of the Bolshevik party is not the same as that of the degenerated Stalinist parties, although Hook equates the two. The Bolshevik party was dedicated to a relentless struggle against capitalism. Such a struggle demands a general adherence on the part of the members of the party to a central strategy and to a tactical line suited to the situation. It demands that the party be a combat party, with the centralization and the discipline of an army. It is a unique kind of army, however, for its general staff is elected by the rank and file, and its policy is determined only after the most thorough-going democratic discussion in the ranks. A Leninist party is not only the most honest of parties; it is also the most democratic of parties, which has in its ranks not the robots Hook depicts but the boldest thinkers. The Stalinist parties, characterized by bureaucratic centralism rather than democratic centralism, are caricatures of Leninist parties. Orders from above take the place of democratic discussion within the party; independent thought, expressed by the formation of factions to fight within the party for programs of action, is forbidden; the membership, which includes many honest and sincere persons attracted to a party they mistakenly regard as revolutionary, is systematically miseducated.

To entrust the punishment of the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy to

the capitalist State, however, is, like entrusting to it the punishment of the crimes of the trade union bureaucracy, to invite the destruction of the labor movement and all parties opposed to the existing administration. Likewise, for teachers to judge educational fitness by the individual's political affiliations instead of by his professional competence and honesty is to succumb to the hysteria of the witch-hunt.

McCarthyism Exaggerated?

For Hook, however, the witch-hunt consists only of "scattered events of injustice, foolishness and hardship." To be sure, "zealous individuals and groups, expressing themselves with anger and unrestraint on the shortcomings of national policy and leadership, have been guilty of 'cultural vigilantism.'" The activities of these groups and the importance of McCarthy have, however, been much exaggerated. "If anything, all this testifies to an unregimented culture, particularly when directed against the state." So too, no doubt, the growth in the twenties of Nazism, which also did not hesitate to attack the existing government, attested to the strength and vitality of bourgeois democracy in Germany.

Hook's program to "reduce the incidence of cultural vigilantism" is somewhat less "tough-minded," to use the book jacket's description for the "philosophy" he has worked out "to guide American liberals," than his program to combat "Communist conspiracy." His first point is that "those who discuss communism . . . should spend some time studying it" with the aid of a book-list obligingly furnished by him. "I predict," he states, "that anyone who reads all these books will not hurl the charge of communism lightly against anybody." The only difficulty, it would seem, would be to get Senator McCarthy, who has affirmed that he will not read the *New York Post*, to read the books. Hook's second and third points are the use of secret hearings "where present and active membership in the Communist Party constitutes a *prima facie* case of professional unfitness for a position in non-federal public and quasi-public organizations" and the continuance of the attorney general's list of subversive organizations — but with proper safeguards to protect "honest heretics," of course — so as to deprive the "cultural vigilantes" of ammunition. His fourth point is that "in a democracy no one can silence for long the

man who has the moral and intellectual courage to stick by his guns" so that a "show of independence" must finally carry the day. His fifth and final point is that we must not exaggerate the strength of McCarthyism so that it is made to appear "a danger to the survival of the nation equal to, if not greater than, Stalinism." In short, we must lecture the McCarthyites, do their work for them but more tidily and tell ourselves that we have really nothing to fear from them. There is no proposal for organized action.

"Those who shout that Fascism is here today, even when this does not echo the Communist Party line, can produce nothing but wearied resignation before the real thing," says Hook. It is not necessary to say that Fascism is here today to appreciate the ominous growth of reaction in the United States, similar to that in Germany under the government of the Catholic Bruening and the General Schleicher immediately before Hitler, and to understand that McCarthy's mass following can, with the coming of a crisis, become the base for a genuine Fascist movement. An understanding of the nature of McCarthyism leads not to a "wearied resignation" but to a determination to fight it. This fight can only be successful if the labor movement, disregarding the precepts of Professor Hook, ceases to compete in red-baiting with the politicians and takes the lead in organizing militant action against it.

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