

LABOR ACTION

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REVOLUTION IN SOUTH VIETNAM: U.S. Helping Stifle Only Force That Can Beat Stalinists

By HAL DRAPER

The American people have to be told that South Vietnam, which is the next country on the list for Stalinist conquest, is in the midst of a revolution which alone can save it from that fate but which is being stifled by American influence as well as by French colonialism.

The Stalinist regime of Ho Chi Minh now rules in the northern half of Indochina, as a result of victory at Dienbienphu and the settlement at the Geneva conference. Its supporters are infiltrated all through South Vietnam too, where, as long as the country is deprived of independence and a democratic, independent and sovereign government, the name of Ho still stands for "patriotism" and anti-colonial struggle. In the middle of next year both parts of Vietnam (according to the Geneva agreement) are to go into a national plebiscite. There has scarcely been a knowledgeable observer up to now who has not openly said or implied that Ho and the Stalinists would win hands-down in a fair vote.

Even if the plebiscite is not held—say, if the South Vietnam government, backed by the U. S., which did not sign the Geneva agreement, refuses to heed the settlement terms—this will not only be a moral and political defeat, but it will also not save South Vietnam from the Stalinists. For the same observers, with almost as much unanimity, have told the West that the hitherto chaotic conditions in the country were leading to collapse within and making it easy for the Vietminh to take over without marching across the border.

LOST, UNLESS—

Up to this month, there seemed to be absolutely nothing in sight that could keep the country from sliding under the same totalitarian yoke as the Vietminh has imposed up north.

The Diem government was inept, compromising with the reactionaries, doing nothing to create real representative government, slowing up land reform, and—insofar as Diem pulled away from the French—convincing even its friends that it was engaged in substituting an American form of dollar-colonialism for the weakening French rule. French troops were still in the country. Bao Dai was still the "chief of state," sunning himself on the Riviera.

No wonder no observer could convince himself that the Vietnamese peasants would vote in next year's plebiscite for this image of a Vietnam, as against the North Vietnam regime which had defeated the French with its arms; made every Vietnamese feel proud of his fellow countrymen, and had set up a Vietnam that was sovereign and efficiently run.

This Vietnam of Ho's has been totalitarianized? Very true, but contrasting with this totalitarianism is not a democracy in the South; and above all, the question of foreign rule overlays all internal questions, which will be able to develop only under national independence. (In any case, the most optimistic expectations about the plebiscite do sometimes mention that, while the South is sure to vote for Ho, the North may vote against him because of their experiences. That may be as it may.)

What it added up to was that all of Vietnam was lost unless there developed a new dynamic alternative in South Vietnam, one that could counter the attraction of the Vietminh.

THE MAY CRISIS

The beginnings of this alternative have finally appeared in the last couple of weeks, in an onset of revolutionary ferment that has swept South Vietnam, according to unimpeachable reports in the press.

Judging from the reports available, and with the indicated reservations due to inadequate details, it seems quite clear that what has been taking place is a mass revolutionary upsurge from below. This revolutionary wave is (we should not be surprised to learn) amorphously led, and no doubt has a distance to go in political clarification and organization before it can hope to overcome the obstacles before it.

But the first and most important thing to ascertain

is *it is there*, and that one of its obstacles is the U. S.

This act in the drama began shortly before the Geneva conference, when the French puppet Bao Dai appointed Ngo Dinh Diem as prime minister with full powers. This appointment was a concession by the French to the influence of the U. S., which wanted a man named to head the government who might possibly be passed off as a true nationalist.

Diem seemed to fill the bill. He had been an *attentiste*, one of the politicians who had refused to participate in any of Bao Dai's governments in the last few years, ever since he had resigned the premiership as a protest against French domination. He was a devout Catholic, anti-Vietminh beyond question, pro-Western, with a reputation for honesty and personal incorruptibility as well as nationalist bona-fides.

The Americans adopted him as "our man." A Diem government, they thought, would escape the stigma of French colonialism, even though French colonialist power remained over the country. The U. S. switched its aid to Vietnam from its channel through France to direct aid to Saigon, by-passing the franc. The

HANDS OFF!

The revolutionary nationalist forces in South Vietnam are demanding independence, a republic, and free elections.

Only a Vietnam freed of the French, of Bao Dai, and of American dollarized puppets can hope to resist Stalinism.

The revolution in Vietnam is fighting both the Stalinist camp and the Western imperialist camp. Hands off!

French colony of money-changers in Vietnam was bypassed too, and besides, all kinds of other American capital began infiltrating the country behind their backs.

The French colons became as "anti-American" as the Stalinists, according to our reporters, but Paris knew it had to play along with Washington or be washed up. Paris went along, aiming to demonstrate to the Americans that "their man" Diem could not do the job, that his regime could lead only to chaos, etc. Just to make sure, they did not mind manufacturing the "chaos" themselves.

Diem is a traditional mandarin-type, and not even a reasonable facsimile of a democratic nationalist; but he did fight back against the French squeeze-play. This is what led to the Binh Xuyen rebellion on the one hand, and in reaction, to the revolutionary crisis.

One of the acts of the French puppet regime preceding Diem's had been to put the police force of the capital Saigon into the hands of the chief of the Binh Xuyen gang. This picture, by the way, is one of the most hair-raising even in the bristling history of capitalist colonialism. As American correspondents have been reporting in a totally casual and uninhibited way, these agents of the French colonialists form a kind of Murder Inc.—indeed, a Murder-Prostitution-Dope-Running-Piracy Inc. (This Binh Xuyen is not one of the politico-religious sects that are often referred to and should not be confused with the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao.) It is a tightly organized and very efficient crime gang, that is all. Its adoption by the French as their only reliable supporters is a new high in imperialist cynicism, but gives a clue to their inability to find anyone else in the country to act as quisling.

The Binh Xuyen, which has its private army, therefore also held the police force by the kindness of the French, whom they supported. The prime minister found himself at the head of a government with (in effect) no police force of his own, while the army was an uncertain quantity.

Diem moved to fire the Binh Xuyen police chief, and to take other steps against the old corrupt elements. In reprisal, the Binh Xuyen declared war against the government. There is no doubt that they did this expecting to get the support of the French, whose troops were still in Saigon; and there is even less doubt that, in as many ways as they dared, the French did in fact encourage and aid the Binh Xuyen revolt.

The French forces hampered the operations of Diem's troops as much as possible, while allowing free rein to the troops of the whore-and-dope peddlers. During the days of the battle in the streets of Saigon, Paris issued statements demanding that Diem show his ability to govern by making peace with these ex-pirates; these French friends of the brothel-keepers, manfully keeping a straight face at press conferences, gave forth with blasts at Diem for "dividing" the nation's forces, etc.

Meanwhile they did not fail in more concrete aid. In at least one Binh Xuyen bunker in Saigon, two French non-coms were found when it surrendered; they claimed they had been "accidentally" trapped there when the fighting began.

Crucial to Diem was the loyalty of the army's officer corps. Would they fight against the Binh Xuyen rebels, or would they listen to Bao Dai's general Vy, who was preparing a palace coup against Diem? As the rebellion went on, it looked as Diem was on the way out. Even the Americans were beginning to accept the French line that he could not "handle the situation"—just as the French had planned.

ENTER THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE

Beset in front by the Binh Xuyen gangsters, with the French snapping at his heels, his officer corps wavering, the Bao Dai and Vy cabal getting ready to jump him, and the Americans turning away, it looked at this point as if Diem was the dearest duck in Vietnam. Yet today he is still there.

For another force had arisen, and it was already powerful enough to cancel all the others out. This was a wave of "revolutionary committees" springing up over the country.

As far as most of the country is concerned, the press dispatches tell us far too little about this. The *Times* (May 2) reported that Diem had threatened Bao Dai "that 'secret revolutionary committees' were springing up in the provinces. He said that Bao Dai's cablegrams irritated and excited the army and population and that if he did not cease sending them a revolution would sweep the country."

Diem was as afraid of the revolution as his chief of state in Cannes but he was threatening to "sic" the revolution onto him if he didn't stop his machinations.

We hear more about the revolutionary committee in Saigon, where it had organized in a matter of a few days as a united front of militant nationalist political groups, politico-religious groups, and other nationalist associations, including the Socialist Party of Vietnam. The same May 2 dispatch in the *Times* said, "The premier yesterday conferred with the revolutionary committee, which he seems to be holding back as his trump card."

It was during May 1-2 that the Vy coup was thrown back, but only by the direct intervention of the revolutionary committee. At one point, the press actually reported that Vy had control of the palace and that Diem had been ousted. A few hours later, the revolutionary committee stepped onto the stage publicly for the first time, according to the reporters' firsthand accounts. Right in the palace, with Vy a virtual prisoner, it was the head of the revolutionary committee that read out the manifesto announcing the deposition of Bao Dai and calling for a new government.

This spokesman of the revolutionary committee was its president, Nguyen Bao Toan, named by the *Times* dispatch as secretary of a new political party formed

(Turn to last page)

AUTO WORKERS • UAW

Auto Negotiations In Lowest Gear

By JACK WILSON

DETROIT, May 17—After the most lackadaisical negotiations in the history of the auto industry, the first important break appeared forthcoming this week with a "leak" to the newspapers by General Motors that it was about to offer the United Auto Workers a package including a six-cent raise and a modified version of the UAW guaranteed annual wage proposal.

With the deadline for Ford on June 1 and that of GM on June 7, time alone was pressing the negotiators to do something besides go through the ritual of negotiations. Since negotiations began a month ago, there have been only 15 meetings with GM and 14 with Ford, which also indicated it may have an offer for the union soon.

Another indication of the kind of negotiations that have been conducted until now is the fact that Walter P. Reuther, UAW president, has been in them only three times at Ford and once at GM.

At the GM negotiations, it was agreed that neither side would issue a public statement without giving the other side 24-hour notice. This is in marked contrast with the old-time negotiations when Reuther was issuing almost hourly bulletins on the actual contents of the talks between the corporation and the union.

FRANCE

Local Elections... SP-CP Deal... Mendes Captures Radical Party

By A. GIACOMETTI

PARIS, May 12—Every six years, half of the local administrations in the departments are subject to re-election. In general, these cantonal elections do not show great political changes. They are not generally fought on foreign policy, but on internal and local issues. The parties of the Right are over-represented, particularly the old and established parties, which benefit from extensive gerrymandering and from greater possibilities to form electoral alliances.

This year's election did not change this general picture. However, a few aspects were significant enough to deserve notice:

(1) The SP and CP collaborated in several instances on the local level, that is, candidates of one party withdrew in favor of the other, thereby ensuring the victory of the latter.

Thus 20 SP candidates were elected with CP support, while 12 were elected against the SP with bourgeois support. On the other hand, 6 CP candidates were elected with SP support. This collaboration took place in defiance of the SP's secretariat's directives, i.e., of Guy Mollet. The net gain, in terms of seats, was 10 for the SP and 6 for the CP. In terms of voting strength, and in comparison with 1949, the SP rose from 16.8 per cent to 17.8 per cent, while the CP declined from 23.5 per cent to 21 per cent. The total "left" vote, including SP, CP and New Left rose from 40.3 per cent to 42.4 per cent.

France-Observateur and related circles have seen in this feature of the elections a prefiguration of a new Popular Front. This conclusion is hasty, and in any case premature. Whereas it is true that the base of CP and SP cooperate more readily than their leaderships, any common front is out of the question as long as the hold of the leaderships is not decisively weakened in both parties and trade unions.

(2) The "Poujadist" movement, a terror of Parliament only a few weeks ago, has played no significant role whatever in the elections. The candidates it opposed, including Edgar Faure himself, were re-elected and its own candidates were mostly defeated.

(3) Neither did the New Left play a significant role. It presented a few candidates, who got 3.6 per cent of the total vote. It was able to achieve Popular Front combinations with SP and CP only in very few instances; in most cases, such combinations were made without

In this context, the strike votes at both Ford and GM have been routine affairs rather than utilized opportunities to educate the rank and file on the issues and to solidify the ranks for any possible struggle.

An interesting part of the UAW GAW proposal as it came out last week was that it was offered on a five-year basis to the corporations. They were asked to put into funds the sum of eight cents per hour per man to build up an unemployment reserve fund to pay laid-off workers a supplement to unemployment compensation. Taking taxes into account the cost to the corporations would be only 4 cents per hour, under the limited liability proposed. This hardly looks like something the companies would resist hard enough to force a strike, especially since it suggests that the UAW leadership may be toying with the idea of another five-year contract.

While most UAW local union elections have only passing interest, the contest at Ford Local 600 is worth commenting on. Carl Stellato won by 24,000 to 4,000 votes, the biggest in his history.

Which led one observer to remark—and quite accurately, "Carl is now no longer a nuisance. He has become a minority."

it and over its head. The lack of cadres, of an organization and, even more, of a coherent policy once again made themselves felt.

MENDES FORGES A TOOL

Since the Mendès-France government, the Radical-Socialist party has been deeply divided into a "Mendèsist" wing with a New Deal program, composed of much of the rank and file in the southern and eastern federations, and a reactionary wing, headed by Martinaud-Déplat, "Administrative President" of the party, and based on the North African colonialist lobbies. In the Radical Party congress of May 4, the Mendèsist wing forced a showdown which it had been seeking since the fall of the Mendès government.

After a bitter fight of ten hours, it succeeded in wresting the leadership from Martinaud-Déplat and his friends. This victory might have far-reaching effects on French politics.

In the past, even though the Radical Party appealed in its electoral program to the liberal and republican sections of the petty bourgeoisie, it was in fact an instrument in the hands of a crowd of corrupt politicians, lobbying for reactionary interest groups. With the victory of Mendès-France, it is putting in its bid to become the great representative party of the French bourgeoisie.

Instead of representing the North African colonialists or similar groups, it will try to represent the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole, that is, the interests of its most modern, monopolistic, bureaucratized sections.

Such, then, is the shape of the new Mendèsist realignment in the making: not a new party, nor a pseudo-New Left as Malraux and Mauriac outlined in L'Express, but a reconstructed Radical Party, as a vehicle for a French New Deal and for a foreign policy based on the British. On such a basis, a Mendèsist Radical Party might propose a political alliance to the small center-left groups such as the UDSR and to the SP.

It becomes more pressing now for the SP to define itself as against this current; if the leadership refuses to differentiate itself from it, it is to be hoped that the rank and file will.

NORTH AFRICA

Tunisians Accept a Deal... New 'Indochina' in Algeria?

By A. GIACOMETTI

PARIS, May 12—On April 22 the French and Tunisian delegates signed the preliminary agreement on conventions that was hailed in the majority of the press as a triumph of enlightened statesmanship. The agreement was made possible only by sweeping concessions on the part of the Tunisian representatives. As La Vérité put it, the Neo-Destour had "retreated to the brink of capitulation."

The gains of the Tunisian people are mainly confined to the cultural and educational fields and, perhaps more important, to the explicit recognition by the French government of its right to autonomy. The actual relationship of power, however, has not changed in the least.

The police remains French for another two years; then, for five years, it will be jointly administered by French and Tunisian authorities; for ten years several key positions in the police will remain occupied by French functionaries; for another ten years, there will be a special regime for areas predominantly inhabited by French or Europeans. The percentage of French policemen will in no case be less than 30 per cent during this period. Then, twenty years from the signing of the conventions, the French and Tunisian governments will jointly determine what proportion of French functionaries should remain in the police.

As far as the courts are concerned, in the next five years disputes between Tunisians will be judged by Tunisian courts, while disputes between Tunisians and Europeans, as well as disputes between Europeans, remain under the jurisdiction of French courts, although a Tunisian judge will be added to them whenever Tunisians are involved. The courts will be turned over to the Tunisian government only after ten years.

The main French companies (mining, railroads, agriculture, real estate, banks, etc.) remain under the jurisdiction of French courts. They cannot be affected by any reforms a Tunisian government might want to undertake. The French legislation remains applicable to capital investment and to the creation of new enterprises. Transfer of capital and foreign investments must first be authorized by the French authorities. The Tunisian economy remains attached to the franc zone and the customs union with France remains in effect.

Finally, the French military authorities remain in charge of "defense," of the borders, ports and airports, of counter-espionage, "etc." Southern Tunisia remains under military administration, as it has been since the end of the last century.

In short, all the instruments of repression and of economic exploitation remain in French hands for several years to come. The French government has kept two birds in its hand, while the Tunisian government has won one bird on the roof.

LEFT-WINGERS OBJECT

Why did the Neo-Destour concede so much? A partial explanation might be found in the statement Mr. Masmoudi, a member of the Tunisian delegation, made at an information meeting of the Neo-Destour in Tunis on April 29: "It must not be believed that these conventions, by which home rule is defined, are eternal. Their application can open up new possibilities. Our partner will be obliged to modify his positions."

This position assumes that the political situation will develop in such a way that the French government will be less and less able to resist granting further concessions. While this possibility is not to be discounted, the leaders of the Neo-Destour should know from past experience how dangerous it is to bargain with colonial powers when the instruments of power are left in their hands.

It is not surprising that the official optimism of the Tunisian delegation is not shared by many sectors of Tunisian opinion. Speaking for the left wing of the Neo-Destour, Salah Ben Youssef declared in Bandung that the most important issues, i.e., internal security and police powers, had yet to be solved, and that the Tunisian people will reject all agreements maintaining the status quo.

Ahmed Ben Salah, secretary general of the UGTT, stated that "once national emancipation is achieved, we shall struggle with the same determination against... any Tunisian government which would ignore the workers' demands." On May Day, the UGTT passed a resolution

demanding general elections to "provide stronger foundations for the national institutions based on social and political democracy." The Tunisian working class, the resolution further states, "is determined to sharpen its struggle on all levels to realize its aspirations and to win social reforms, regardless of how strongly its adversaries might oppose its advance."

LINEUPS SHIFTING

Evidently, different positions are taking shape in the Neo-Destour. While the Tunisian bourgeoisie can content itself with limited "autonomy," that is, the recognition of its right to exploit the Tunisian people along with the French bourgeoisie, the Tunisian people cannot settle for less than "independence," the opportunity to participate decisively in the management of its own affairs. What form its struggle for independence will take in the future depends on the way the conventions will be interpreted and applied by the French government.

The French population of Tunisia has reacted in several ways. The ultra-colonialist settlers, civil-servants, etc., led by the senators Colonna and Puaux, violently oppose the conventions, in which they, like the Neo-Destour, see the thin end of a wedge that is to drive them out of their privileged positions. Their hopes are in the possibility of sabotaging the ratification of the conventions by endless delaying tactics in parliament. As Puaux said, "legality offers sufficient resources for us to stay within it."

These elements are flanked by semi-fascist groups like "Présence Française," which believe in direct action, such as assassinating Tunisian nationalist leaders and beating up liberal Frenchmen. After three brutal assaults against the latter within the last week, the French authorities were compelled to deport General Rime-Bruneau, president of this association, to France.

The liberal sections of the French population, represented by the "Committee for a Free Franco-Tunisian Co-operation" and the Tunisian Federation of the SP, have given full support to the agreements, and have urged parliament to ratify the conventions as soon as possible.

The Tunisian CP considers the agreements in themselves to be "a mere patching-up of the protectorate regime," and opposes them all the more energetically since its opposition will probably remain confined to newspaper articles.

REPRESSION EXTENDS

Meanwhile, in neighboring Algeria, the repression continues unrelentingly. The "state of emergency," originally confined to the Aurès region and to Kabylia, has since been extended to the south of the Aurès, and press censorship has been established in the whole country. Several Algerian nationalists and European Stalinists have been banished from the territory; they have the choice of expatriation to France or of forced residence in a "controlled area" where 160 persons have already been interned.

The MTLD had decided to boycott the cantonal elections in Algeria; abstentions ranged from 65 per cent at the primaries to 45 per cent at the general elections, with 83 per cent abstaining in a district where the election returns could not be forged.

Not one day passes in which military operations against the partisans are not reported. They are by and large as unsuccessful as they were in Tunisia two years ago. Instances have been reported (in the tabloid France-Soir) of French soldiers going over to the partisans with their entire equipment. Le Monde is trying to reassure its readers by showing that Algeria is not yet another Indochina.

In Paris, the Stalinist support of the reformist wing of the nationalist movement has led to incidents between Algerian workers and the CP. At the May Day meeting outside Paris the MTLD group walked out after the CGT leadership had prevented its representative from taking the floor and had given it instead to one B. Omar, who, according to the MTLD, "in no way represents the Algerian workers." On the other hand, large numbers of Algerians attended the May Day meeting of the "Committee for the Liberation of Messali Hadj," where the main speakers were Dechezelles, Pivert, and representatives of the PCI.

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LONDON LETTER

Tories Banking on Using Bevanite Bogy

By OWEN ROBERTS

LONDON, May 12—As the tempo of the election campaign accelerates it becomes increasingly difficult to present a clear reflection of political life in Britain. It is rather as if—when Parliament formally dissolved six days ago—the 630 local constituencies which go to make up the jigsaw puzzle have suddenly been knocked apart and shaken up. While each of them still bear a definite relationship to the others they have now taken on much more of an individual characteristic. However, some threads are still apparent.

One factor which is common throughout the entire country is the fashion in which the Tories seem to be endeavoring to exploit the differences within the Labor Party. In particular they are going out of their way to build Aneurin Bevan up into a bogey-man with which to frighten the electorate. This is nothing unusual. In many previous elections the Tories have singled out a specific individual on the Labor left and tried their hardest to convince the voters that this person is a dangerous "revolutionary" who threatens the "British way of life."

That is what is happening now. Bevan and the Bevanites are being featured as the main enemy of the Tories with the inference that the Labor Party cannot act as a responsible political party while such people have any degree of influence.

TRUST THE LEADER!

A typical example of this mode of operation is to be found in a statement made by the Tory candidate for the Essex constituency of Hornchurch. His opponent is Geoffrey Bing, a left-winger, and the Tory said to a newspaper reporter the other day: "For many months past, I have repeatedly endeavored to get from Mr. Bing a clear statement on whether he is a Bevanite or an Attleite. Always he has evaded the issue. The fact that Both Mr. Bevan and his wife, together with Mr. Freeman, are to speak during his campaign, while Mr. Attlee's supporters are conspicuous by their absence, seems to confirm that which is obvious to me, but which he has seemed so far ashamed to admit."

As a reaction to this type of propaganda the party headquarters at Transport House has produced a poster which will be widely displayed all over the country. It consists simply of a large colored photograph of Clem Attlee with the bold inscription underneath: "You Can Trust Mr. Attlee."

The Tories have not been slow to real-

ize the value of this particular device and they now are saying that this poster implies that even the right wing of the Labor Party realizes that Aneurin Bevan cannot be trusted to act in a responsible fashion, but that Clem Attlee can be relied upon to keep him out of mischief.

The campaign has produced one or two rather amusing incidents, one of which is of particular interest to Americans.

'TYPICAL' MEETING

A couple of nights ago an American concern installed television cameras at a meeting which was being held at Tooting with the idea of making a film, to show you Americans what a typical British election meeting looks like. The main speaker at the meeting was Miss Pat Hornsby Smith, one of the young up-and-coming Tories. The meeting carried on quite normally until Miss Smith was rash enough to state that the workers were better off under the Tory government than they had been under the Labor government.

There was an immediate uproar; storms of boos, shouts and catcalls drowned her subsequent remarks. Violent arguments broke out among members of the audience, and in one case almost developed into a physical conflict. The chairman added to the uproar by vainly hammering at the table in an endeavor to restore some semblance of order to the meeting. In the middle of it all the American television cameras kept turning—filming a typical English political meeting!

BRAZIL

A Lesson for Opportunists: Reactionary Coup in the SP

By J. R.

SANTIAGO, Apr. 20—The Socialist Party of Brazil (as other dispatches to LABOR ACTION have noted before) was founded by ex-Marxist elements together with left liberals, populists and ex-Stalinists. It has existed as a minority party for some years, up to its latest stage of political alliance with the populist group of Janio Quadros and his supporters. Now a reactionary coup d'etat has taken place inside of it.

The whole situation provides a very enlightening example of the fruits of opportunist policy in a socialist party.

Against the strong opposition of the revolutionary socialist elements in the party, the party committee of the state of Sao Paulo started on the road of supporting the populist Janio Quadros. It launched the "movement of March 22" which resulted in victory for Quadros as mayor in the Sao Paulo municipality. Then the SP put Quadros on its ticket for head of the state government, and he won.

Both in the municipality and in the state of Sao Paulo, the SP participated in the administration and acquired office-holders. It had gotten nearly 100,000 votes, and some state and federal deputies, and so it had now become a party of some importance with respect to "practical politics." These organizational and electoral advances were the outcome of the SP's popular-front alliance with "Janio" and Janio's Christian-Democratic Party; thus "Janismo" was launched as a new political current in Brazil; and all this is to be chalked up to the SP leadership of ex-Marxists.

FRANKENSTEIN STORY

But this policy, which seemed to be so "successful," has led to anti-socialist internal consequences for the party, indeed to the ouster of even the same ex-Marxist elements who launched it.

The new bureaucrats set up by the party's gains in the electoral field, the deputies, state secretary and others,

The line-up for election day seems to be a full team. The Tory party is putting forward a candidate for every seat while the Labor Party is doing likewise, except for the constituency which returns the Speaker (chairman) of the House of Commons; by tradition the Speaker is neutral and his seat is not contested. The present Speaker is a Tory and the Labor Party is bowing down to convention—but not so the rank-and-file Labor members in the area, who are putting an 'independent socialist' into the field against the neutral-Tory Speaker.

14 DAYS TO GO

The Liberal Party states that it expects to field about 120 candidates; this is exceedingly optimistic considering that they have suffered defeat after defeat during recent years and that in the last general election they only succeeded in securing six seats.

The Communist Party is putting forward 17 candidates and has not the slightest chance of getting any of them returned. During the last general election the Stalinists entered 10 candidates and each of them was soundly defeated. Under the British electoral system each candidate has to place a deposit of 150 pounds when he stands for Parliament; if he fails to poll one-eighth of the votes cast, this money is forfeited to the Treasury. In this fashion the 10 Stalinist candidates cost their party funds exactly 15,000 pounds during the last election.

There is now fourteen days to go before polling day. These will be crammed full of hard work and hard fighting for all of us in the BLP. But, like all election campaigns, it will draw fresh blood into the fight. The left-wingers who are on the job will make sure that this new blood is transfused into the place where it will do most good: that is, with the left-wing!

backed by the upstarts, the ex-Stalinist and bourgeois elements, formed a bloc inside the party against the "theoreticians"—meaning the genuinely socialist elements—because, in the new situation, even the old party committee which had backed Quadros had now become an impediment in the "practical" distribution of the fruits of electoral victory.

The party State Committee decided to oppose the candidacy of deputy Roger Ferreira to the mayoralty of Sao Paulo. The latter used his supporters to intimidate meetings and conventions, formed a bloc with other bureaucrats, Janists, careerists and bourgeois elements, under the slogans of "Down with the theoreticians" and "Long live Roger!"

The old leaders of the party—who had themselves been the initiators and organizers of the "March 22 Movement" and the architects of Janio's victory—were pushed aside by the "Janist" Roger Ferreira, by their own creation, by the result of their own policy.

NEW ROAD

The anti-socialist bloc defeated them at the general assembly of the party and elected its own candidates to the party convention, which elected the new state committee. The old socialist group which had built the party was simply "purged," as the fruits of their "successful" policy of alliance with the petty-bourgeois.

Now the socialists have lost control of the Socialist Party, as a result of their "victory." This is a paradox only from the point of view of opportunism.

The anti-socialist bloc raises the banner of "healthy nationalism" (inside the party!), as against the "theoreticians" who are charged with having made many mistakes—as indeed they have.

The left socialist group will have to begin the fight to reconquer the party, a fight to the bitter end, and afterward to create a new left independent organization. Such a new orientation would have to begin with a frank criticism of the mistaken policy of alliance with "Janism," telling the whole truth about Janio and the "March 22 Movement," and returning to the banner of uncompromising revolutionary socialist policy.

Women Denounce Polygamy, Attack Mohammed Ali

By D. P. JONES

The struggle for national independence among colonial peoples has sparked a whole series of social and democratic demands among the people of Asia and Africa. The most recent example of how the lifting of the burden of colonialism and foreign rule now permits the development of the struggle for the most elementary democratic rights comes from Pakistan, where a newly created organization of Moslem women is carrying on a struggle for emancipation from the status traditionally accorded to them under Mohammedanism.

The Moslem tradition serves as a reactionary deadweight upon the free development of social relations, and this is nowhere so true as in its attitude toward women, who are not only despised as inferior beings, but are deprived of the legal position of free individuals, being in many instances practically the chattel property of their male consorts. This is particularly evident in the legal recognition of polygamy with its attendant abuses and inevitable consequences in the degradation of women as a whole. Thus, even though the actual practice of polygamy is rare, and practiced only among a small minority of the upper class, it has become a symbol of the second-class citizenship of women and the rallying point for militant women.

The discussion which has been going on has been within the framework of the Moslem religion, with the anti-polygamists claiming that the institution is not necessarily indicated in the Koran but that it was only suggested as an aid in carrying out the edict that men must be generous to widows and orphans. If this should be difficult, says the Koran, then men might marry the widows and make the orphans their own. As official apologist for the status quo, Princess Abida Sultan, delegate from Pakistan to the last United Nations General Assembly, said in a press conference: "Neither the Koran nor the Prophet Mohammed has laid down any condition or stipulation as to when or why a man can or cannot take more than one wife" (note the negative nature of this rebuttal) and "women who cannot tolerate polygamy are free to make this stipulation in the marriage contract. . . ." Of course, what matters is not that an individual can beat the system, but that the system exists at all.

PURDAH NEXT

Various women's groups in Karachi, Pakistan, have organized a "Board for the Protection of the Rights of Women," and the day after the board was formed its members were given an occasion for their first public activity. Prime Minister Mohammed Ali married his secretary as his second wife, and while fifty women demonstrated in protest outside his home, a letter was sent to him stating that "polygamy as practiced today is contrary to the spirit of Islam."

Although this is a movement of upper class women and those of the working class have not yet become involved, the situation for women in general in Karachi is so bad that it may be predicted that it is only a matter of time before a more inclusive organization is formed. Purdah, the condition in which women are kept completely out of the world of affairs, is almost uniformly practiced, but they cannot be expected to remain untouched by the progressive forces which are at work in the country at large.

The incipient movement has some similarities to the early American struggle for women's rights; both forced to defend themselves within a religious framework, both concerned at the start with domestic affairs, and both initiated by upper class women. It is to be hoped that, like the Americans, the Pakistani women will quickly perceive the necessity for political rights, without which all other gains are merely concessions which can be granted or withheld, but it is also to be hoped that they will not have to wait for a comparable eighty years to win this basic democratic freedom.

YOU'RE INVITED

to speak your mind in the letter column of Labor Action. Our policy is to publish letters of general political interest, regardless of views. Keep them to 500 words.

CLIPPINGS:

On Our Way of Life

SAN FRANCISCO, May 15 (AP)—Marine Gen. Holland M. (Howling Mad) Smith, retired, advocated last night restrictions upon suffrage to combat communism.

"Unrestricted suffrage will eventually lead to some form of the communism we are trying to check abroad," he told the Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association convention.

He said voters who had demonstrated no competence to govern themselves should not be privileged to rule others.

"Our traditional way of life is being threatened," he said, "by the wide demand for more security instead of opportunity by those who shirk competitive effort, and seek some division that gives them a satisfying, unearned share in the efforts of others."

—N. Y. Times

GREENWICH, Conn., April 27—The National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church learned here today about a new counter-attack on the menace of paganism in American cities.

[A special fund; the dispatch goes on to say, is being used to solve parish problems, including] the case of Christ Church in downtown Cincinnati where a new \$1,500,000 sanctuary is being built to handle a "massive program." Here the question is one of salesmanship—how can that church not alone survive but succeed?

"Plans are under way," said the Bishop, "for a market research analysis, religion potential surveys and similar emphasis, led by competent sales and promotion executives."

—N. Y. Times (Apr. 28)

Labor's New Unity Constitution: What It Does and What It Fails to Do

By BEN HALL

Nothing in the AFL-CIO merger constitution (adopted by the joint Unity Committee for presentation to the December 5 merger convention) is surprising or new. All major points were already indicated in the preliminary merger agreement. But a reading of the official text shows which provisions have teeth and which are mere expressions of opinion.

The outstanding features of the new constitution are:

(1) Craft and industrial unionism are recognized as equal.

(2) Unions dominated or controlled by "Communists or other totalitarians" are excluded from the united federation and such elements are denied the right to hold office.

(3) All workers regardless of "race, color, creed, or national origin" are entitled to the full "benefits" of unionism.

(4) Machinery is set up against racketeering and corruption within affiliated internationals.

(5) Political action is underscored.

(6) In the words of George Meany and Walter Reuther, "It promotes democratic unionism." But this is undoubtedly the weakest aspect of the constitution. Neither the constitution nor the merger agreement give effective support to the reawakening of inner-union democracy.

Article II lists the "objects and principles" of the new federation in a most general fashion. But while each has "equal" status in the abstract, the constitution provides effective measure to enforce some, but not all. Least of all for inner democracy.

Setting the Stage

Political action becomes a reality through the establishment of two standing committees: (1) the Committee on Legislation whose task is "to carry out the policies and programs of the Federation in the Congress, and in the legislatures of state and local governments"; (2) the Committee on Political Education whose tasks are defined in very gingerly language (perhaps because of state and national laws limiting the scope of union political action) but which obviously takes the place of the AFL's Labor's League for Political Education and the CIO's Political Action Committee. Within the limits of law, it will urge workers to the polls and will endorse and support candidates for office.

Industrial unionism is fully safeguarded by the following:

(1) All CIO unions come into the merger with full rights. Industrial unions in basic production are powerful enough to defend themselves regardless of any constitutional clause.

(2) The Director of Organization will be chosen by the CIO and will have a decisive voice on the day-to-day inner-organizational questions.

(3) Industrial unions will be united in a separate department, equal in status to any other department, with the same right to separate national and local organization.

In the sphere of political action and in relations between craft and industrial unionism, the constitution marks no change from what already exists. It simply recognizes the final victory of what the CIO has always defended.

Similarly, there is no noteworthy change in attitude toward the Communist Party. Stalinist-dominated unions were expelled from the CIO years ago. Most unions already bar Stalinists from holding office. The constitution makes basic law out of current practice.

In most respects, the constitution records what already exists. But some provisions will ultimately play a role in forming the character of the labor movement. Three questions are in dispute, and it is on these questions that a realignment is taking place inside the labor

movement. They are the Three Rs of U. S. labor: racketeering, racism, and raiding. The constitution outlaws all three with varying effectiveness.

It should be noted that the united federation will be open to all AFL-CIO affiliates without qualification. It is doubtful that any other course was possible without dragging out negotiations indefinitely and making unity impossible. But it is obvious that while the constitution speaks out against the Three Rs it cannot make conformity with its position a precondition for affiliation by AFL and CIO unions. Unions which do practice discrimination, others which are racket-ridden, and others which raid without conscience will come into the merger.

The constitution does not settle these questions; it merely sets the stage for inevitable conflicts. The fight against the Three Rs will be fought out in the new federation. (All the objections of the Transport Workers Union to the merger fail to recognize this simple fact: unity is only the beginning of the fight, a fight which is immeasurably facilitated by the merger.)

But in some fields the constitution already sets up formal machinery and discipline to enforce its position; in others it is confined to a statement of moral position.

To Clean House?

Racketeering: The strongest section of the constitution strikes at corruption within the labor movement, depriving racketeers of the cover of "autonomy." It is so clear and forthright and precedent-making that it should be quoted in full:

"The Executive Council shall have the power, when requested to do so by the President or by the president or any other members of the Executive Council to conduct an investigation, directly or through an appropriate standing or special committee appointed by the President, of any situation in which there is reason to believe that any affiliate is dominated, controlled or substantially influenced in the conduct of its affairs by any corrupt influence, or that its policies or activities are consistently directed toward the advocacy, support, advancement or achievement of the program or of the purposes of the Communist party, any Fascist organization or other totalitarian movement.

Upon the completion of such an investigation, the Executive Council shall have the authority to make recommendations or give directions to the affiliate involved and shall have the further authority upon a two-thirds vote, to suspend any union found guilty of violation of this section. Any action of the Executive Council under this section may be appealed to the convention, provided, however, that such action shall be effective when taken and shall remain in full force and effect pending the appeal."

The federation, then, assumes the power to initiate its own investigations of racketeering in any affiliate, to give orders to an offending union, and even to suspend it from the federation. This clause can be a potent weapon in the hands of honest unionists to fight corruption in the labor movement.

(It will be noted that this clause also covers the CP et al. But as mentioned, however mistaken in its bureaucratic approach to fighting the Stalinists, this aspect mainly registers the status quo. The new impact of this clause will be on corruptionists and racketeers.)

Ironically, while this blow is struck at grafters in unions—the most far-reaching measure adopted in recent times—both the CIO and AFL decide to press for governmental legislation regulating union and welfare funds, in order to keep them honest! American unions have been traditionally hostile to government regulation. It might seem puzzling; why call for government action just when labor is about to clean its own house?

But the answer to this apparent puzzle is not hard to find. The federation has no police power; it cannot jail offenders, it cannot abolish racketeering by decree. At most, it can expel racket-infested unions just as the AFL expelled the ILA. But sometimes petty organizational considerations make a leadership hesitate. It would, for example, hesitate to act against a union as powerful as the Teamsters Union. When a dishonest union officialdom is expelled, the federation must win away its membership or be reconciled to the continued racket domination of that industry or craft outside the federation.

Answer to Racketeers

From the standpoint of basic unionism, the only effective reply to racketeering is democracy. Federation action has to be accompanied by an appeal to union members to rise against grafting officials, by a pledge to defend their inner-union rights, by a campaign to restore democracy everywhere, in every union. But the leaders of American unionism, even the best of them, even the creators of the united union movement, have no intention of rising to this pressing task. And this failure is most glaring in the proposed constitution.

Democracy: Internal union democracy gets only lip-service and not much of that. One of the principles of the federation is "To safeguard the democratic character of the labor movement and to protect the autonomy of each affiliated national and international union." That is all.

Special standing committees are set up to promote lofty objectives: there is one on Ethical Practices to stand guard against corruption; there is one on Civil Rights to look into discrimination; on Political Educa-

tion; on Public Relations. Of the 14 special committees not one protects the democratic rights of union members.

The constitution outlines no code of rights for the rank and file and no basic rules of democracy for internationals. Not one clause is directed in any practical way against the anti-democratic practices so common in many unions.

New Alliance

Racism: Another stated objective is "To encourage all workers without regard to race, creed, color or national origin to share in the full benefits of union organization." This clause appears deliberately vague and ill-defined.

What are the "full benefits" of unionism? Do they include equal rights inside the union and shop? Does this clause rule out segregated locals? Does it forbid contracts that permit segregated facilities in the factories? On these and dozens of other practical questions, the clause remains enigmatic.

Constitutional experts on all sides will offer interpretations to suit their respective preconceived notions and objectives. But the clause will gain meaning only as the struggle against racism in the new federation goes on.

A Committee on Civil Rights is established to implement "the principle stated in this constitution of non-discrimination in accordance with the provisions of this constitution." The formal and official rights of such a committee seem vague.

But although the text is evasive, there can be no doubt that the fight to extend and expand equality in the labor movement reaches a higher stage with the advent of unity. In public speeches, Reuther and Meany are outspoken, not evasive. CIO unions outlaw discrimination and bring in thousands of able Negro unionists who will not preserve a dignified silence.

An alliance against racism is already forming. The CIO News (May 9) reports prominently a resolution of the CIO Transport Service Employees Union, calling upon Reuther and Meany to support the nomination and election of A. Philip Randolph to one of the 27 vice-presidencies of the new federation.

This item is of double significance: (1) A CIO union rallies behind the head of an AFL union. (2) The national CIO highlights this fact.

Randolph, it should be noted, is not now an AFL vice-president nor a member of its Executive Council. He is president of the Sleeping Car Porters, a prominent Negro labor leader, and has taken the floor at AFL conventions many times to denounce discriminatory practices.

Mirror of the Present

Raiding: An end to raiding is desirable for many reasons. For one, it is an essential element in the defense of industrial unions against divisions by the crafts. Practically, measures against raids are directed against men like Dave Beck of the Teamsters Union, eager to expand his union at the expense of others and ready to tolerate backward union practices (and malpractices).

The constitution handles corruption with decisiveness and racism with vagueness. Raiding falls somewhere in-between. The constitution stresses solving jurisdictional questions by "voluntary agreement." But where agreement is impossible, it provides for an investigation by the federation president, a report to the Executive Council and a decision by it. "In the event an affiliate shall fail to comply with such decision, the Executive Council shall submit the matter to the convention for such action as the convention may deem appropriate under the provisions of this constitution."

Unity is a big step forward. It will strengthen labor political action; it will strike at union corruption; it will further equality for minorities; it will restrain irresponsible raiders. In sum, it will weaken the worst elements in American unionism and strengthen the best. But the constitution is obviously phrased diplomatically to ensure its adoption by everyone without violent internal dispute. For that reason, it reflects the character of the labor movement as it is now, on the threshold of unity, and not what it will become.

Tenzing: Union Organizer

The following news item is reprinted from the N. Y. World Telegram.

Tenzing Norkay, who scaled Everest, is organizing the Sherpa Climbers Assn. in Darjeeling, India, to fight for higher wages and better conditions for porters and guides.

The new union's rules set the minimum wage at 84 cents a day. The association envisions hospitals and schools for the families of guides killed in the Himalayas.

But Tenzing's plan hasn't been overly successful. Only 100 of Darjeeling's 500 Sherpas have joined. Tenzing is too busy to devote full time to the project—he teaches at the Mountaineering Institute and is preparing for a trip to the United States—but he's hopeful. "We'll, get the association going," he says.

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Discussion: Civil Liberties and Fascist Groups...The Rights of Organizations

The Feb. 7 issue of Challenge carried Comrade Fredericksen's original letter on the question of civil liberties and fascists, plus our editorial reply thereto; the exchange which follows is a continuation of that discussion. Thanks to Comrade Fredericksen for his patience: we have had his letter some time but were unable to devote the necessary space to it till now.—Ed.

To the Editor:

I hesitate to take too extensive an advantage of Challenge's generous policy of both printing and answering critical letters—I have known organizations whose editorial policies were neither so liberal nor so scrupulous, so I appreciate such democracy and would hate to scare it away. Nevertheless, your answer to my previous missive on civil liberties surprised me so much that I can't refrain from further comment. (I refer, of course, to your answer on the substantive question, "Should organizations *per se* be suppressed if they resort to overt acts of violence in place of peaceful advocacy?"—not to your opening pleasantries on my equally tongue-in-cheek remarks about "advanced elements" in the YSL, etc.)

I say "surprised" because I had rather supposed you would either deny the interpretation I had placed upon these hitherto merely ambiguous planks in your platform, or concede, in view of the considerations which I had focused upon, that proscription of organizations *per se* under the circumstances hypothesized would run counter to your current general outlook upon civil liberties. Instead, you have confirmed the worst that I might have suspected of you, and countered with an argument that—let us speak plainly—PUTS YOU SQUARELY IN THE CAMP OF SIDNEY HOOK! (Or were you there first?)

You distinguish between action groups—like the Nazi SS—and organizations for the advocacy of ideas. The latter you would admit, the former you would proscribe. Naturally, you are obliged to add that "action" and "advocacy" may be so intertwined that it is impossible to differentiate (and hence impossible to avoid the punishment of the one in the process of punishing the other).

Seems to me I've heard this song and dance before. "The Communist Party is different from other organizations referring to themselves as political parties; it is an *action* group, organized for the overthrow of democratic governments by direct and violent action." Thus goes the Supreme Court dictum, and thus, from what I have been able to gather in the columns of LABOR ACTION, goes Sidney Hook.

Sure, you add that the prosecution of such organizations must be tempered by the democratic socialist's strong reluctance to hinder advocacy *per se* wherever he can help it—that prosecution of a mixed action and advocacy group, for instance, should depend upon the urgency of the circumstances and the degree to which the one function of the organization is inextricable from the other. And I don't doubt that your concern with democratic liberties is far more genuine than that of either the Supreme Court or the apologist liberals. (That is putting it mildly; a more suspicious observer might be inclined to judge that at least the Department of Justice, which takes the initiative in these matters, along with its congressional allies, is using the supposed threat of violent action as an *excuse* for the suppression of heretical advocacy.)

However, once you grant that "action" organizations might legitimately be outlawed, and that whether they should be or not is a matter of the actual danger they present, you are logically, qualitatively in the same camp as the liberals you so often deplore. Your arguments must be rather weak, once you put yourself in this position; for neither do the liberal apologists suspect their own motives (however much you may suspect them), nor can an audience of innocent bystanders be expected to choose on the basis of allegations that "my motives are better than his." You are then reduced

to a more or less technical argument as to whether the CP is or is not an "action" group in the sense defined—and the prosecution can make a better case for this than you might suppose.

Despite your "uncompromising resistance to Stalinism," you are in practice far less worried about Stalinist activities than you would be about equivalent fascist activities in an international situation such as that of the thirties. The comrades from California place their fingers very neatly upon the reason: Fascists attack the labor movement and the mass organizations through which we and the Stalinists alike seek to win influence; Communists merely filch atomic secrets and strike critical war industries. Put yourself in the shoes of a conservative, capitalistic democrat—would you or would you not consider the CP an "action" organization of a nature sufficiently dangerous to warrant its suppression? (Even though you sincerely believed in democracy?)

I repeat: the individuals (and if necessary the mobs) who perpetrate acts of violence against the democratic rights of others should be forcibly restrained (in the case of the mobs) or apprehended (in the case of the individuals) and punished—but never a hair on the head of the responsible organization should be touched. Or at any rate, and at very most, it should be the plucking of a merely *fiscal* hair—one such for each actual outbreak of violence—never the dropping of a guillotine upon all further activity. Dick FREDERICKSEN

REPLY

Issue Is Acts—Not Views, Motives or Intentions

We think it ought first be made clear that the question which Comrade Fredericksen is disputing involves the question of civil liberties for organizations (Stalinist, fascist or other) which are engaged in *illegal acts of violence* against workers, a workers' state, racial or religious groups, etc. Does a government have the right to outlaw organizations which are engaged in an attempt to overthrow it with guns in hand?

For ourselves, the important dividing line for the civil-libertarian must be drawn between the *expression of views and opinions* and *overt acts*. When we talk about civil liberties for all including fascists, we very specifically mean their civil liberty to express, publish, propagate and otherwise spread their views, including their hateful fascist views. But we do not think that the "right" to break up meetings by violence or intimidate Jews or Negroes—by physical terror comes under the head of "civil liberties" at all!

Therefore it is not a question of tagging an organization as an "action organization" (even correctly) and then outlawing it because you think it is an "action organization," like the witchhunters whom Comrade Fredericksen refers to. It is a question of requiring proof that the organization, as such, is indeed engaged in specified illegal acts of violence.

It is because the witchhunters know that they *cannot* prove this about the CP as such that they work out other dodges—like Sidney Hook's, for example. To put our views in "the camp of Sidney Hook" does not make good sense.

What Comrade Fredericksen is arguing is that no organization must be outlawed even if it is proved that it is engaged in such overt acts. This, we submit, is the equivalent of keeping the dirty bathwater with the baby—unlike the liberal apologist for the witchhunt, who throws the baby of civil liberties out with the bathwater.

Comrade Fredericksen refers to the witchhunters' rationale for suppressing the CP on the ground that it is an action group "organized for" overthrow by violence, etc. This is a dodge-formula specifically invented by the witchhunters to evade the necessity for proving that the CP is engaged in acts of violence (or that there is any clear and present dan-

ger thereof). It is a witchhunters' formula designed to outlaw an organization not for any acts whatsoever but on the basis of a prediction of what it may do in some unspecified future. The whole traditional heart of civil liberties is involved in this difference.

So there is no question of whether our motives, or Fredericksen's motives, or anyone's, are better or purer than the witchhunters. One cannot base civil liberties on a claim to better motives. It is a question of proving certain specified acts—not views, not intentions, not wishes.

Nor is there any special "technical argument" involved. Surely Comrade Fredericksen would not be confused if some critic were to tell him:

You do not challenge the government's right to imprison criminals after due process of law and conviction. So you are in the same camp as those who believe that the government has the right to put anybody in jail, non-criminals as well as criminals. For your views reduce the matter to a technical one, namely, is the accused really guilty? And then it becomes a question of whether your motives are better than the police's.

There can be no doubt, however, that organizations present greater problems than individuals. And therefore we did not answer these questions in any absolutist fashion; we used the conditional "might" to describe what would be permissible. For much would depend on concrete circumstances; all cases would have to be examined by a truly democratic government in their concrete details; and we listed several factors which socialists would have to take into account. One factor was indeed the dangers involved in outlawing any organization and another was the socialist awareness of the need for full civil liberties and for democracy in general.

It is hard for us to believe that Comrade Fredericksen believes that action against the Nazi SS by a socialist gov-

ernment or a bourgeois-democratic government would have been a violation of civil liberties. It is not a verbal question at bottom—the government declaring the SS to be outlawed—but rather one of confiscating its weapons, breaking up its training camps, etc. In the context of German society in the early 1930s and the repeated and unmistakably demonstrated activities of the SS, not of this or that SS member, but of the SS as such, the government would not have been violating anyone's democratic rights, for nobody has the democratic right to engage in such actions.

And finally we have to note that Comrade Fredericksen's views seem partially the result of some mistaken ideas on Stalinism; he seems to have accepted in part the witchhunters' view of the Communist Parties. He appears to be troubled by the idea that, if it might under certain circumstances be permissible to outlaw organizations for engaging in a civil war against a democratic government or attempting to violently destroy the labor movement, then maybe the witchhunters have a case against the Stalinists now.

The fact is that they don't. It is not a question of the Stalinists' aims of establishing a totalitarian society (they do want to do that), nor of the fact that there are GPU and espionage rings as part of the over-all Stalinist apparatus. (In our view the government is not acting against civil liberties in acting against those who "filch atomic secrets," but it has no rights against strikers, Stalinist or otherwise; and these two types of acts should not be coupled.) But the CP does not meet the circumstances and conditions we have been talking about. Outlawing or harassing it means (as we are sure Comrade Fredericksen will agree) action against its political ideas and activities. Between these there is a world of difference.

Max MARTIN

for the Editors of Challenge

READERS TAKE THE FLOOR

Kucheman Issue

At the U. of Chicago

The following letter from Comrade Scott Arden, of the Chicago YSL, is a criticism of the article on the Kucheman Plan by Comrade Debbie Meier in the April 25 Challenge. Neither Comrade Arden's letter nor the original article by Comrade Meier represent any official view of the YSL; both speak for themselves in these "discussion" pieces.—Ed.

To the Editor:

I would like to take issue with Debbie Meier's article on the campus political situation at the University of Chicago (Challenge, April 25).

Though many of her criticisms of the SRP (Students Representative Party) are to the point, Comrade Meier is way off at least in terms of her general emphasis.

Spokesmen for the Independent Student League, including Kucheman, the author of the plan in question, made it clear what they meant the passage of their plan to accomplish, and they also made it clear that actually bringing refugees from Stalinism to the U. S. to study was of second-rate importance to them.

Their rejection of the Anderson amendment, which would have substituted "totalitarian countries" for "Iron Curtain countries," was not simply "interesting" (Comrade Meier's word)—it was revelatory. The Kucheman Plan is consciously aimed at propping up and supporting American foreign policy in the cold war.

This is why the liberals of the Kucheman variety refuse to broaden their plan to include refugees from Franco's Spain and other U. S. "allies"—to lump them

with Stalinist totalitarianism (where they belong) would be a slap in the State Department's face. And Kucheman does not hesitate to make it clear that he is far less interested in the refugees than he is in performing a political act in support of the American war bloc. Another Independent Students League spokesman made this very clear when she publicly stated that the world is divided into "two camps" and we should show the world that the American student bodies stand squarely with the American camp.

Now we socialists should have nothing against the Kucheman Plan if the Anderson amendment had been accepted (which it was not); Comrade Meier is right on this, but she failed to make it clear that we can in no way support the plan as it now stands.

That is, student exchange is not the issue. Everyone is for it. Both the Independent Student League and the Student Representative Party are for exchange plans with all countries including Russia. Refugees are not the issue. Only a handful of SRP members (the Stalinists) believe that students who have fled from Stalinists totalitarianism should not be allowed to come to the U. S. to study. "Coexistence" is a point on which we are opposed to both student parties.

The issue is the Kucheman Plan, and while Comrade Meier is on the whole correct when she criticizes the reactionary basis of the opposition to the plan on the part of some elements within SRP, she errs when she fails to press, equally strongly, her inferred criticism of the reactionary basis for the support of the plan by the Independent Student League, and when she fails to make it clear that we of the YSL cannot in any way support the unamended plan.

Scott ARDEN

Chicago, April 29

Some Lost History And a Forgotten Document

FOOTNOTE TO NORMAN THOMAS

By PHILIP COBEN

We were reading a recent copy of the *Progressive* (the March issue, to be exact) and there was an article entitled "Norman Thomas, Respectable Heretic," by Irwin Ross. It purported to be a tribute and a political-biographical sketch, and it struck us as grossly unfair to Thomas—from our own point of view, naturally, not Ross's. For surely it is unfair to a man to outline his career and leave out his "finest hour."

We are referring to the period in Thomas's political life when he came closest to being a militant socialist. In Ross's sketch, this episode has dropped out of history as if it never existed, though it bears not only on Thomas's life but also on the history of the Socialist Party.

We have a right to suspect, of course, that in Ross's eyes any recollection of this period would not do Thomas "credit" and therefore it is in effect suppressed; but the recollection has also recalled to our memory a very interesting and not unimportant document of the period, which we have been moved to disinter and append below. Perhaps few even of our readers have ever seen it; fewer remember it; it is probably inaccessible now; and yet it was quite a remarkable document in its time.

1

THE EX-ZEALOT

The title of the *Progressive* article is the clue to Ross's approach, and it is an especially sticky one. Of course, this is not to question the fact that there is great truth to it, as we have on occasion brought out in our own criticisms of Thomas's very pinkish sort of socialism. But Ross, in his enthusiasm for proving Thomas's indubitable "respectability," tends to extend the present back into history.

For example, he says he disagrees with the "rather ungenerous remarks on the left" according to which—"Thomas's popularity, it has been suggested, has been due to his ineffectuality as much as to his radiant personality; he is a convenient, and safe, object of adulation for standpatters trying to prove their broad-mindedness. If he were a threat to conservative institutions, it is charged, he would hardly be regarded as such an admirable fellow."

And contending that this kind of criticism is both inaccurate and uncharitable, he rebuts it with two points: "... his thunder is generally touched with wit. He lacks the solemnity of the professional do-gooder, and he has a capacity for self-mockery." And: "Moreover, he has long shown a disarming generosity toward his opponents." (For instance, he "thought well" of Alf Landon "as a strong defender of civil liberties," and he "felt that Herbert Hoover deserved better of the American public.")

Surely this is damning with faint praise, or defending with weak rejoinders. Thomas's "popularity" with his audiences was not explained merely by his wit nor certainly by nice words about Republicans. Back in his best days Thomas was able to inspire audiences by communicating his own earnest and even burning feeling of the necessity for abolishing capitalism and replacing it with a rational and just socialist society. He could indeed raise an audience to the "solemnity" of dedication to the socialist goal.

In these degenerate days, such "solemnity" seems a sin, or a piece of *gaucherie*, to Ross; but this is a comment on the Rosses of today, not on Thomas.

CONTEMPT VIA ADULATION

Thomas's popularity, which Ross so ineffectually seeks to explain, was also immeasurably aided by his courage in civil-liberties fights, which Ross mentions only under a different head. But primarily and above all, he made his reputation and his place in politics as an apostle of the socialist idea. It was only because of this phase of his career that it later became *worthwhile* for the "conservative circles" which Ross mentions to adopt him as their "respectable heretic."

But it would be quite difficult to gather this from Ross's "tribute." He takes a cut at the old SP socialists who are disgruntled that Thomas no longer plays his old role:

"Some bitter-end Socialists, who cling to the remnant of the party with a fervor which only lost causes elicit, are unhappy that Thomas gave up electoral activity after the 1948 campaign. . . . [Then refers to low SP vote in 1952.] Despite this fiasco Thomas is still criticized by the zealots for deserting the cause and acquiescing in the ancient illusion that the workers have something to gain by fooling with the two old parties."

While Ross here reflects Thomas's present politics, to be sure, the note of contempt for the SP is his own. It is hard to think that if Thomas had not once been a "zealot," a "bitter-end Socialist," and a "purist"—of his own sort—then Ross would not today have found it worthwhile to pour out his misdirected adulation over him.

2

THE "MILITANT" PERIOD

A good portion of Ross's article is devoted to the

course of Thomas's views on war, and it is this that we mainly had in mind referring to the "suppressed" period in the life of both Thomas and the SP.

Ross discusses Thomas's original pacifism, which went along with his Christian-Socialist motives in joining the SP in the first place; his abandonment of absolute pacifism after the First World War; support of collective sanctions against Japan in 1931, but opposition to collective security later in the '30s; support of the Loyalist war against Franco; his "non-interventionist stand" during World War II (but Ross does not mention his shift away from an anti-war position after the U. S. entered); and finally the fact that "today he supports the main lines of the government's policy" in the cold war.

The missing period was the years in the middle of the '30s when, in the midst of a leftward swing in the working class as a whole and in the Socialist Party in particular, Thomas too swung toward a revolutionary opposition to imperialist war, as distinct from mere pacifism on the one hand or interventionism on the other.

The SP had been revived both organizationally and politically by the onset and deepening of the economic crisis. New and younger elements joined the party and were repelled by its musty atmosphere of pink talk and do-nothing sloth. They wanted a "militant" party, a socialist party that really carried on a fight for socialism. In the early '30s a "Militant Caucus" was formed as a left wing, which rapidly grew to threaten the fossilized old-guard leadership. It carried along with it some inner-party fellow-travelers who were not "leftish" so much as they merely wanted a more active policy. (Thomas went along with those.)

The "Old Guard" were encrusted social-democrats so far to the reformist right that, to them, the "Militants" looked like ravaging Bolsheviks. The Militants, however, were driven to try to refine their political ideas; most of them mainly knew they wanted the party to "go left" but were very uncertain as to what this meant. Still, political clarification progressively took place. In 1935 the "old Guard" split off, as was inevitable, to form what still hangs on today as the Social-Democratic Federation; while the Militants and their allies reorganized the Socialist Party. Thomas marched with them.

At the next year's party convention in 1936, at Cleveland, the party, now freed of its dead weight on the right, adopted a new set of programmatic declarations which represent the highwater mark of the Socialist Party's political life. The Cleveland Declaration on War most particularly, supported by Norman Thomas, was a remarkable document for any section of the international. The SP's "St. Louis Declaration" in 1917 is more famous, for obvious reasons, for it was taken in the face of impending war itself, but in political content it falls well short of the Cleveland Declaration.

For its historical and political significance, therefore, we republish it below, and since it is not very long, we give it complete. Of course, the paragraph about "defense of the Soviet Union" is of purely historical interest now; but even it is not without interest in the atmosphere of today's witchhunt.

3

THE CLEVELAND DECLARATION ON WAR (Adopted by the Socialist Party, May 1936)

The two pillars of capitalist peace in the post-war era, namely, the Five Power Naval Treaty and the League of Nations, are today in a state of complete collapse. The imperialist nature of the capitalist peace imposed by the victors upon the vanquished now gives rise to a new imperialist war for a redivision of the earth. Once more, the capitalist nationalist volcano blows off its paper cap of imperialist treaties.

The treaties, the non-aggression pacts, the League of Nations, the sanctions, and the capitalist system of "collective security" have not only failed to give a firm basis for peace but have in themselves become a source of friction and war.

The present international situation proves conclusively that war is inherent in capitalism.

The inherent forces of capitalism leading to war are the struggle of rival imperialism for new markets, sources of raw material, and fields of exploitation.

In the struggle to maintain or extend the power of rival capitalist states, the world has already been divided into separate camps. The next war, regardless of how it begins, regardless of whether countries are fascist or democratic, small or large, will be one of imperialist interest on both sides.

The Socialist Party warns against mistaking the peace-loving pose of any capitalist state for an honest interest in ending the imperialist struggle. Such poses are intended to strengthen the immediate imperialist interest of the capitalist states and to prepare for future imperialist wars as "wars to end wars."

In the light of the experience of the last war, where many working-class movements were tricked into support of imperialist war under the guise of a holy crusade, the Socialist Party of the U.S.A. proclaims that no capitalist war can be a good war, that no capitalist device can be a basis for a policy of peace. Only when the workers take political power into their own hands

in the great nations of the earth will the world have a sound basis for lasting peace.

FASCISM AND WAR

Because fascism represents a concentrated form of capitalist nationalism, the spread of fascism tends to accelerate the immediate threat of war.

But just as fascism intensifies the danger of war, so the coming of war hastens the coming of fascism. Dictatorial rule, based upon chauvinist demagoguery, are normal attendants of all capitalist wars, necessarily exaggerated in the present era of capitalist decay and fascist reaction.

The twin danger of war and fascism must be fought simultaneously as the products of capitalist nationalism. Uncompromising struggle against all capitalist states, both before and after war is declared, is the only method of fighting imperialism and the threat of fascism in our own country and throughout the world. The Socialist Party, therefore, repudiates support of an imperialist power against a present fascist power as a means of overthrowing fascism.

Sanctions, applied by one or more capitalist nations against another, are merely a new form of imperialist rivalries and cannot be supported by the workers. The support of capitalist sanctions in the Italo-Ethiopian struggle served to paralyze the independent fight of the workers against fascism and imperialism and played into the hands of imperialist rivalries.

COLONIAL STRUGGLE

Without exception, all the capitalist countries are exploiting millions of toilers in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, thus exposing the hypocritical claims of some of these "democratic" countries that they are the friends of the small nations, that they wish to preserve the independence of the backward nations. The colonial people, in their struggle for freedom, have only the working class to depend upon as allies. The working class in the imperialist countries must in turn render every support to the colonial struggle so as to undermine the foundations of imperialism and facilitate the struggle against it. Refusing to compromise with imperialist schemes about the "redistribution" of the colonies, the workers must fight vigorously for their complete independence.

HOW TO DEFEND IT

The Soviet Union, where capitalism has been abolished, is really desirous of peace. They deserve the support of the workers of all lands in their efforts to preserve peace. The Soviet Union, surrounded by capitalist enemies, is in constant danger of imperialist attack, and all class-conscious workers must be prepared to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attacks. Such defense, however, can only be a proletarian defense, independent of capitalist governments and their policies and independent of the diplomacy of the Soviet Union, and carried out with the means that the proletariat has at its disposal. Should the American government, or any other capitalist government, for reasons of its own enter into an alliance with the Soviet Union, defense of the Soviet Union does not include support for capitalist allies of the Soviet Union in a war. The Soviet Union can best be defended by vigorously carrying on the class war in all countries.

MILITARISM AND IMPERIALISM

The American government, while talking about peace, has greatly increased its armed forces, has adopted the greatest military budget in peacetime history and the largest in the world, is busily engaged in cementing its war alliances (for example, naval treaty with England) and setting up its own sphere of diplomatic and military influence (proposal to organize a Pan-American League of Nations). The American Socialist Party recognizes that its main duty is to the victims of American imperialism at home and abroad, that our main fight is against American imperialism and all its policies, against militarism and against jingoism.

ANTI-WAR POLICY

As in 1917, American Socialists will refuse to support any war the capitalist government of America might undertake.

Should war break out despite our efforts, we will continue to carry on the class struggle and the fight against war, and through mass resistance to it, through agitation for a general strike, will endeavor to convert the imperialist war into an organized mass struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' and farmers' government.

Should a war break out in any part of the world, regardless of the countries involved, Socialists will fight against American participation in that war in any form.

SOCIALIST DEMANDS

Genuine neutrality, however, is impossible for this or any other country so long as it is ruled by the profit motive. Without creating the illusion that neutrality can be achieved under capitalism, the Socialist Party will fight for the following:

Liberation of all American colonies and possessions. Withdrawal of American troops from all foreign territories. No interference in the affairs of other countries, particularly Mexico, Cuba, and Central and South America, either by the government or by private individuals. Prohibition of the manufacture, transportation or sale of any war-materials or munitions. Prohibition of loans to other countries for war purposes. Withdrawal of government support of guarantees in private loans to other countries for any purpose. Cancellation of all war debts and indemnities. Abolition of all military training for the youth.

Only a Socialist government, however, supported by the broad masses of the workers, will be in a position to carry out such a program and therefore to ensure peace. The struggle against war is therefore bound up with the struggle against capitalism and for socialism. This struggle cannot be conducted unless there is a working-class party, clear in policy, consistent and vigorous in action, which never compromises the class struggle, and through all trials leads the working class to the final goal.

BOOKS and Ideas

Murray Kempton: 'Part of Our Time'

**RUINED MONUMENT
TO LIBERALISM**

PART OF OUR TIME: SOME MONUMENTS AND RUINS OF THE THIRTIES, by Murray Kempton.—Simon and Schuster, 334 pp., \$4.

By **GORDON HASKELL**

Murray Kempton writes that each decade has its myth, whose votaries feel themselves compelled to destroy the myth of the decade which preceded it. He might have added that some of them are so obsessed by the myths of the period in which they live that they are incapable, when looking at the past, of making a distinction between the myths and the realities of that time. His book, *Part Of Our Time: Some Monuments and Ruins of the Thirties*, is an example of this incapacity.

Kempton is the labor columnist of the liberal New York Post. He and the paper for which he works did valiant battle against McCarthy when the senator and the extremist position which he represents were riding high. This should be enough of an indication (to those who don't see his column) that he is immune to the particular insanity which claims that this country was recently in imminent peril of conquest by the Stalinists from within, or even of the milder version which ascribes the failures and defeats America has suffered since the war to Stalinist infiltra-

Probe

WASHINGTON, May 11 (AP)—Why poor people are poor is the subject of an upcoming inquiry by a Senate-House Economic sub-committee.

The committee put it in more imposing language. It will investigate "the causes underlying the continuing long-term experience of low income encountered by a significant portion of the population."

—N. Y. Herald Tribune

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tion into all areas of American life.

This is the myth (in all its shades) which Kempton describes as THE myth of the '50s. But there is another myth abroad in the '50s which has been far less dramatic in its political expression, but which runs much deeper and more persuasively in the American consciousness.

America, so the story goes, went through a socio-economic revolution in the '30s. Under the astute political leadership of Roosevelt, and with the expert guidance of the social engineers of the New Deal, a new society was brought into being which provides a high standard of living to all, and which is immune to the deep crises which wracked all previous capitalist countries. Although many problems remain to be solved, we now live in the best of all possible worlds (domestically), and only the agents of world Stalinism, hopelessly doctrinaire idealists and other types of neurotics fail to recognize it.

The idea that the American Way of Life is the highest achievement of mankind, the capstone of human history, has long been dogma for the United States Chamber of Commerce.

Fifteen years of relatively full employment has converted a vociferous band of liberals to a modified version of this faith. The Chamber of Commerce regards the New Deal as a period of dangerous socialistic tampering with the American Way of Life, while the liberals (and many ex-socialists, some of whom still think of themselves as socialists) consider that the AWL did not really come into its own till the Roosevelt era.

THE HERO WORSHIPER

The myth of the Roosevelt revolution, and of the unlimited era of prosperity and progress opened up by it for American society has Kempton completely in its grip. If he is aware of the fact that this prosperity was born in total war and depends for its continuation on America's aristocratic position in the capitalist world and on a vast armament build-up, he does not mention it and does not permit that awareness to interfere with the picture of social reality on which he bases his discussion of the present, and from which he judges the past. To him this is not the era so much of the H-bomb and the forty-billion-dollar military budget, as that of big, stable, comfortable unions negotiating in friendly rivalry with big, stable, profit-laden corporations over an equitable sharing of the general prosperity.

The heroes of the liberal myth of

the '50s are the successful administrators who preside over unions, government and private agencies and "enlightened" corporations. Positions of financial security (if not luxury) and social prestige are open to everyone who has the slightest capacity, specially if he has the advantage of a college education. From the higher rungs of the ladder, the bureaucrat looks upward toward apparently limitless prestige, and downward on a mass of ordinary beings, relatively contented with a lesser security and prosperity which is still so much more than they had been accustomed to hope for in the decade of the '30s. It is quite understandable that as long as the economic boom lasts, these bureaucrats should believe that it is they and their kind who created this prosperity, just as the old-fashioned business-man in 1929 thought that it was he and no one else who had created the prosperity of his time.

THE REALIST

Murray Kempton's book reflects this attitude in almost simonpure form. His contempt for the masses is virtually limitless (at one point he even refers to the workers who built the auto union as "rabble"). His respect for the successful bureaucrat is just about as great. Social battles are, for him, essentially struggles among leaders whose "grasp on reality" depends on their capacity to manipulate the masses either directly or through the social institutions they control.

Kempton thus concludes that the radical movements of the thirties were futile and meaningless, an "escape from reality," the stamping-ground of sick people. The "healthy" were either the brutish masses who went about their private concerns with awareness and less interest in these movements, or the men who were capable of riding the upsurge of the workers into the era of bureaucratic stability and then adapting themselves to the role of administering the institutions created by it.

THE PSYCHIATRIST

The device Kempton uses to illuminate the role of the Stalinist, socialist and Trotskyist movements of the thirties, is a series of biographical sketches of people who were involved in some way with these movements. Most of those he chooses were people whose relationship to the movements of which they were members was about as untypical as one could find.

One group (Hiss, Chambers, Elizabeth Bentley, Anne Moos Remington) were either never active in the Stalinist movement as such, or only for the briefest period. They were attracted not to the mass movement, but to the secret apparatus. In discussing them, Kempton explains their attraction to the Stalinist movement not in terms of the political ideas which animated it, but in terms of quirks in their individual personalities.

It is a platitude that every individual who joins a social movement has a personal history, and that the role he will play in any such movement will be strongly influenced by the character and personality which has been shaped by that history. But a study of the interplay between personality and social role, though interesting in itself and vital to any biographer, is no substitute for an analysis of the social movement itself. Yet that is what Kempton has made it.

With this method, the radical movement of the thirties appears as a conglomeration of frustrated individuals. Thousands of people joined together in political organizations rather than in fraternal or religious societies. Kempton recognizes that socialist and Stalinist politics derived their appeal from the capitalist collapse of the '30s. But since these movements remained relatively small, and were later decimated by the prosperity of the post-war years, while the government reform agencies and the unions became powerful, he sees the former as futile, neurotic manifestations and the latter as the healthy growths of "reality."

From his point of view, it is inevitable that, however twisted his individual Stalinists may be, the Stalinist movement as such had (and has) a greater "grip on reality" than the socialists or Trotskyists. After all, the Stalinists attached themselves to the reality of power. Not in the United States, to be sure, but power in Russia and in their worldwide movement. The others, who looked to and sought to stimulate the independent activity of the workers, who saw the salvation of our civilization not in the manipulations of the mighty, but in the growing consciousness and democratic activity of the masses, were and are simply escapists who cannot stand to look the real world in the face.

THE IDEALIST

Part of Our Time tells us more about Kempton and the liberal myth of the '50s than it does about the social movements of the '30s. To attempt to set straight every distortion of fact and perspective which appears in this book would take a volume rather than a review. The approach which dominates it, however, may be illustrated by an episode which is mentioned in the book, and a story which goes with it.

In late 1949 Joe Curran made his move to stamp out all opposition, and with it all democracy in the National Maritime Union. The Stalinist machine in the union had been defeated the year before. But Curran and the group around him decided that the time had come to run all crises, all possible leaders of rank and file opposition, out of the organization.

The struggle which ensued reached its first climax at a New York port membership meeting at the St. Nicholas Arena on November 17. Some 3000 union members crowded the hall. Cops and detectives stood in the aisles and around the walls, and a solid line of policemen stood between Curran and the membership.

The votes which were taken ran five to one against Curran, but were coolly counted for him. The hall was in bedlam, while the police threw one opposition spokesman after another off the platform and out of the building. "And there," says the LABOR ACTION article on the event, "protected by the police and only by the police, facing the unanimous hatred of the New York membership, Curran, the man who had just been imposed as chairman, cried out to the NMU before him: 'What's the matter with you guys? Don't you believe in democracy?'"

The story which goes with this episode is this:

After the meeting, a seaman approached a liberal reporter who had been in the hall. The conversation went something like this, as the seaman asked:

"What do you think of the meeting?"

"Well, I wouldn't swear that Curran really had the majority."

"What the hell are you talking about . . . you know it was five to one against him."

"Look, fellow. You know I am committed to CIO policy. What do you want from me . . .?"

That reporter was Murray Kempton. In his book, as in his column, he is capable of sharp and sardonic comment on the personalities of public figures, on the contradiction between the image they (and often the world) have of themselves and the reality of the social role they play. He is capable of flashes of social indignation which make him sound more like the "alienated" idealists and revolutionaries whom he despises than the manipulators of institutions whom he admires. But the bitch-goddess success is a hard taskmistress, and an insight into the history of periods of social crisis and turmoil is one of the things she denies her followers.

Revolution in South Vietnam —

(Continued from page 1)

by the left wing of the Hoa Hao group (called the Social-Democratic Party, but not to be confused with the SP).

At this point, after Diem had had to fall back on it to save himself from his enemies on the right, the revolutionary committee drove ahead to extend its power. It called a National Revolutionary Congress in Saigon for May 5, a few days away, and raised the demand for the dismissal of Bao Dai and the declaration of a republic (i.e., ousting not only Bao Dai but also his masters the French). Thus was the banner of the democratic-nationalist revolution in Vietnam out for the first time at the head of an organized movement that was clearly bidding for power.

CAPITAL IN FERMENT

The dispatch to the *Times* on May 6 bears extensive quotation as it describes the capital in ferment:

"The day was one of confused and frenzied political activity. Meetings, speech-making, demonstrations and excited comings and goings went on around the clock.

"In the general commotion the recent bloody fighting between government forces and troops of the rebel Binh Xuyen army was half forgotten. . . .

"The bigger and wilder of today's political congresses was one sponsored by a group that calls itself the People's National Revolutionary Committee.

"Under the direction of the committee, 4000 representatives of 95 political parties and branch revolutionary committees from all over the southern half of Vietnam met. . . .

"After having heard speeches against Bao Dai, colonialism and communism and debated the issues for eight hours, the revolutionary congress ended the day by adopting a set of principles and an action program that called for the elimination of Bao Dai.

"The principles called for unity among all the nationalist forces of the country, refusal of all power to Bao Dai, the strengthening of South Vietnam against communism, collaboration with anti-Communist, anti-colonialist and anti-feudal forces throughout Southeast Asia, and the establishment of a nationalist-socialist-democratic regime for South Vietnam."

The fact that this broad revolutionary front, which arrayed itself against both the camp of Stalinism and the camp of Western imperialism, declared for a socialistic regime should not necessarily lead anyone to assume that it is a socialist movement in any real sense (though the socialists are in it). It is of course significant that militant nationalists in Asia inevitably tend to talk in socialistic terms. But the task of this Revolutionary Congress for this stage is the fight for independence.

Included in the revolutionary front are also sections of the Cao Dai group, and not a few are figures who have broken away from the Vietminh because of its Stalinist totalitarianization.

KERENSKY?

The Revolutionary Congress also declared its support for Diem to carry out its program. In terms of historical analogy, this is bound to remind one forcibly of the situation in the Russian Revolution between March and November 1917—when the Soviet Congress, under the leadership of its right wing, in the name of its own program threw its support to Kerensky to carry it out.

The Diem-Kerensky analogy holds for a little way further. Diem has clearly set himself to lean on the Revolutionary Congress only enough to safeguard himself against the right and to convince the U. S. that he is indispensable, while at the same time seeking to tame it and clip its claws.

To meet simultaneously with the Revolutionary Congress, he had himself called a "national political congress" made up of councillors from the provinces who were mainly his own men, though they were elected in the highly undemocratic local election which Diem had organized in 1953. But even this congress of Diemist moderates and "notables" indicated clearly in its majority that Bao Dai had to go. They refrained from demanding this immediately out of obedience to Diem, though even in this gathering a strong left wing wanted an immediate republic!

THE U. S. WARNS

Now that France's unique friends, the gun-toting whoremongers of the Binh Xuyen, were temporarily quiescent, there were few in Vietnam who would speak up for a deal with the French, and nobody with any power—

Nobody except the American dollar, whose eloquence was backed up by the presence of General Collins as Eisenhow-

er's special envoy. It was made clear, at least to the moderate "notables," that unless the regime went no further than Washington was willing to stand for, the aid of the dollar would be stopped.

On the eve of the two congresses in Saigon, the worried American general "warned Mr. Diem against inflammatory action that might arise out of tomorrow's meeting of the national political congress ('states general') summoned to decide the fate of Bao Dai." (N. Y. *Herald Tribune*, May 5.) At the same time Collins told American correspondents in Saigon that he favored a constitutional monarchy in Vietnam—with Bao Dai as chief of state. (In Washington, the State Department pretended that it had no line on the subject; presumably Collins was expressing his "personal opinion.")

"How are these poor people going to run a republic?" asked Collins. "We even have trouble doing it in the United States sometimes." (*Time* magazine, May 16.)

Homer Bigart reported in the *Herald Tribune*: "There is some doubt whether the Allied [meaning U. S.] representations will have a restraining effect. Bao Dai is thoroughly discredited now that his supporting faction, the Binh Xuyen organization of former river pirates, has been put to flight. . . .

"Americans here have no love for Bao Dai, but some regard him as the only thread of legality in the present government." (May 5.)

(Labeling Bao Dai a "thread of legality" is surely journalistic exaggeration.)

FRANK TALK

Bigart also writes: ". . . Mr. Diem is unquestionably the most moderate anti-French figure. However, there are misgivings tonight that Mr. Diem might lose control of 'revolutionary elements' in the National Political Congress—that is, in his own right-wing congress!

The description of Diem as "the most moderate anti-French figure" is the key to the U. S.'s interest in him. He is socially "safe" but not tied to the French.

The next day correspondent Bigart openly reported that the U. S. was warning the regime against being influenced by the Revolutionary Congress:

". . . Premier Ngo Dinh Diem . . . has been cautioned by the United States against an abrupt deposing of Bao Dai. . . .

"Foreign diplomats, including Gen. J. Lawton Collins, special envoy of President Eisenhower, had warned Mr. Diem to treat the revolutionary group with extreme caution. Tonight a palace spokesman said, 'Mr. Diem is very conscious of Vietminh efforts to maneuver the Revolutionary Committee.'"

(This smear was to be expected, of course, quite apart from whether there are or are not Vietminh stooges somewhere around the Revolutionary Congress, as would be inevitable given the degree of Vietminh infiltration in the South.)

On May 2, the *Times* had reported: "In the premiere's palace an aide said frankly—there is a lot of frank talk in Saigon these days—that the reason the premier had not gone all the way with the revolutionary committee so far was that he wanted to find out what the American reaction would be."

LION TAMER ON A TIGHTROPE

And so the Americans worked to push Diem and the French together, for a patch-up compromise, in which the French are to be nice to Diem in the premiership while Bao Dai is to stay on as chief of state. An arrangement along these lines seems to have been tentatively agreed on.

The idea is to free Diem from his dependence on the revolutionary forces. Once Diem is assured of French support, he can turn on the left and put it "in its place." The semi-independent army officer cadre is to be bribed with the promise of American military aid and money, the bribe that was probably responsible for the decision of the officers to go against the Binh Xuyen instead of joining the rebellion at the instigation of the French and Bao Dai's clique.

Thus Diem will have managed to balance himself between the revolution and imperialism until he could tame the former and win the backing of the latter. There is no doubt that he can achieve this aim if the Revolutionary Congress remains tied to him (i.e., plays Menshevik to Diem's Kerensky).

Since the nature of the political leadership of the Revolutionary Congress is (to say the best) an unknown quantity, or (to put it worse) quite possibly dominated by undeveloped though would-be militant, or even opportunist, elements

from the politico-religious sects, it may very well be that a counterrevolutionary combination of Diem and Dollar will serve to put an end to this Act I of the South Vietnam Revolution. But it will be only the end of Act I.

SNEERS AND CHAUVINISM

This counterrevolutionary danger can be fought not only in Vietnam but here at its source, in the U. S. And it would be fought if there were a democratic liberal movement here with any guts, not to speak of a strong socialist movement such as unfortunately does not exist in this country. It is not only socialists who should be indignantly raising the cry, "Hands off the South Vietnam Revolution!"

It is virtually a standard cliché among ADA liberals and labor speech-makers to talk about the "Asian revolution." What is usually meant is some vague idea. Here before us is a real revolutionary crisis, an "Asian revolution" in the concrete.

It takes little thought to utter shapeless homilies about "supporting the Asian revolution" in general. But when "the revolution" shows up in life, how many of our liberals are going to see it, and, seeing it, have the political clarity and moral courage to line up with it?

Instead we get some unspeakable demonstrations of chauvinism. *Time* magazine talks of the "squalid conflict" in Vietnam, as if holding its delicate nose over the whole thing. The N. Y. *Times* speaks of the anti-French feeling of the Vietnamese as "xenophobia," which properly means irrational hatred of foreigners—a disgusting display of imperialist snobbery which alone speaks volumes about the American Party Line mind.

And everywhere in the press we get a snickering attitude toward the "exotic" complications of Vietnamese politics. Outstanding is the sneer that the politico-religious sects like Cao Dai and Hoa Hao are such peculiar and even ridiculous affairs that we very sophisticated whites can hardly take them seriously. It is so easy to poke fun at the strange tenets of the synthetic religion of the Cao Dai or at the deviationist-Buddhism of Hoa Hao. It is much harder to understand that these strange religious tenets have nothing whatsoever to do with the political and social importance of these movements.

VANGUARD NEEDED

It is because the French have for decades suppressed the development of all political life in Indochina that politics and social aspirations were, in part, crammed into the strange channels of these semi-religious movements, and adopted this "exotic" garb. In a real sense, the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao are ersatz-parties, party-surrogates, substitutes for the political parties which French colonialism prevented from arising and developing healthily. Therefore, also, their militantly anti-French trend.

Both of these sects have been and are full of unhealthy growths, venal leaders, careerism, semi-banditism, reaction, in various wings. And other wings, we are seeing, are playing apparently an important role in the left nationalist movement. A continued healthy development in Vietnam politics would mean the dissolution of these sects as political movements, or at least cutting them down to the size they deserve, on the fringe of society.

They have been significant as reservoirs and channels of peasant discontent and groping, for lack of better ones. Like other peasant movements, they are bound to break up in differently oriented pieces in the face of decisive problems. The social dynamism which they have in part bottled up will flow elsewhere.

Where? Perhaps to the relatively new Socialist Party of Vietnam, about which we know regrettably little; perhaps to a new revolutionary formation which will grow out of the present ferment; for the Vietnamese workers of the cities have a deep revolutionary socialist tradition. (For example, in 1939 the Trotskyist movement won the municipal elections in

The ISL Program in Brief

The Independent Socialist League stands for socialist democracy and against the two systems of exploitation which now divide the world: capitalism and Stalinism.

Capitalism cannot be reformed or liberalized, by any Fair Deal or other deal, so as to give the people freedom, abundance, security or peace. It must be abolished and replaced by a new social system, in which the people own and control the basic sectors of the economy, democratically controlling their own economic and political destinies.

Stalinism, in Russia and wherever it holds power, is a brutal totalitarianism—a new form of exploitation. Its agents in every country, the Communist Parties, are unrelenting enemies of socialism and have nothing in common with socialism—which cannot exist without effective democratic control by the people.

These two camps of capitalism and Stalinism are today at each other's throats in a worldwide imperialist rivalry for domination. This struggle can only lead to the most frightful war in history so long as the people leave the capitalist and Stalinist rulers in power. Independent Socialism stands for building and strengthening the Third Camp of the people against both war blocs.

The ISL, as a Marxist movement, looks to the working class and its ever-present struggle as the basic progressive force in society. The ISL is organized to spread the ideas of socialism in the labor movement and among all other sections of the people.

At the same time, independent Socialists participate actively in every struggle to better the people's lot now—such as the fight for higher living standards, against Jim Crow and anti-Semitism, in defense of civil liberties and the trade-union movement. We seek to join together with all other militants in the labor movement as a left force working for the formation of an independent labor party and other progressive policies.

The fight for democracy and the fight for socialism are inseparable. There can be no lasting and genuine democracy without socialism, and there can be no socialism without democracy. To enroll under this banner, join the Independent Socialist League!

Get Acquainted!

Independent Socialist League
114 West 14 Street
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- I want more information about the ideas of Independent Socialism and the ISL.
- I want to join the ISL.

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Saigon, the capital.) Many of these former revolutionary leaders and trade-union leaders have been murdered, systematically, by the Stalinists; many are still alive—in concentration camps of the French colonialist regime which are still maintained, and kept locked, by the Diem regime, and about which our press does not tell us. Some are no doubt active in Saigon today.

The crystallization of a revolutionary vanguard and leadership for the Vietnamese Revolution—against Western imperialism and against the Stalinists of the Vietminh—is a necessity for a progressive outcome of the crisis. That will depend on the Vietnamese people. Here in the U. S., it is the duty of every democrat to raise his voice in protest at American intervention against the revolution and U. S. use of its economic aid to whip the Vietnam government in line with its policies.

The U. S. will not be able to use its dollars to buy votes in a Vietnamese plebiscite; it will be able to use its power and money only to avoid a vote, not to win it. Only the genuine revolution of the people against imperialism will be able to defeat the counterfeit revolution of the Vietminh totalitarians.

The standard biography

KARL MARX

by

Franz Mehring

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