

LABOR ACTION

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FIVE CENTS

Special Issue: 5 Pages on The COMING REVOLUTION in the STALINIST EMPIRE

An Analysis of the Upheaval
In the Post-Stalin Era

Khrushchev Inaugurates Sweeping Purge As the 'Collective Leadership' Explodes

By GORDON HASKELL

The dramatic shake-up in the top leadership of the Communist Party and government of the USSR has made a profound impression on the whole world. Where yesterday the Russian government gave the external appearance of solidity and calm, of collective leadership and unanimity, today we get a glimpse which comes much closer to the reality: a leadership rent with disagreements and animosities; a carefully planned and fanatically pursued struggle for power between the factions and cliques; the slow but inevitably developing tendency toward the concentration of authority and power in the hands of a single dictator.

Though this tendency is constantly at work in any country in which the people are excluded from participation in the decision-making process (that is, where there is no democracy), in each case concrete circumstances determine the way in which the process works itself out.

It is reported that some 700,000 people marched through the streets of Leningrad the other day, shouting their approval of the decisions of the June Plenum of the Central Committee. It is reported that telegrams and letters are pouring in to Moscow from all over the USSR, including the farthest reaches of Siberia, from East European governments, from China, from Communist Parties all over the globe, unanimously endorsing, hailing, supporting and rejoicing over every single decision made by the June Plenum. The Polish Communist Party's newspaper has chided those who may have expressed dismay or uncertainty over the shake-up in the Russian leadership, or who may

have hinted that involved is a method of governmental decision which might leave something to be desired from the point of view of democracy, by pointing to this "unanimously favorable" reaction of the Russian people as proof sufficient that their will has been carried out. After all, what is democracy but a means to ensure that the will of the people be done?

RITUAL MARCH

Did the 700,000 people, or any of them, who marched through the streets of Leningrad have the slightest idea of what they were endorsing or condemning? Up till two days before they marched, they had not even known that the Central Committee of their ruling party had been convened in plenary session, let alone what the issues before it might be. The day before they had marched, they did not even know what anyone claimed to be the issues dividing the oligarchic group which rules them. And while they were marching, they had never heard anything but the official version (that put out by the victors in the struggle) of what the issues had been, and how they had been resolved.

Nevertheless they marched, hailed and condemned according to the script. All

over the country, mass meetings were held, addressed by official spokesmen of the victorious group, giving their version of the struggle. The people voted unanimously to hail one side and condemn the other. If Malenkov and Molotov had won out in the fight, the meetings would have been just as massive and unanimous, and the people would have voted the other way without a quail. They know what the game is, what its rules are, and what the penalty is for violating them. Stalin taught them that in decades of bloody rule. Yet while they march and vote according to the rules prescribed by their masters, there is no reason to believe, none whatever, that their thinking is influenced by this particular ritual.

The Russian people, we are told, unanimously endorse the decisions. Good. Let us assume that political decisions, including changes in top government offices, were decided in our country the same way. Instead of an election campaign, there is an intense, silent, struggle among a few dozen leaders, while the whole press of the country gives the impression that nothing at all is going on. Then one morning you wake up and read your morning paper. The Republicans are out, and the Democrats are in. What issues were involved? Every single paper in the country tells you the same story, without variation. And that story, of course, is the Democrats' version, and theirs alone, of what was at issue and what happened.

The "one party press" has been properly deplored in the United States. But even with it, the Democrats have managed to let the people know more or less what they think of their opponents and their policies both before elections and after. Before this "election" there was no discussion outside the ruling circles, and there will be no discussion afterward, unless the meetings now being held can be squeezed into someone's definition of a "discussion."

KEY TO PRESSURE

Despite the fact that we only have the victor's version of the issues is there really no basis on which to form an opinion or an analysis of the great issues facing the Russian government which divided the opinions of its leadership and led to this extremely dangerous struggle among them? Or, perhaps to put it more accurately, have we no basis to judge around what issues the struggle for supreme power within the ruling group of the Russian Communist Party organized itself?

Labor Action has no correspondent with a pipeline to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. We read with interest the reports of correspondents who claim to have such sources. It is an interest tempered by much disappointing experience with the "inside dope" on such matters. And yet there is at least



MOLOTOV
The Hammer Is Broken

one highly significant fact about this upheaval which is unquestionable because it is public, and which can tell us much of what we need to know about the most important aspect of the recent events: what relationship does it have to the political moods and pressures of the masses of the Russian people?

What is really known and unquestionable about this upheaval is what the victors have chosen to tell the Russian people and the world about it. And that is of enormous importance, because it tells us what the victors think the people want to hear, thus giving us an indirect reflection of the pressures which the Russian people are bringing on their rulers.

Is it true that Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovitch and Shepilov opposed such consumer-oriented measures as the opening of vast stretches of Siberian prairie to wheat growing, or lifting the government tax-in-kind on the private plots of collective farmers? Is it true that they opposed policies which have produced the let-up in the cold war, such as the treaty with Austria and the normaliza-

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Changes Being Planned in L. A. Format

For over seventeen years, LABOR ACTION has been an Independent Socialist weekly. In war or peace, in good times or bad for the socialist movement, we have never missed an issue. We are now forced to announce, with deepest regret, that for the next few months, LABOR ACTION will appear in its present format every two weeks.

We especially regret that we are compelled to announce this retreat at this particular time. All of us in the Independent Socialist League are convinced that not in several decades has a more hopeful prospect confronted the American socialist movement. All of us are convinced that if ever we needed and could well use the weekly impact of our splendid newspaper, the time is now, when the prospects are not just for tenacious resistance to decline, but for growth and expansion.

In a way it can be said that the bi-weekly appearance of the paper for the next period is a product of cultural lag, in two directions.

When the whole socialist movement in this country was on the downgrade, we stubbornly held on with our weekly despite shrinking circulation and income. Through the darkest days of McCarthyism, at the cost of unbelievable sacrifices, LA's clear voice for freedom and democracy for all was never interrupted. The attorney general's vicious "subversive list" put heavy pressure on our list of subscribers, and our fight to get off this blacklist put an additional strain on us where we could stand it least: on our pocketbook. Year after year the drain on our creditors' confidence and reserves has increased, while to our staff payday has become a precious occasion, not because it is so bountiful, but because it is so rare.

We held out, though neither budget balances nor short-range political forecasts

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Scoop from Moscow

LONDON, JULY 4—The Moscow radio tonight criticized the Western press for describing the ousting of former Kremlin leaders as a rift in the Communist Party.

"No matter how much certain Western propagandists may like to represent the exposure of the anti-party groups as a rift in the party, they will not succeed," said the broadcast, "because not only in the party as a whole, but in its Central Committee, there was no sign of a rift."

"The resolution was not the affair of one person, but a collective decision, adopted unanimously with only one abstention."

—N. Y. Times, July 5

Khrushchev Purge — —

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tion of relations with Japan? Is it true that they "offered constant opposition, direct or indirect," to the Central Committee's attempt to steer a "resolute course toward rectifying the errors and shortcomings born of the personality cult and waging a successful struggle against the revisionists of Marxism-Leninism, both in the international sphere and inside the country," as the Central Committee's resolution ousting them charges?

RULES OF THE GAME

It may be true, and it may not. It may be true of some of the people involved, and untrue of others, or a complete falsehood from top to bottom. Who can say? Those who might wish to challenge the allegations are silent. The fact that it is said all but Molotov voted for the condemnation and political assassination of these leaders (and he abstained on his own political death-sentence) is utterly irrelevant to the facts. The defeated have no voice in this power struggle, and it is one of the rules of the game that the defeated not only bow to the verdict of the victors, but proclaim it as just.

Since Khrushchev's speech to the 20th Congress about the political era during which Stalin ruled, everyone knows this is so, and in Russia it has never changed. The only people who can sincerely question the irrelevance to any considerations of truth of official announcements on such questions are those few and pathetic souls who became so convinced by the Communist Party during twenty years that nothing but the fullest and most libertarian democracy flourished in Russia, at least for the workers, that they are still wandering around to this day denying that Khrushchev ever made the famous speech on the Stalin era at the 20th Congress, and claim this was a pure fabrication of the American Central Intelligence Agency, which was so clever it was

able to gull the *Daily Worker* along with the rest of the world.

As to the truthfulness of the report, we do not question it merely on the general principle that tyrants tend also to be liars. We are entitled to reservations, at least with regard to the charge that Malenkov has been, all these years, adamantly against a program of increasing consumer goods at the expense of all-out pressure for producing means of production and arms. After all, Malenkov was ousted by Khrushchev from the premiership not long ago on the charge that he, Malenkov, was going too far in his concessions to consumers in Russia, and was deviating from the Stalinist principle of priority for heavy industry. It was during the brief period when Malenkov's star shone most brightly in the galaxy of Russia's ruling group that the first steps were taken to draw back and soften the cold-war struggles, and it was he who first asserted that in a nuclear war neither side would be the victor.

OMINOUS CHARGES

With regard to Molotov the charges ring a bit truer, and this may account for the fact that when the decision of the June Plenum was first made public it was Molotov who took the brunt of the attack. After all, he is the old warhorse of the group, the old associate of Stalin through all the twists and turns of the faction fights and purges of his era. He could better serve as a symbol of that era than Malenkov. And since, at this time, there were no charges that the "anti-party opposition" was seeking to overthrow the government for the purpose of restoring capitalism in Russia (the standard charge against all oppositions in the past), but rather that, in sum, they were seeking to turn the helm back to policies associated with the era of Stalin's rule, Molotov was the indi-

vidual whose person could most easily be linked with such a charge in the public mind.

But, to repeat, whether the exact charges are true or not, the important known fact is that they are made. Thus it is clear at least that Khrushchev and his supporters are convinced that the way to get public acceptance of their action, the way to minimize the possible public uneasiness and even possible reaction against this big purge is to tell the people that it had to be done to ensure the carrying out of policies dear to their hearts.

In the few days since the announcement of the outcome of the struggle at the June Plenum, the charges have taken on a more ominous tone, as far as the fate of the individuals is concerned. At the speeches in Leningrad in connection with the celebration of the anniversary of the city, Khrushchev and others have pointed to Malenkov as the chief culprit, and have, in passing identified his name with the purge and execution of the Leningrad leadership of the CP during the closing years of Stalin's life. A criminal indictment could easily be based on such a charge.

Further, the opposition leadership is charged with having planted its supporters throughout the organization. This lays the groundwork either for a mass purge of doubters and dissidents from Khrushchev's policies, or at the very least for the intimidation of any possible opponents. Any expression of criticism of the policies or personalities of the leadership in the coming period becomes a very dangerous business. The critic can be immediately charged with being one of those "planted" by Malenkov and Co., and demoted, expelled, or worse.

WHAT'S THE CASE?

It must be said, further, that there could hardly be any difficulty in preparing an air-tight case against any or all of the defeated leaders for the Russian courts. We are not talking about a case made air-tight by a few months of expert manipulation of the accused in the cellars of the police which results in unanimous and enthusiastic confession to every conceivable crime. We are talking about a perfectly sound and legal case based on irrefutable evidence of crimes against "socialist legality" perpetrated by these leaders during their terms of office. The enthusiasm with which such a triumph of abstract justice would be greeted throughout the world might be attenuated, however, by the thought that abstract justice would be served equally well by a trial and conviction on the same or similar charges of the accusers in this struggle as of the accused.

Let us take the victors in the struggle for power in Russia at their word. They are for more and better consumer goods, for better relations with the satellites and the capitalist world, and the like. The men they defeated were dragging their feet on the bold administrative measures proposed by Khrushchev for the reorganization of Russia's bureaucracy-ridden economy, and even may have sought to mobilize, in a fight against the line and the leadership which was carrying it out, disgruntled bureaucrats frightened by the effect these measures might have on their personal fortunes. Above all, they feared that Khrushchev went too far in "downgrading" Stalin, and had differences with him on how fast and how far one could ease the pressure on the masses both inside Russia and in the satellite empire without risking mass upheavals and even possible revolution.

NO DEBATE

Most likely, some had one opinion on this, and others another. What may well have brought them together, to the extent that they really got together, may have been a feeling that Khrushchev was getting too much power into his own hands, and that he had to be stopped before they had another Stalin sitting in supreme control over them. In any event, one thing is certain. Whatever the differences of opinion or personality may have been, there was no way to settle them in open and public debate

before the people; no way in which to propose to the people to legally replace the policy and personnel of the state with different ones. The only thing which could be done was to try to line up supporters among the leadership for a concerted move against Khrushchev. If this has, indeed, been tried and failed, the chance of it ever being attempted again, or the chances of its success if attempted are greatly reduced.

The groundwork has been laid for a mass blood purge of Khrushchev's opponents. Whether or not this will actually take place, or on what scale it may take place, only the future can tell. If the new boss of all the Russias stays his hand and contents himself with a political purge of his rivals and opponents, one of two possible conclusions may be reached, neither of which is that democracy is on the march in Russia. One conclusion is that Khrushchev and his supporters are convinced that the domestic and foreign policies they are following are so popular that no one can consolidate an effective opposition to them, and hence that they need not subject the country and the bureaucratic class which rules it to the harrowing experience of another great blood purge. Or one could legitimately conclude, on the other hand, that they feel the political situation in Russia is so potentially explosive that they dare not risk the very existence of the regime in a full-scale blood purge, even though this might be desirable from the point of view of the firm and secure establishment of their own rule against the claims of all possible rivals.

TO ONE-MAN RULE

In any event, it appears incontestable that Russia has moved at least several steps further from the "collective leadership" announced after Stalin's death, and closer to the only form of rule which can even pretend to stability in a dictatorship: one man rule.

People whose concern is the right and ability of people everywhere to rid themselves of all kinds of dictatorship and rule themselves democratically should not be indifferent to what has just happened in Russia, even though the actors in the drama on both sides were not concerned with democracy, but with power. For it is hardly possible to see any way in which the outcome of this new struggle in Russia could hurt the cause of democratic socialism on a world scale.

If Khrushchev proceeds to a mass blood purge, the last fading shreds of illusion about Russia and its "socialism" will be dispelled all over the world. If the power-struggle in Russia has only begun instead of having ended, such a power-struggle among the leaders could enhance the chances of the Russian people to break through the bureaucratic crust which rules them and establish democracy. If the issue of supreme rule in Russia has been settled for the time being peaceably and without popular upheaval, it has been done by promising the people a better standard of living and peace. If the promises are fulfilled, they will be better off, and humanity will be benefited thereby. If they are not, who would be so rash, after what has happened in East Germany, Poland and Hungary, as to contend that this totalitarian regime, even if it has achieved its most perfect and stable form under one supreme boss, is impervious to the will and action of the people?

Changes Planned for L. A. — —

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justified it. We held out because we were confident that the ideas associated with the paper were not just esoteric notions in our heads, but reflected an aspect of reality which would one day receive the response which it deserves. We held out from sheer revolutionary socialist stubbornness and cussedness, if you will, when no law of nature, man, or administrative procedure gave us a right to. That was one aspect of cultural lag.

And now, when we are sure things are beginning to move with us instead of against us for the first time in many years, we have to become a bi-weekly. We know the dawn is breaking, we can feel it in our bones. But the old debts are there, and the new readers and financial contributors are still on the horizon. McCarthyism is retreating, but even though the Supreme Court is laboring manfully at excavating the dung-heap piled on top of America's civil liberties, it will still take some time before everyone who wants to read a socialist paper will dare to. The subversive list is still there too, and the years and the thousands of dollars we have spent in our fight to get off it may well have to be doubled before justice prevails.

So . . . we are caught by the cultural lag on this end also. Since we know what is involved, we have strained every financial and other sinew beyond the breaking point. It just can't be done any longer. So we will all have to make the best of it.

WE'LL NEED YOUR HELP IN THE BREATHING-SPELL AHEAD

As we have said, *Labor Action* will become a bi-weekly for the next few months starting with this issue. During this time, we will do two things. We will get our office, editorial and credit structure reorganized on a sound basis. And more important, we will make a careful survey of our resources and potentialities, literary, technical and organizational, with a view to establishing an over-all publication set-up which will be best suited to the political and organizational tasks and possibilities which lie before us.

We are confident that with this breathing-speech, and with the continued and even increased support of our readers and well-wishers, we will move on to a publication which in format and frequency will be at least adequate to our immediate needs.

Since we should have doubled the price of our weekly and of our subscriptions a long time ago in line with the practice of all socialist publications (more cultural lag), we take the occasion to do so now. Thus, under the new set-up your sub will continue for as many months as it did under the old.

Since it is better that all foreseeable afflictions be announced at once than that they seem to fall in succession, we hereby also inform our readers that Hal Draper, *LABOR ACTION* editor for almost a decade, is leaving for an extended vacation abroad. The true extent of his contribution to the quality of the paper will not be fully appreciated, perhaps, until his absence reveals it.

Now, a final word to our friends and subscribers on this matter. We have no inclination to chide you for not having done enough to keep the weekly paper going. After all, you who are our readers have done your part . . . or at least most of it. Though it is hard to give up our weekly frequency, things could be much harder. And mark this: they will be, if you take this step backward as a sign that you can relax whatever financial and sub-getting help you have been giving us in the past.

If we are to maintain even the bi-weekly schedule, and to move forward to the best kind of publication we can put out in the present circumstances, we will need more money and more subscribers, not fewer. Think this over, and think it over carefully.

We have been forced back a step. We have taken it reluctantly, after stubborn resistance. It is up to you, in good part, by continuing and even increasing your sub-getting and financial support, to stabilize our press at this level, and make it possible for us to advance tomorrow.

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Editor: HAL DRAPER. Business Mgr: L. G. SMITH.
Associate Editors: GORDON HASKELL, BEN HALL.

A Study of the Great Upheavals in the Post-Stalin Era

The Coming Revolution In the Stalinist Empire

1. A NEW ERA OF REVOLUTION

In the three and a half years from March 1953 to October 1956, it has become clear that we have entered a new era of revolution in world politics, marked by the revolution against world Stalinism. The preceding period—the post-war period from 1945 on—had been a period marked by the development of, and great victories by, the colonial revolution against capitalist imperialism; and this still continues, though less stormily. To it now is added the new era of the anti-Stalinist revolution.

The events of 1953-56 which have brought this development to maturity came in two main waves, 1953 and 1956. The precipitant was the death of Stalin in February 1953, with the immediate result of the obvious "panic and disarray" in the ranks of the Kremlin leadership.

One of the early unprecedented consequences was the outbreak of strike actions and resistance movements in some Russian concentration camps, such as Norilsk in May; followed by the first open mass-demonstration movement and general strike in any of the satellite states, namely, in Czechoslovakia beginning June 1; and then the world-historic workers' uprising beginning June 17 in East Berlin and East Germany; while soon after, back in the Russian heartland of Stalinism, the fall and execution of Beria on June 26 manifested the existence of continuing strife inside the Kremlin camp itself; and then in July the great explosion of rebellion took place in Vorkuta.

An interim space of less sensational or less public events was marked by the fall of Malenkov from first place and his replacement by Khrushchev, likewise betokening internal regime strife.

The second wave was publicly precipitated by the 20th Congress of the Russian Communist Party and the Khrushchev speech on the crimes of Stalin, in February 1956. In terms of dissident mass action, this was immediately followed by the demonstrations in Georgia which, whatever their political character, represented a crack in the totalitarian structure.

But the crisis reached its heights, as a consequence of the "de-Stalinization" process that had started both from above and below, with the revolutionary upheaval in Poland in October and the immediately following Hungarian Revolution, which indeed succeeded in installing a provisional revolutionary regime for four days, before the brutal intervention by Russian troops to crush this revolution.

In turn, however, this Russian intervention to massacre the Hungarian Revolution has raised the internal crisis of world Stalinism to new heights, both in the states where it holds state power and in the Communist Parties outside of these states.

2. CONTRAST: POST-WAR AND TODAY

The turning point that is marked by these three and a half years is to be seen in the decisive contrast between the position of world Stalinism today and right after the war, a little over 10 years ago.

Then: Russia emerged from the war, despite physical devastation, not only as a military victor but with a new empire, in East Europe; not long after, this Russian empire was further strengthened by the addition



of China to the Stalinist world, as an ally. Record mass Communist Parties grew in France and Italy.

While all of Western imperialism was under the hammer of the colonial revolution, in a steady disintegration of its power and influence everywhere in the world, and while one country after another was tearing itself away from colonial domination by Western capital, Stalinist power on a world scale seemed to be on a steady and powerful upward swing, probing with new might into most corners of the world. Its line of progress seemed to be onward and upward inexorably, while, with capitalism doomed as a world system, the world's revolutionary and working-class forces seemed to be hypnotized by its world-historic pretensions; and genuine socialism seemed to be as impotent to stop it as was capitalism.

It was in this period that there came the greatest burgeoning of despair and defeatism about the future of socialism and indeed of democracy, and the most outspoken growth of both a "wave of the future" illusion in the might and stability of the Stalinist power, and a "1984"-type denigration of the potentialities and powers of the proletariat under totalitarianism.

The anti-Stalinist revolution has come to put an end to this period of triumphant Stalinist expansion and of the illusions and despair that it engendered.

3. FIRST BLOW: THE TITO BREAK

Even before the death of Stalin, the Stalinist world was rocked from within by its first massive and portentous blow, the break between Tito and Russia in 1948, which first showed the explosive power of national-Stalinism within the framework of the Stalinist system itself—this after only three years of the new Russian empire.

The dynamite in this outburst came mainly from national-Stalinism on the bureaucratic level, that is, from the ruling-class antagonisms between the bureaucratic rulers of the satellite state as against the master state; unaccompanied by the social revolutionary upheavals which are the decisive characteristic of the new era definitively ushered in by 1956.

Yet in its time the Titoist break with Moscow was properly hailed as a momentous step in the disintegration of Stalinist power, its "beginning of the end," while at the same time socialists combated illusions about the "democratization" or non-Stalinist nature of this Titoism. On this basis also, socialists properly came out for the defense of Tito-Yugoslavia's national sovereignty against attack by Russia, while at the same time according no kind of political support to the Tito regime itself.

The phenomenon of Titoism, even though accompanied by no social revolution, gave rise to sweeping illusions of democratization and de-Stalinization. These illusions were fostered by three types of steps taken by the Tito regime while remaining entirely within the political and social framework of totalitarian bureaucratic collectivism:

(a) Measures of de-Russification: elimination of Stalinist particularities which arose from the national development of the system under Russian conditions, or for specifically Russian national interests, which however were either meaningless or harmful in terms of a Yugoslav national version of the same system.

(b) Measures to eliminate excesses or excrescences of the system.

(c) Concessions to popular discontent or demands, designed to quiet disaffection at home, particularly in the face of Russian pressure, the biggest single concession being decollectivization and lowered demands on the peasantry. In a whole series of other respects also—such as attempts at debureaucratization, decentralization, and in general various experiments on how to loosen up or give an appearance of loosening up while still remaining within a totalitarian framework—the Titoist regime pioneered in taking measures which anticipated, in type and even in detail, the measures talked about or even sometimes taken by the satellite regimes in the post-20th Congress period of "de-Stalinization."

4. RECONSOLIDATION?

But outside of Yugoslavia, world Stalinism seemed even after 1948 to consolidate itself in East Europe, in China and in Russia itself.

It did not appear to have been basically shaken; na-

A Socialist Analysis

This analysis of the revolutionary upheavals of the post-Stalin era has been adopted by the Independent Socialist League. Drafted in May, well before the present dramatic events in Russia, it sought to bring together and systematically present the Independent Socialist theses on the social and political forces and patterns at work in the Stalinist empire since the death of Stalin, up through the Polish and Hungarian Revolutions.

With the current explosion in the Russian leadership, we feel that this analysis is more timely than ever, and that its essential ideas have been confirmed most forcefully, especially against all those tendencies which maintained illusions in the "collective leadership" and "democratization" of the new Moscow bosses.

LABOR-ACTION takes pleasure therefore in publishing this document complete, as a contribution toward the theoretical and political understanding of Stalinism.

tional-Stalinist ("Titoist") leaders in other states, or those whom the Russians feared might become such, were repressed and purged.

At the same time it became increasingly clear—what may have been true even before—that Mao's China, while an integral part of the Stalinist world, was an example of successful Titoism, that is, of effective national independence from Moscow on the part of a Stalinist state, in the capacity of at least a junior partner, not a mere satellite or puppet, and to an indeterminate extent a junior partner with paramount regional rights for its Asian region.

In Russia: 'Relaxation' and the Terror

5. BEHIND THE FACADE

This picture of consolidation, relative stability and dynamically growing power and self-confidence seemed to be the situation on the eve of Stalin's death in 1953. His death and its consequences showed, however, that behind the totalitarian façade was, rather, weakness—panic—fear—seething hatreds—popular discontent from the bottom to the top of society—not at all a stable or even a stabilizable social system, but one which was and is in a chronic crisis which is broken only by acute crises.

6. THE RELAXATION: MOTIVES

The first consequence of Stalin's death was, therefore, a period of "relaxation"—a period in which the Kremlin heirs sought to ease up on the pressure below in order to tide them over a critical period. It is this period and policy of "relaxation" which gave rise to a new outburst of illusions about "democratization" and "liberalization" of the regime by itself—its self-reform in a democratic socialist direction.

In fact, however, the policy of relaxation, and all measures associated with it, flowed from five considerations—three of these being similar to or analogous to the three which operated in the case of Titoism, plus two others of great importance.

The first three are as follows:

(a) "De-Stalinization" in the personal sense, that is, the sloughing off of some of the adventitious impositions

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Social Forces Behind the Great Relaxation After Stalin's Death...

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on the regime due to the whims, idiosyncrasies, crotchets, quirks or kinks of the individual but absolute dictator Stalin. (E.g., the abolition of the official canonization of Lysenkoism, whose rise was reportedly due to Stalin's personal intervention, which had no roots in the interests of either the state or the system itself, though the system made possible and even inevitable such deformation.) This is analogous to the factor of de-Russification which was listed above in the case of Titoism.

(b) *Measures to eliminate excesses or excrescences.* (E.g., letting down of the bars against the depiction of romantic love in approved fiction.)

(c) *Concessions, in fact or promise, to aspirations denoted by mass discontent.* The biggest concession, at least in promise, was the Malenkov line of increasing consumer goods and cutting down on the emphasis on heavy industry.

7. THE RELAXATION: HARDS & SOFTS

The fourth consideration is that the great relaxation after Stalin's death was also, in one aspect, one of the periodic swings in the alternating movement characteristic of this bureaucratic-collectivist system, from "soft" to "hard" and back again.

Basically, the periods of hard or soft pressure derive from the relations, within the process of production, between the tops of the state apparatus of terror, down through the echelons of command of the dominant bureaucracy, to the masses of workers, as further discussed below; i.e., the intensification or easing of the pressures and demands laid down from the top for the degree of exploitation and sacrifice extorted from the factories and farms. But this also sets the climate for all other sectors of life, since in general it determines the degree of terror which has to be organized over the whole of the society in order to repress the hostility and tensions engendered.

Every period of "hard" pressure is necessarily accompanied by greater bureaucratism and an intensification of all the evils that flow from this in this society, and therefore generates in turn the opinion in the bureaucracy that a letup is needed in order to correct these increasingly exaggerated abuses and to compensate for the particular type of one-sided development that they cause.

Likewise, every period of "soft" pressure, by leading eventually to a falling-off in production for other reasons, and to illusions that further gains might be made by the masses if their disaffection were further implemented, also engenders a tendency in the bureaucracy to make a change back, as these undesired consequences threaten to get out of hand.

This is the general reason for the characteristic alternating pattern of hard and soft periods; but there is no economic automatism about this pattern, since it is politically conditioned.

The period up to Stalin's death had been a "hard" one, which in turn had succeeded the last wartime period when a good deal of general looseness prevailed in many economic and social spheres due to the embroilment of the regime in an external life-or-death struggle—i.e., a "soft" period. However, if this "hard" and "soft" pattern is traced back (not cramming events in an arbitrary mold but detecting the general tendency), then through the zigzag alternation there also appears the tendency for the hard zigzags to get harder, that is, for greater draconic efforts of terroristic pressure to be necessary in order to drive the Russian people to the same exertions.

Because Stalin's death came at the high point of a "hard" period and was necessarily succeeded by a "soft" period, an important error has been crystallized in common terminology: the term "Stalinism" has come to be reserved in popular journalism for the "hard" policy, while the "soft" policy is mechanically interpreted as a turn away from Stalinism. This is unfortunate from the point of view of better political understanding, since the fact is that Stalin had used both at different times; so also did Beria, whose identification with "hard" Stalinism is dubious, and who indeed first came to power as secret-police chief as the executor of a "soft" turn.

8. THE RELAXATION: POWER STRUGGLE

The fifth consideration shaping the Great Relaxation after Stalin's death was factional division inside the Kremlin leadership, using this term to denote anything from power- or clique-struggles or tendency lineups howsoever shifting, to definite factions. In general the underlying problem behind this division arises from the hard-or-soft issue as discussed above.

Disagreement at the top helps to create a simulacrum of "democratization"—or rather, produces some of the phenomena which get hailed by gullible observers as evidence for democratization. For example, the occasional appearance of contradictory views in the press does not argue the existence of democratic differences of opinion but indicates that the views on top are neither steady nor certain.

9. TOWARD A ONE-MAN ARBITER

No one individual *Vozhd* could hope to succeed Stalin immediately. The evidence is for the existence of a

mutated struggle for dominance in the Kremlin, a struggle in which the first decisive loser was Beria; second (in 1955) Malenkov, though far less decisively; third (later in 1955) Molotov, to the extent of a partial humiliation; these three being the triumvirate which had seemed to take over the top leadership at Stalin's bier. Their decline brought the ascendancy of Khrushchev as the front-runner, apparently still a distance from unchallenged power as The Arbiter of the system.

It is now clear, however, that if Malenkov was not physically liquidated after his fall from top place, it was because of the continuing power struggle in which he played a role, and not because of any reform in the system or its leaders.

The system, after Stalin's death, demanded the collective rule of the top leadership, in the absence of an individual successor to the Arbitership. At the same time the longer-range demand of the system is for a supreme Arbiter who can resolve the questions that cannot be resolved by democratic discussion among the hierarchy. It is not possible to have genuine democratic exchange of opinion, let alone democratic decision, among a limited stratum of the bureaucracy, except as an unstable transition, a temporary condition in the passage back to rule by Arbiter—or forward to the falling apart of the system.

It has become fashionable to say that the de-Stalinization process is "irreversible." This is not true except in the longer-range historical sense in which the doom of Stalinism is inevitable. Indeed, the tendency to return to a "hard" policy and even to one-man rule is in-



MALENKOV

Second Down for Khrushchev in 1955

herent in the system. Whether this tendency works itself out or not will depend in the last analysis on the growth of the anti-Stalinist revolution. In short, it is only revolution which will make genuine de-Stalinization "irreversible."

10. FROM WEAKNESS, NOT STRENGTH

The Great Relaxation that followed Stalin's death was, therefore, a turn taken from weakness and not from strength.

The heirs were weakened by the death of the tyrant who had tightly kept the lid on, with ruthless force concentrating all threads of real power in his own hands; and now, facing the angers and resentments of the people, the Kremlin bureaucracy eased up in order to blunt the cutting edge of the hatreds that surround them.

This ease-up, while primarily motivated by internal pressures, had to have its counterpart also in foreign policy.

Promises of internal relaxation must be accompanied by evidence that the international pressure is, or is going to be, less. Relaxation in the cold war is necessary both as a motivation for explaining the internal relaxation, and for giving a seeming guarantee that the latter will be forthcoming. Hence the "Geneva spirit" period.

At the same time the international relaxation was also needed by the fact that the Kremlin, in the "panic and disarray" after the death of Stalin, could not afford any belligerent international incidents developing; its attention had to be concentrated within, for the next period.

11. THE CAULDRON OF HATRED

The internal relaxation was an internal appeasement: who and what had to be appeased?

It is not a question of any claim that imminent revolution from below stared the Kremlin in the face after the death of Stalin. There can be a long road between a decisive revolution and, merely, the beginning of the breakup of the bureaucratic monolith's stranglehold on the country through the growth of unrest and discontent.

What is basic is to register the fact that behind the monolithic front of Russian totalitarianism is a seething cauldron of hatred of the ruling bureaucracy, hostility to

its oppression, resentment against its grinding exploitation, and enmity to its masters.

This was manifested during the Second World War by the mass desertions from the Russian army by the subjects of the Kremlin who were even willing to fight for the Nazis, and by the initial greetings given by the peoples of the Ukraine and other border areas even to the Hitlerite invasion.

It was manifested by the great slave-labor revolts in Vorkuta, Norilsk and other concentration camps.

It is manifested by the tremendous machinery of repression and terror which the Kremlin needs to maintain in order to stay in power.

The new Russian working class, enormously increased by industrialization and educated by decades of urban life and organization, is waiting as the grave-diggers of the system that created it.

This is the great reservoir of revolutionary energy which, once released, will sweep over the Stalinist power, and of which the bureaucracy lives in fear.

12. THE BUREAUCRATS AND THE ECONOMY

But it is not only a question of the revolutionary discontent of the masses. It is also a question of appeasing the mass of the bureaucratic ranks themselves, the secondary echelons of the ruling class itself.

These ranks are driven by the Kremlin as ruthlessly as they are expected to drive the workers; they are the transmission channels of upper policy. This ruling class is not a leisure class; it is a frenetically driven class; but like all ruling classes, its members, not satisfied merely with the superior privilege and income which their positions afford, aspire to a "normalization"—the right to enjoy their privileges in undisturbed peace and security. Of this they have little.

To the echelons of the bureaucracy, therefore, relaxation has the most literal meaning: an end to, or an easing-up on, the unending merciless drive to fulfill the demands from on top, to fulfill a plan which is always breaking down from its own disproportionalities, its own wastes, its own parasitism and unplannability.

This drive from above is not fortuitous or dispensable on the part of the tops. It is a result of the fact that this system is (a) no longer, as capitalism was, coordinated or regulated by the impersonal "blind" workings of the market, while at the same time (b) it cannot be coordinated and regulated by a workably planned mechanism which can substitute for the market—as long as there is no adequate possibility for a constant check on and correction of the Plan by give-and-take from below such as is impossible within a totalitarian framework. This requires socialist democracy, which alone makes possible a genuine planned economy. Here we have the basic contradiction of the system.

This bureaucratic system seeks, but cannot find, any means of keeping its economy functioning on an even keel. This is a society where economics and politics are fused; that which under capitalism is accomplished by a semi-automatic economic mechanism is here (as well as under socialism) to be accomplished by the political institutions. At every step the big political whip must do what many economic whips do under capitalism.

That is, totalitarian terror is an integral, built-in and inescapable component of this social system, not an excess or a "mistake" or a superstructure.

The bureaucratic planning of the economy requires terror, in the absence of workers' democracy—and in turn, terror makes impossible any genuine planning.

Thus the unremitting pressure from the top down, since it naturally attenuates as it filters down the line toward the bottom, must be given a hard and fierce impetus as it starts out from the top, so that it will still have moving power a few echelons below; and this pressure cannot be dispensed with, without setting in motion forces which will overrelax the whole system till it starts falling apart.

This is the rationale of, and the inevitable drive behind, the "hard" factions. At the same time, as we have seen, there are times—as on Stalin's death; as there was whenever a "hard" period was threatening to raise resentment to an uncomfortable pitch—when a continuation of the hard line can be seen especially by the more sensitive bureaucrats as dangerous; when, therefore, a "soft" turn gains adherents.

And so the zigzags of the regime, and the division of the bureaucracy into tendency line-ups, are brought about by the most basic drives of the social system. It was this that was exacerbated to critical levels by the death of Stalin and the acute emergence of the problems it released or triggered off.

13. THE BUREAUCRATS AND THE MASSES

The two factors discussed—the discontent of the masses, and the discontents of the ranks of the bureaucracy—are not separate factors. The latter is significant as a transmitting mechanism for the former, that is, for the basic class struggle in this society.

The aspirations of the bureaucrats for normalization and relaxation act as a transmitting belt for the pressures of disaffection, sporadic sabotage, slowdown and non-cooperation that arise from the masses.

If the regime allowed (say) more consumer goods, the workers would work better, problems would be

The Issue of Reform or Revolution in Russia and East Europe . . .

fewer, quotas would be filled more easily, the dangers of failure would be less, etc.; and so the middle-echelon bureaucrats could live a happier, less tense, more relaxed and "normal" life in which to enjoy their perquisites and privileges. So it is in the interests of a section of the bureaucrats to be for more consumers goods, or other ameliorations of the workers' lot—i.e., in this and other instances to act as channels to pass on the pressure of a working class which has no democratic channels to express its demands—no channels at all to express its demands except to keep the economy in crisis, to keep the bureaucracy in fear and insecurity.

Thus, up through the class structure the demands of the mass of people fight back against the whip of the bureaucracy, that is, against the totalitarian terror which is an integral component of this economy.

In the last analysis, the appeasement to which the post-Stalin relaxation was directed was appeasement of potentially revolutionary mass discontent from below, which had to be safety-valved.

Through the mirror of the Kremlin's "disarray and panic" at the death of Stalin, the next Russian Revolution can be seen incubating.

II

In East Europe: The Pattern of Revolution

14. NATURE OF THE REVOLUTION

Short of the next Russian Revolution, it is the anti-Stalinist revolution in the conquered satellite empire that has exploded first, before the heartland of Stalinism.

For this, however, at least the weakening of the heartland was a necessary preliminary. Just as we have seen since the war that world capitalism has decayed and lost power most catastrophically first on its peripheries—in the colonial world—so also with regard to the Stalinist system: both brown around the edges first. Hence the Czech demonstration, East Germany, Poznan, Poland and Hungary.

Politically and socially, these revolutionary upheavals have four basic characteristics:

(a) They fuse the nationalist revolution and the social revolution in a single interlocked struggle; i.e., the demand for national freedom from Russian domination, with the demands on the native Stalinist regimes for genuine democratization and an end to bureaucratic exploitation.

(b) The central political revolutionary demands of these movements spell out the demand for democracy. This in one word is the program of the anti-Stalinist revolution. This social revolution is a *democratic revolution*.

(c) This revolutionary movement bases itself in the mass on the maintenance of social or collective ownership of the basic means of production in industry, maintenance of the "nationalized economy" and against any restoration of capitalism or the old regime. The social program of the revolution is the democratization of the statified economy. This essentially defines it as the *socialist revolution*.

(d) Far and away the leadership in this revolution has been taken by the working class, with strong allies from the working-class students and from the intellectuals, the latter two elements playing a big role especially in triggering the revolutionary actions; and with united support from the peasants, though more passively. Thus while the revolution is national in scope, it is the working class which stands at the head of the nation. This revolution is *proletarian* both in program and in leadership.

Thus the national revolution, the social revolution, the democratic revolution all fuse into the proletarian socialist revolution—under this system of despotism which by its very nature tends to fuse all politics, economics and social life into a monolithic unity.

15. REFORM OR REVOLUTION?

As this revolution, both in Russia and more broadly in the Stalinist world, comes visibly closer and its face becomes clearer; as the prospect of seeing this revolution in our day changes from a hope or dream to a practical and real probability, so also is the line drawn sharper between the proponents of reform or revolution in the Stalinist world.

Those are the terms in which it is posed: reform or revolution.

There is, of course, an obvious analogy at first blush with the historic issue of Reform or Revolution as it was fought out in the socialist movement with respect to capitalism; and indeed there are many parallels possible which are not necessarily accidental. But still we cannot merely carry over the old controversy and its arguments but have to think the new problem out afresh, for it is a different social system and a different world context which is involved here.

With this basic caution, we nevertheless add: On the issue of reform or revolution in the Stalinist world, we

stand for revolutionary socialism; we expect and look to the revolutionary overthrow of the totalitarian Stalinist regimes by mass action from below—as against those who preach the inevitability, or desirability, or expectation of an inner self-reform of the bureaucratic-collectivist ruling class which will hand down democracy to the masses from above, which will bring about the self-democratization of the bureaucracy.

16. THE DEUTSCHERITE FORMULA

As the revolution against the Stalinist power comes closer, the reformists on this question have increased their ranks, at the same time that their political basis becomes ever more untenable. This viewpoint now extends out from the ranks of the Stalinoids, fellow-travelers, socialists with pro-Stalinist illusions, etc., out into—far into—the ranks of the imperialist bourgeoisie itself.

The common denominator tends to be rationalized in the theoretic of Isaac Deutscher; and "Deutscherism" tends to be an umbrella for various kinds of Stalin-reformism. With the discreditment of those other approaches which point the Stalinist bureaucracies in a more favorable light, all theories and views about the reformability of the bureaucratic-collectivist ruling class tend to reduce themselves to Deutscher's formula.

According to this formula, in brief, Stalin's monstrous form of totalitarianism, while regrettable, was historically inevitable in order to bring about a rapid enough industrialization and modernization of Russia, which in turn was indispensable in order to lay the basis for or build "socialism"; and so this process, which was inevitable, was also historically progressive. Now this task has been accomplished, deplorable though the methods may have been, and now this totalitarian dictatorship is no longer necessary; on the contrary, it is a drag on the further development of these "socialist" economies. This the new masters in the Kremlin realize; and Stalin's death fortunately gave them the opportunity to start turning the helm of state toward the democratization process which history and their own aspirations demand. If they are not scared off this road by threats from the capitalist West, or scared off by the threats of subversive "anti-socialist" forces within, they will sooner or later bring Russia, and her dependencies and partners, along the road of the complete liquidation of Stalinism, dictatorship, or terror, and to a genuinely socialist democracy. It follows from this that any revolutionary struggle against this bureaucracy's power, even if detonated by otherwise justified demands, is counter-revolutionary, will only postpone socialist democratization, can be effective only as a tool of the imperialists, and must therefore be deplored if not prevented and repressed.

17. DEUTSCHERISM AND REFORMISM

It is clear, first of all, what this view has in common with old-fashioned reformism (i.e., under capitalism), different though they are in so many vital respects.

Common is the underlying distrust of the action of the masses themselves; hostility to the basic conception of Marxism that the emancipation of the working class must be by its own action, that it cannot be looked for to some condescending savior; that the socialist goal is not a good that will be handed down out of the goodness of their enlightened hearts by benevolent masters but must be taken by the organized strength of a revolutionary movement; that genuine democracy can be attained only insofar as the masses take the political stage as self-conscious actors and doers, not merely as objects of history.

There is nothing whatever so basic to revolutionary Marxism as this. It is its opposite that is characteristic of all forms of reformism, opportunism or capitulation to the ruling powers of the world, whatever their class nature may be.

On the theoretical plane it is this which permits us to unite the new Stalino-reformism with the old reformism under capitalism.

18. BOURGEOIS TENDENCIES

Some of the ideas put forward by Deutscher reformism also influence, or are shared by, wider political tendencies.

There are the thinkers, braintrusters and pundits of the Western imperialist camp, in and out of the government, who have their own reasons for hating, fearing and deploring the prospect of uncontrolled revolutionary mass action breaking out anywhere. Afraid of revolution, they are equally afraid of revolution on the other side of the "Iron Curtain," insofar as they understand that the flames will inescapably tend to leap across the Curtain, which is not of iron, and extend to their own world.

They look upon the oppressed masses of the Stalinist world as fit only to be auxiliaries to their own armies in the event of war breaking out between the two imperialist camps; they do not want them to rise up and fight for their own freedom; they want them to "preserve themselves" so as to be available to fight as tools

of the Western capitalist military camp. They do not look to their revolutionary struggle as a means of preventing imperialist war, but only as a means of fighting a war.

Short of the outbreak of war, they hope to make an imperialist deal with Moscow, whereby the Russians will agree to "contain themselves" peaceably in exploitation of their own empire and not bother the West, while the capitalist world guarantees their (the Russians') "security" and peace of mind in running their own vassalries. This "peaceful" perspective is only endangered by the outbreak of uncontrolled revolutionary struggle in the Stalinist states, for such struggle makes the Russians fear that all their power and pelf is at state and endangered, when the capitalist statesmen really want to allay any such fears.

Such an imperialist deal, which is the only form of a peace policy that the world's leaders can envisage, is called "peaceful coexistence" when it is propounded by the Stalinists, under which label it is often execrated by all good American party-liners and even viewed with suspicion by liberals, some of whom invent other labels like "competitive coexistence" to take off the curse. But whether labeled "peaceful coexistence" or the "containment policy," which basically means the same thing, the end is the same: an imperialist deal over the passive bodies of the satellites and subject peoples of the one or the colonial prizes and exploited peoples of the other.

This bourgeois-imperialist tendency, therefore, while it has its own political roots and objectives, and because it shares in the detestation of revolution on either side of the lines, tends to set forth as the realizable goal of its imperialist deal a reformed Stalinist bureaucracy that will at last have seen the light and made the compact. From this follows some of the same illusions about the potentialities of a Stalinist inner-transformation as are articulated and theorized by Deutscher and his co-thinkers from quite different political premises.

19. BOURGEOIS NEUTRALISM

In the second place, many neutralist currents in the bourgeoisie (in France for example) are even more directly impelled to believe that the Stalinist totalitarians either are or can be in process of reforming themselves and their system.

In the mind of all forms of neutralism which depend on the reconciliation of the rival war camps, illusions about the Stalinist regimes (as well as about capitalism) are inevitable, for if the two camps are really to be united in amity, then this must be considered possible; and it if is possible, it is because the imperialist rivalry is not inherent. Specifically, the Stalinist totalitarian leaders must be viewed as reasonable people genuinely interested in peace above all, if only their understandable skittishness about capitalist encirclement can be cured. At any rate they cannot be as black as painted. . . .

20. SOCIALIST NEUTRALISM

The strong neutralist currents in the socialist movements of various countries, typified by the Bevanites, often share this approach, and in addition may be subject to another disease, which spreads as a blight specifically in socialist ranks, separate from, though often connected with, neutralism. This is the blight of pro-Stalinist illusions, which characteristically view the Stalinist regimes as some kind of socialist states, though distorted, detestable, degenerate, or deplorable kinds of socialist states or "workers' states," or some sort of progressive form of society.

According to this, this otherwise detestable "kind of socialism" must be disembarrassed of its unpleasant features in order to bring out the pristine lines of its intrinsic "socialism"; and to this end, we must be free with sympathy for the "socialist" objectives of this deplorable regime while remaining kindly and helpful in persuading its leading hangmen to become less degenerate.

According to the varieties of this strain of thought, the "socialist" essence of the Stalinist states (which is equated by a vulgar economism with the simple existence of statified property) must willynilly bring their dictators to socialist democracy as the political corollary of the economic "socialist" forms. Thus, pro-Stalinism reinforces Deutscherite reformism.

21. THE REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

If these and other varieties coalesce around Deutscherite reformism in looking to the self-reform and self-democratization from above of the Stalinist regimes, it is not the result of fortuitous agreement but the natural common ground resulting from rejection of a revolutionary perspective. All of these people become enemies or opponents or derogators of the proletarian socialist revolution against Stalinism.

We stand firmly on the basis of this revolution, alongside an equally firm position of opposition to capitalism and the capitalist-imperialist war camp. We expect that

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Problems of the Polish and Hungarian Revolutionary Uprisings...

(Continued from page 5)

the forces of socialist revolution in both halves of the world will inspire each other; whereas in both camps the social-reformists and the Stalin-reformists advise: "Be prudent... do not fight for what you need—your masters will hand it to you freely if only you convince them that they have nothing to fear from you!"

III

Socialist Policy and the Anti-Stalinist Revolution

22. "PERMANENT REVOLUTION"

Our fundamental guide in the anti-Stalinist revolution is the conception of the "permanent revolution" in an adapted form—i.e., the need for the continuous, or uninterrupted, transition in a rising line from the nationalist revolution to the social revolution (this applies outside the Great-Russian heartland) or from the democratic revolution to the proletarian socialist revolution, as discussed in point 14.

We reject any notion that this revolution must restrict itself to "stages" lest it go "too far" for any given period (tactical considerations aside, of course). There are indeed likely to be stages, but the point is that it is not the vanguard that must restrain events to prescribed stages.

23. WHOM WE SUPPORT

As against the totalitarian Stalinist regimes, we support every democratic movement, all democratic elements, every measure and every force and every step to create genuinely democratic institutions.

The revolutionary events of 1956 make even more important the view which we set down in our 1949 resolution:

"The aim of all opposition in such a state inevitably centers around the demands of democracy. Not only is this demand the essence of the socialist struggle under the bureaucratic-collectivist regime, it is at the same time the program around which the widest strata of the population can be effectively mobilized. . . . The task of the Marxists, therefore, is to enter into battle against the main enemy (the ruling bureaucracy) alongside every genuinely popular movement of resistance to the despotism of the state."

24. THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY

The following consideration is vital to the relationship between conscious revolutionary socialist elements and other democratic elements in the anti-Stalinist revolution.

Under Stalinism the fight for democracy has a different political and social content than under capitalism. Under capitalism, any fight whose social vision is merely limited to general democratic objectives and asks no other changes thereby assumes the continued existence of the capitalist social system, which negates the possibility of full genuine democracy; and so revolutionary socialists, in addition to being the most consistent supporters of every democratic measure—and in order to be so—must themselves spell out the social content of the democracy for which they fight—namely, spell out the socialist objective of the struggle for democracy.

The character of the Stalinist social system makes the case basically different under that system. There the struggle for democracy—democratic rights, institutions and freedoms—takes place in a society where the basic means of production are already statified, where the political institutions (the state) that are to be democratized are already the owner of the economy.

Here a struggle whose vision is limited to democratic transformation and asks no other changes is one which assumes the continued maintenance of the form of the collectivized economy in industry. Here the struggle for democracy automatically tends to turn into the struggle for democratic socialism, regardless of the consciousness with which the struggle begins.

25. THE ROLE OF REACTION

This is not to say that anyone who calls for democratic change is ipso facto fighting for socialism. There may possibly be remnants of elements who may still think in terms of capitalist restoration. But (a) such tendencies are enormously stronger among the emigres from the satellite states than among the people themselves; and (b) all evidence shows that insofar as there are such elements among the people, they are a tiny and unimportant minority.

In the anti-Stalinist revolution, therefore, we vigorously support all tendencies, struggles and steps toward a revolutionary democratic opposition to the regime. This political position does not prejudice any questions of revolutionary tactics in the detailed course of a revolutionary upheaval, such as can be decided only by militants on the spot; it defines our side in the struggle.

We recognize that, as in Hungary, a revolutionary democratic upsurge against the Stalinist power may well also churn up, from the dregs of the society, not only the mass of the working-class democracy, but also whatever specks of the old reaction still exist. One of

the tasks of the socialist workers in such a revolution is naturally to isolate and quarantine such elements and prevent them from exercising any influence. There has indeed been no important evidence in either the Hungarian or Polish revolutions that such elements, including anti-Semitic elements, played any substantial role in the revolutionary upsurge. But in any case, whatever the eventuality, socialists would energetically combat any attempt by enemies of the revolution to smear the revolutionary democratic opposition by pointing to the existence of any such elements, even where they really do exist. We say candidly and in advance that any mass, especially all-national, sweeping upsurge may possibly exhibit such elements among them, whether to a minute and insignificant degree or whether to a degree that would jeopardize the revolution, but in any case, we regard this as a problem of "our side," and not a reason for turning against "our side."

The brunt of socialists' analyses and propaganda must be, not the exaggerated dangers of "reactionary" elements within the general revolutionary democratic attack on the regime—dangers which may exist, but which the healthy dynamism unleashed by a genuine revolution can adequately handle, we are convinced—but the brunt must be directed against all those regime forces which set themselves to bridle the revolution and lead the people back into the confines of totalitarianism as expeditiously as possible and as soon as the revolutionary unrest can be tranquilized.

26. POLAND AND HUNGARY

In the Hungarian Revolution, where—due to the Russian intervention—the nationalist revolution and the social revolution were completely fused from virtually the beginning, there was no stopping-point possible between the one and the other. The revolution also broke open the Nagy-Kadar coalition, forcing its individual members to fall one way or the other. Thus, Nagy finished by going along completely with the revolutionary democracy, while Kadar, despite his record of Stalinist-dissidence, finished by becoming a tool of the Russians.

The Polish development differed in this respect—basically because the revolutionary democratic movement there had developed earlier, more strongly in advance of the crisis, and had cast its shadow before, more menacingly for a longer time; whereas the Hungarian crisis burst upon the country more unexpectedly and improvisedly and with less preparation. Thus—as in the analogous contrast between the German and Austrian revolutions of 1918—the revolution which was less deep-going and deeprootedly prepared was the one which was the most dramatic and violent.

In Poland the "thaw"—a loosening of the bonds of totalitarian restraint in various fields of life, most prominently at first in the field of cultural and intellectual life—began even before the 20th Congress; and soon after the Congress, took the lead by far in making Poland's ferment of "de-Stalinization" deeper, more stormy and less "controlled" than in any other satellite, Hungary included.

This was so because of: (a) the political experience and tradition of a proletariat that was more advanced and better trained politically in social struggles than any other in the Russian empire with the possible exception of the East German; (b) the strong roots of nationalist aspirations directed against oppression from Russia; (c) the economic exploitation of the country practised by the Russians.

On top of the stormier development of "de-Stalinization" in Poland came the blow-off in Poznan. While this could be militarily suppressed and localized at the time, it acted as an advance warning to the Polish regime.

This is what basically accounts for the fact that after Poznan the decisive section of the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy—including Ochab and Cyrankiewicz—went over to the thesis that the developing revolution could be averted, and discontent confined within the bounds of the existing system, only by the Communist Party leadership themselves running to the head of the movement by timely concessions. Hence, Gomulka was released and installed as leader to be the symbol and organizer of the contemplated program of anticipatory reform, since (a) he was not discredited in the eyes of the people, and (b) his record and views on a number of points were consistent with these concessions, unlike the others.

27. POLAND: THE CLASS PATTERN

The main concessions made to curb the developing and seething Polish Revolution was a curbing of Russian influence, designed to take some of the nationalist steam out of the growing social-revolutionary movement.

As we know from the experience of Titoism, such a step is not to be understood merely as a reluctant concession on the part of the Polish Stalinists. They are for obtaining a maximum measure of national independence from the Russians; this is the "Titoist" component which is an inherent drive behind every satellite regime, even the most subservient, let alone the Polish.

The revolution developing under the Polish bureaucracy, however, made this course not simply a preferable good that they could aspire to, but a pressing necessity. Moreover, by pointing to the threatening revolution they could hope to convince the Russians to

agree to a reluctant acceptance of some "anti-Russian" steps as a lesser evil. This is what happened in October.

Thus, by balancing between the revolution from below and the Russian power which overshadowed them, the new regime gained nationalist concessions (de-Russification of the army, ouster of the symbol Rokossovsky, etc.), though the Russian troops still remained in the country. With the popular credit thus obtained, the regime swung into a drive to tranquilize the uncontrolled revolutionary ferment among the people and even among many strata of the Communist militants and intellectuals.

Outside of the de-Russification concessions, major concessions were made by the regime to the two social forces that naturally stood outside the main arenas of the revolutionary democratic stirrings: the peasantry and the Catholic Church. The peasantry were granted a wide measure of decollectivization, reduction of collection quotas and rights of private ownership. The church was given the right of religious instruction in the public schools themselves, in violation of democratic concepts of church-state separation, as well as remission of previous undemocratic restrictions on the church, release of prisoners, right of ecclesiastical appointment, etc.

The reason for these major concessions in these directions was to strengthen and stabilize the regime by leaning across the working class and dissident intelligentsia—on these two social forces as a counterpoise to the main centers of the revolutionary democratic opposition.

In this way the regime hopes to stabilize itself within the framework of a bureaucratic-collectivist system whose totalitarian structure has been cracked wide open in all directions since October, and which they could thereupon hope to re-totalitarianize, even if preferably on a more national-Communist basis than before.

This is the general class pattern of the Polish Revolution after October.

28. 'OUR SIDE' IN THE REVOLUTION

In all this, then, it is essential to keep in mind that what we are dealing with here is not a study of good or bad reforms bestowed by good or bad leaders at the head of a regime, but rather the gains (or losses) registered by a revolution, a mass revolutionary upheaval which has shaken the Polish totalitarianism, loosened it up, qualified its ability to operate as such in almost every field, in proportion to the storminess of mass action; which has even here and there, and for a while, brought about a degree of independent organization, from below, particularly in the student and youth fields, though the main advances of this sort were soon suppressed by the regime's edict or pressure.

This revolution is not the work of the regime or any of its leaders but is inevitably directed against this regime; and the regime and its leaders exert themselves to bridle and quiet this revolution by every means from peaceful persuasion where possible to political pressure to police action.

Our political support—without involving any commitment on tactics—goes to "our side," the revolutionary democratic forces who, whether or not they support a popular leader as a symbol, are engaged on a course which is the deadly enemy of the regime, and which, if pursued (however prudently), will bring them inescapably into a life-and-death clash with the regime; and in no case does our political support or confidence go to the Gomulka regime, critically or otherwise.

As in the case also of Tito, we are for the defense of Poland, under any national regime including Gomulka's, as against Russian or other foreign assault or intervention designed to force it back into vassalage, in any struggle where the national right to self-determination is indeed the dominant element. But political support to Gomulka is not involved here.

In case of any hypothetical Natolin-Stalinist putsch in which Gomulka willy-nilly acts the part of a "Kerensky" as against the Stalinist "Kornilov," we are equally ready to defend Gomulka in the same spirit (Kerensky vs. Kornilov); though it must be admitted in all political realism that it is difficult to envisage such a putsch unconnected with Russian intervention.

In any case, again, political support to the Gomulka regime is not involved in any of these hypotheticalities; and the real situation and real problems of the revolutionary Left in Poland have little relation to these hypothetical questions, which we answer because they have been raised.

The revolutionary pressure of the people can impel or encourage this Gomulka regime to grant further concessions of a nationalist or social character, and such concessions and gains socialists will welcome and support, whether in the nature of further de-Russification or more democratic leeway; but in the last analysis such gains will be possible only as by-products of revolutionary pressure and not of the regime's magnanimity.

29. FOUR POINTS OF POLICY

The working class in the anti-Stalinist revolution has no reason to be wary of democratic concessions to non-working-class strata who are also oppressed by the common enemy, the ruling bureaucracy. On the contrary, socialists should fight not only for workers' power against this bureaucracy, but also for the legitimate interests

From Spontaneous Rebellion to Organization for Final Victory...

of all other elements in the society who should be its allies in the struggle.

(a) *Freedom of the peasants from forced collectivization:*

The working class has no interest in maintaining bureaucratic collectivization of the land, into which the great majority of the peasantry have been forced under Stalinism. Under conditions of revolution, as was true notably in Poland, the peasantry may abandon the collectives en masse; they must have complete freedom to do so, and in such exercise of their right the democratized state would seek to organize the return to them of the property which the bureaucratic despotism took away.

The socialists do not advocate or support decollectivization; but they do guarantee the complete and untrammelled right to decollectivization. As always, the socialists' aim will be, in step with material possibilities, to lead the peasantry voluntarily toward free cooperatives or other free collective forms which can utilize the land most productively, by the power of example and encouragement.

(b) *Private property:*

The Stalinist over-bureaucratization of the economic system in the Eastern European countries has also tended to involve over-stationification—the statification of all sectors regardless of how economically ready for socialization they may be. It is entirely possible that a revolutionary socialist government would find it desirable, transitionally at least, to allow greater leeway for private property and private small business in subordinate sectors of the economy, particularly where free collective or socialized forms are not yet feasible in terms of economic efficiency.

This must be understood quite apart from any tendencies toward capitalist restoration.

(c) *Multi-party system:*

When socialists demand complete political freedom in these states, they demand freedom for all, not only for themselves. We repudiate any notion that the new political freedom should be extended only as far as pro-socialist parties and no further.

While we are entirely confident that a genuine popular democratic revolution will be led by the working class and be socialist in its content and program, we are on principle opposed to limiting the legality of new parties or political activity only to those which purport to be pro-socialist, or worse yet, only to those which are accepted as pro-socialist by the government (even a democratic government). We are for the right also to reconstitute even the old bourgeois parties, if any wish to do so, or new parties which are pro-bourgeois in anyone's view. We do not believe that the revolution will be endangered by such freedom.

(d) *Church rights:*

Among the social forces repressed by the Stalinist dictatorship in many of these states has been the Church, especially the Catholic Church. We are for the restoration of complete religious freedom and self-government of the churches, in no way controlled by the government. We are against any intervention of the government or any other outside power into the internal affairs of the church, such as in the naming of bishops or other church officers.

At the same time we maintain the traditional socialist insistence on complete separation of church and state in every respect, including the completely secular character of public education.

30. FOR THE WORKERS COUNCILS

The leading social force in the anti-Stalinist revolution, however, is the working class. The experience in both Hungary and Poland has shown that the revolutionary working class spontaneously organized its forces into Workers Councils as its revolutionary instrument against the state, and that these Workers Councils tended to assume the character of a dual power challenging the old state or assuming its power after the shattering of the old state.

Socialists must be the most consistent and militant supporters of the Workers Council systems which arise in the revolution, and of their expansion, seeing these not simply as technical factory instruments of locally limited power but as the formations which can link up horizontally and vertically—nationally—as the basis for the new revolutionary government, the latter's roots in the factories.

The old bureaucratic apparatus cannot simply be taken over by the revolution, along with its discredited and compromised cadres who did the bidding and dirty work of the Stalinists; this apparatus must be swept off the board. The apparatus to replace it as the state power can arise out of the Council system.

31. SPONTANEITY AND REVOLT

The revolutions of 1956 raise the question of the party in the anti-Stalinist revolution, and also present some important experiences toward answering this question—namely, the general relationship between spontaneous revolt and conscious organization in the revolution.

The experience so far has tended to put the spotlight on the great drama of spontaneous revolt from below.

One of the great and indelible contributions of the Hungarian and Polish revolutions is their final and conclusive proof that the triumph of Stalinism in a country does not turn the workers into hypnotized robots, brainwashed by an all-powerful propaganda and terror machine, à la Orwell's 1984 or Hannah Arendt's inverted idealization of totalitarianism. This eliminates one of the great motives for capitulation to Western imperialism under the plea that it is the only force that can save us from this otherwise invulnerable monster.

Contrary to the "1984" picture, this Stalinism has produced the very opposite of the dehumanized "prole"; it has produced the most sweeping, courageous, mass, united struggle for freedom in the whole history of social struggle.

Above all, what has been shown is that this struggle begins by breaking out as a spontaneous one—i.e., not initiated or organized or led by any organizations or established leadership. It is therefore irrepressible.

32. THE PROBLEM OF ORGANIZATION

It is entirely possible for a completely spontaneous revolt to overthrow a despotic regime, especially under conditions where all sectors of the society are sympathetic to its cause. This has happened more than once in history, as in the February 1917 revolution in Russia. Considerably more difficult problems are raised, however, in the next stage—the presentation of a stable revolutionary governmental alternative to the old one, and the building of a new society. It is essentially at this point that the problem of conscious socialist organization becomes most acute.

The spontaneity of the revolts against Stalinism, however, should not be exaggerated or interpreted as being complete. It is useful to emphasize their relative spontaneity in order to underline the irrepressible elements in them, but misleading to interpret this as flatly opposed to the existence of organized factors.

In point of fact, one of the important contributions of the 1956 revolutions was precisely the demonstration that even under Stalinist totalitarianism, and in advance of the shattering of the totalitarian framework by mass struggle—in fact as a preliminary to the mass struggle—forms of revolutionary organization and opposition can and do spring up. Dissident elements in a semi-organized form utilized institutions and organizations sponsored by the regime itself. Of this nature was the Petoši Circle in Budapest or *Po Prostu* in Warsaw. Under the gathering discontent, semi-organized factional forms even penetrated into the ruling parties themselves, as in the case of the Nagy group in the Hungarian CP. There were anticipatory splits in official organizations, as in the case of the student organization in Hungary just before the uprising. Simultaneous with the upheavals, other ad-hoc organizations formed—like the "October committees" in the Polish

factories, which were veritable revolutionary soviets until dissolved by Gomulka.

These organizations and forms of semi-organization were sufficient to make possible the destruction of the old state in Hungary, and in Poland the shattering of the totalitarian framework for a while, but it was precisely the inadequacy of this organizational framework which was one, and an important, contributing influence to the subsequent confusion of the revolutionary Left of which the old despots could take advantage. What was missing was any over-all political leadership which could pull together the strands of revolution, point a direction, unite disparate efforts, offer a pole of clarity around which a cross-section of the nation could rally, and above all, begin to connect up with revolutionary elements and dissident forces in the rest of the Stalinist empire—so as to lay a stronger basis for that indispensable spread of the revolution across the borders which will one day help to ensure the victory of the revolution even against Russian tanks.

The Nagy group of the CP could possibly have constituted such an instrument, but did not because of its orientation toward or hesitancy about reforming the old machine instead of breaking with it. The Workers Councils might have been able to throw up such a leadership if given more time, though that is not necessarily to be expected without more previous training and preparation. In any case, it is such an over-all political leadership, whatever it might be called and whatever form it might take, which would play the role of the revolutionary party.

33. TOWARD VICTORY

But if the absence of a revolutionary party in any sense was one of the fatal weaknesses of the 1956 revolutions—taking these as an East Europe-wide movement, and not merely as separate national movements—it does not follow that such revolutions are doomed to be futile since in no case will the totalitarians allow anything like a revolutionary party to gain experience or even existence. For in both Hungary and Poland, and perhaps also in East Germany, such a revolutionary party leadership is developing now, molecularly, as a result precisely of the experiences that have been gone through: provided that by "party" we do not necessarily understand the type of organization known by that name elsewhere, but understand simply the separating-out of a strata of leading people who link up with each other for a common action and with a common, more or less clear program.

Furthermore, if next time the few days of political freedom which the Hungarian revolution enjoyed just before November 4 are lengthened to a whole period, then from that first confused burgeoning of new political formations there is at least the possibility of hammering out a more adequate political leadership, not necessarily in one party at that.

In any case, the experiences of the 1956 revolutions afford no reason to make a virtue out of the lack of conscious organization in the movement, but rather reasons to look forward to the remedying of this defect.

The 1956 revolutions themselves have laid down new foundations for the solution of this problem now, even though defeated or set back. For one thing that can never be restored, however stringent the re-totalitarianization of these countries may become, is the sense of atomization of the working class, the shattering of the class into mutually suspicious and discrete fragments by the terror or secret police intimidation.

Now the whole people know that everyone, or virtually everyone, hates the regime; that they the people are united in reality; that nothing can stop their assault once they rise; that they must only prepare better, more understandingly, more consistently, to win; and in this way there already exists the basis for the conscious linking-up and seeking out of new forms of organization which are needed.

This is one way in which the revolutions of 1956 will be, even if in defeat, a necessary prerequisite for the final victory which is coming.

Young Socialist Convention Looks Ahead — —

(Continued from last page)

stances. Among the heightened activity were participation in various civil rights activities, such as the Prayer Pilgrimage, and in academic freedom work. In connection with the latter the convention was informed of the work of YSLers in the recent student struggle in New York City for the right of *Daily Worker* editor John Gates to speak at the various city colleges. During the course of this activity, YSL national chairman Michael Harrington addressed over 1000 students on four campuses.

During the recent past there has also occurred an intensification of the growth of the YSL, both in localities where the League has existed for a long time and in new areas, so that the membership of the League now stands at the highest point in its history. The feeling of all the delegates was that an even more intense growth lies ahead, most significantly, that

we can look forward to an expansion of the YSL into sections of the country not heretofore reached. By the fall it is expected that a number of new Units will be chartered.

The convention expressed its opinion that an expanded effort must be made to capitalize on these opportunities and called upon the League to intensify tours, writing, speaking, and getting to larger numbers of students and young workers than ever before. In this connection, the production of one or more YSL pamphlets in the immediate future was called for.

The convention also took up various proposed constitutional amendments and adopted them, as well as electing a new National Executive Committee. The NEC contains a large number of newer and younger members of the YSL, who impressed the League with their leadership qualities, as well as many of the

older and more experienced comrades who formed part of the previous YSL national leadership. The same balance was struck in the election of the National Action Committee, the YSL's resident committee, by a post-convention meeting of the NEC. The NEC also elected the League's national officer's, Michael Harrington being re-elected national chairman and Max Martin national secretary.

OBSERVERS IMPRESSED

The various resolutions adopted by the convention will be published in a forthcoming issue of the "Young Socialist Review." Challenge readers interested in obtaining a more detailed view of the decisions of the convention may write the YSL national office for copies. The cost is ten cents each.

One of the interesting sidelights was the response of observers at the convention to its proceedings. The convention

was open to the radical public and observers from various tendencies were present. They were extraordinarily impressed by the democratic nature of the convention, by the maturity and capability of the delegates, by the seriousness and optimistic mood of the young socialists they saw in action.

The best note on which to end this report of the Third National Convention of the Young Socialist League is this: Its importance did not lie in the evaluation of the past. Its importance lay in the fact that the future, the future of both the YSL and the socialist movement as a whole, dominated the proceedings. And that future looks bright as the socialist movement begins its long awaited revival in the United States. Its recognition of this fact and its preparation to meet it marked the convention as the most important and fruitful in the YSL's history.

Young Socialist Convention Looks Ahead

By MEL STACK

We are on the threshold of a new and promising period for socialism in the United States. The recently-concluded Third National Convention of the Young Socialist League recognized this fact and greeted it with enthusiasm and optimism. It demonstrated that the YSL stands ready to respond to the new and favorable opportunities which face the socialist movement today.

Delegates and visitors from all parts of the country assembled in New York City on July 1, 2 and 3 to deliberate and decide on the various questions and problems confronting the League. Among the areas represented at the convention by delegates and fraternal delegates were: New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, the Dayton Area, Philadelphia, Seattle, Cleveland, Buffalo, Connecticut, New Mexico and Colorado.

Prior to the convention there had taken place an intense discussion throughout the YSL on all of the disputed questions which were decided at the gathering of the YSL's highest governing body. Seven thick issues of the "Young Socialist Review"; the League's discussion and information bulletin, had been issued in the three months preceding the convention. These bulletins had contained pro and con articles on most of the issues before the League. In addition, a minority grouping had published a number of issues of its own organ, the "Left Wing Bulletin," presenting its views.

Prior to the election of delegates, the various Units of the YSL held pre-convention discussions in which all views were presented. And at the convention itself there took place the fullest and most democratic debate and exchange of opinion. Thus from every standpoint the convention was the most democratic gathering possible. The decisions taken at it represented the views of the majority of the organization, views arrived at after reflection and after hearing all sides.

TOWARD NEW MOVEMENT

Major interest at the convention, as in the pre-convention discussion period, focussed on the question of socialist regroupment and socialist unity. In this discussion there had been counterposed two views:

—That of the YSL National Action Committee majority which called for the creation of a broad Debsian-type party of democratic socialism, and which favored unity between the Independent Socialist League and the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation, with the YSL participating in the youth affiliate of such a merged organization, as an important step towards a new movement.

—That of a minority which opposed the perspective of the NAC and stood for a socialist regroupment on the basis of agreement by the various groups on a basic political program, with emphasis on youth regroupment of all tendencies within the framework of an "independent" YSL.

The resolution presented to the convention by the National Action Committee was adopted by an overwhelming majority of the delegates. The policies proposed in it are now the policies of the Young Socialist League.

The crisis in world Stalinism is the obvious impetus to the entire discussion that is sweeping the radical movement on the possibilities of socialist regroupment. This is so because for many years the Com-

munist Party dominated the "radical scene" in America, that is, won the support of most of those breaking with capitalist ideology, on the basis of its pretense to representing socialism. Now with the total and utter collapse and discreditment of the American CP, a vacuum exists which will be filled by one sort of regroupment or another.

But the Stalinist crisis is only one of the factors which makes regroupment possible and desirable today. The labor movement is in a paradoxical position: on the one hand it is the mightiest organized working class the world has ever known and yet it is still committed politically to the Democratic Party, that infamous coalition of liberals and Southern reactionaries. As the resolution states, "Thus, for American socialists, the fight for a labor party takes on a central and decisive significance."

Yet today we are still a way off from the formation of a labor party. The question is: what can we do today to facilitate that formation and to revitalize the socialist movement so that when the Labor Party is formed, socialists will be capable of playing a significant and important role in the working class.

FOR UNITY

The convention declared that a new socialist movement can be forged by the creation of a broad, "Debsian" Socialist party. It stated that democratic socialists of various tendencies can be united behind their commitment to socialism, their opposition to Stalinism, and their support of democratic struggles throughout the world.

The YSL looks toward unity between itself and the Young Peoples' Socialist League in connection with unity between the Independent Socialist League and the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation as the first step in the direction of building the new socialist movement.

There are many reasons why the SP-SDF can act as the framework within which the future unified movement can be built: it is generally regarded and identified as the party of socialism in the United States, the party of Debs; it is not tainted by any ties, past or present, to Stalinism; it has contained and contains pacifists, Marxists, non-Marxists, etc.

However, it must be emphasized that this unity was not envisioned by the YSL as merely the merging of two or four of the existing socialist sects. This is the first step in "seeking to establish an organizational focus of democratic socialist unity," for the creation of a broad socialist movement. If unity of these adult socialist groups can be achieved,

the YSL would be proud to participate in the formation of its youth affiliate. The youth organization should have, it was felt, the traditional autonomy of youth groups; democracy should govern all relationships between the youth and adult organizations.

The resolution ends with a beginning: "We look toward a new beginning. We have no illusions that a great, mass socialist movement will suddenly spring into existence. Yet, we see possibilities, an opening in American society brought about by a range of specific events; we call for a turn of the American socialist movement, away from its isolation, toward the American working class and the job of building a labor party."

MINORITY VIEW GIVEN

The minority resolution on socialist regroupment presented to the convention was overwhelmingly defeated. This resolution called for a socialist regroupment only on the basis of agreement by the various groups on a basic political program. It went on to maintain that the process of achieving this end could best be served through the American Forum—for Socialist Education.

On the youth field, the minority resolution proposed that the YSL become the center of unification of all radical youth, since it possesses all the characteristics that a united socialist youth organization should have, i.e. broadness, independence, socialist politics. Such a youth organization would guarantee members of all adult socialist groups "full equality and full freedom of internal and external political expression." This new YSL would be independent in every way of all adult socialist tendencies.

The overwhelming majority of the Convention agreed with the criticisms of this position put forth by the National Action Committee. The minority proposal, it was pointed out, limited itself to a perspective of continued isolation and developed no way to reach a broad youth audience with the message of socialism. In this regard, it was argued that the minority resolution put forward a course of action which could only appeal to a small number of young people who were already socialists. In addition, it would permit those adult tendencies whose view of regroupment was that of a "raiding operation" to make the YSL the center of such raiding and splitting efforts.

OTHER ISSUES

Other resolutions implementing the position adopted by the delegates on socialist regroupment came before the convention and these were also accepted. Among them was one dealing with the view of the YSL in regard to the "regroupment" efforts of the Socialist Workers Party. This resolution stated that the SWP's conception of "regroupment" consisted of a series of raids and splits in other organizations, including the YSL, and that because of this members of the SWP would no longer be accepted for membership in the YSL and no member of the YSL could join the SWP.

Murray Weiss of the SWP, who was present through most of the convention, was granted the floor to comment on a statement he had made several years ago calling for the smashing of the YSL. He once again reiterated the SWP's hostility to the YSL, and left in force his previous statement that "our only interest is how to smash" the League.

The other major political question dealt with at the convention was an international one, the crisis in world Stalinism. The resolution presented to the

convention by the YSL NAC was adopted by the delegates.

It sustained and deepened the YSL's analysis of Stalinism and particularly of Stalinism in Eastern Europe. It gave full and complete support to the fight of the Hungarian people for freedom; it concretized the analysis of the class struggle under Stalinism, the inability of the West to make any democratic response to the crisis, the intertwining of the national and social revolution under Stalinism, the limitation of "reform" by the Stalinist ruling class; and finally it hammered home our most deeply held conviction, that socialism and democracy are inseparable, that without the one there can never be the other.

A minority view on this question was rejected by the convention. Supporters of the majority characterized this view as being vague and lacking an adequate appreciation of the importance of democracy in the anti-Stalinist revolution and as the road to socialism. Supporters of the minority view contended that it stood for "workers democracy" as opposed to the "general democracy" they saw advocated in the majority position.

CAMPUS PROBLEMS

In addition to the political discussion, the convention concerned itself in great detail with the campus perspectives and organizational problems of the League. These matters were dealt with under several heads: YSL orientation and campus perspectives, Unit and Organizing Committee reports, and a national report. During the discussion of these points the convention took note of the growth and increased activity of the YSL in the past period and set itself the task of intensifying this progress in the period lying ahead.

The delegates and visitors to the convention reported and listened to reports on the optimistic outlook for the organization. An examination was made of the record of the YSL in the context of the objective circumstances prevailing during the organization's three-year history.

Since its founding the YSL has showed a slow, steady growth. Although it was the major nation-wide socialist youth organization in America, if not the only one, the YSL lived its early childhood in the midst of a hostile environment. It had begun its days at the height of the McCarthy madness and the trauma this created was difficult indeed. Yet the YSL maintained itself in the face of the reactionary and trying times, maintained itself when all other youth groups were either being decimated or disappeared altogether.

Within the recent past highlighted by the Negro struggle for civil rights, the crisis in world Stalinism, and the decline of the witchhunt, our ideas have reached far out into the student and youth publics. Our support for, and activity in, the civil rights movement has been welcomed and respected. The Stalinist youth movement has absolutely collapsed under the blows of the events in Poland, the revelations at the 20th Party Congress in Russia, and the great Hungarian Revolution, so that today we can speak to ex-LYers, showing them what the genuine, democratic road to socialism consists of.

EXPECT GROWTH

The convention heard reports on the increased activity of the YSL in the past period, reflecting the above circum-

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NEW YORK

Thursday, July 18

THE REVOLT IN CUBA

Guest Speaker:

Angel Perez Vidal

Rep. of The 26 July Revolutionary Movement; Pres. of Accion Civica Cubana

A Joint YSL and ISL Forum

8:30 p.m. at L. A. Hall, 114 West 14 Street, N.Y.C.