

LABOR ACTION

JUNE 2, 1958

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BACKGROUND OF THE FRENCH CRISIS

Editorial

U.S. Foreign Policy

"PUNCH-DRUNK"

During the past month, American foreign policy has met with disaster on four continents. In France and North Africa, the fate of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and of much more than that hangs in the balance, with no foreseeable outcome favorable to the policies of Washington. The recent events in Lebanon expose again the irrelevancy of the Eisenhower Doctrine and the basic lack of an effective U.S. policy there. And Vice President Nixon's recent "good will tour" of South America, which turned into a continental Donnybrook, just about boxed the compass on American foreign policy since World War II.

Time magazine has referred to these events as "a week of challenge unmatched since the days of the Korean War"; Walter Lippmann called Nixon's trip a "diplomatic Pearl Harbor"; and one U.S. Senator has publicly admitted that "we're punch-drunk" from the blows received in such quick succession.

These are strong expressions, but not exaggerated ones. The steady deterioration of America's overseas affairs is now so pervasive that no one can pass it off as a mere failure of diplomatic techniques. It is a crisis of policy, and one that goes to the very roots of capitalist society. These are the convulsions of old relationships in disintegration, and a new world seeking to be born.

Nowhere can we see with greater clarity than in France, Algeria, Lebanon and South America that the roots of the crisis lie not in Russian maneuvers or plots, but in conditions inside the various countries and in those complicated relations which make up the capitalist world as a whole. The Russians

(Continued on page 7)

By A. GIACOMETTI

Paris, May 23

There is no way at present to predict the outcome of the current crisis in France. It is possible, however, to describe the factors which determine the present situation and which condition its further development.

Foremost among the basic elements of the situation is the economic crisis, which has never been so threatening before. For a number of reasons which we need not go into here, the French economy has been unable to support the war in Algeria without being bolstered either by foreign loans or by increases in taxation and a general lowering of the standard of living. Working-class resistance has made the latter solution impossible, and the country has lived on foreign loans. Today, the economy is bankrupt as never before, the deficit in the balance of foreign payments is huge and the first effects of the depression are being felt in several key sectors (principally aircraft and steel). Whether a new foreign loan will come through is doubtful: in any case, it will not come from the U.S. which is opposed to financing the Algerian war, and other possible creditors (Germany, for instance) are getting worried about their own economic prospects. The only remaining source of revenue involves a lowering of the standard of living of the working-class.

This brings us to the second factor:

the attitude of the working-class. What is striking in this attitude is the existence, side by side, of an almost general passivity on political issues with a considerable militancy on economic issues. A few weeks before the current crisis, a strike wave was building up: railroad workers, civil servants, office workers in the banks were striking for higher wages. The Algiers putsch, on the other hand, produced very few reactions, the only notable one being a general strike in Nantes and St. Nazaire. If the atmosphere in Renault is an indication, the workers take the putsch as a joke, being vastly amused at the disarray of Parliament. The weakness of the reaction is disquieting, but it does not come as a surprise. It is the result of the demoralization which both the CP and SP have carefully cultivated all these years.

HOME TO ROOST

For ten years, both parties have done everything in their power to demobilize the working-class. After organizing a wave of violent and disastrous strikes in the post-war period, the CP has confined its followers to petition-signing and letter-writing campaigns, and has contributed to break every progressive mass-movement, including the soldiers' demonstrations of 1955. The SP has done that and worse: under Guy Mollet, it has involved and morally compromised the French working-class in a vicious colonial war, and has helped to spread the chauvinist infection in its ranks. Now the sky is dark with chickens coming home to roost. The SP and, to a lesser extent, the CP are caught up in a wave of contempt which every French worker—justifiably—feels for Parliament. Having learned to expect nothing but the worst from their parties and from Parliament, the workers no longer feel directly threatened by a threat against the institutions of the "system." At the same time, the same workers would react drastically against all attempts to force down their already low living standard, but the two reactions are not necessarily related.

The contempt of the working-class for the parliamentary system is paralleled by the contempt of the bourgeoisie for its own institutions. It has been generally recognized for some time that the parliamentary system is incapable of solving any of the real problems before the country and that it has been replaced in practice by government through pressure groups. Nobody questions de Gaulle's attacks on this point: for some time now there have been Gaullists of the Right but also Gaullists of the Left. Now the most influential sections of the bourgeoisie have ceased to consider Parliament as a useful instrument of power. Whatever its role may have been in the past, it is certain that Parliament will not bear the stresses that will result from an attempt of the bourgeoisie to prosecute the Algerian war

(Turn to last page)

Nixon's South American Tour "A Diplomatic Pearl Harbor"

By SAM BOTTONE

It is getting so that every few months the eruption of a new major crisis in U.S. foreign policy can be confidently expected. What is different this time is that upheavals have occurred on four continents simultaneously—Europe, Asia, Africa and South America.

Of the recent events, however, the deepest and unkindest cut of all has been the riots and demonstrations which greeted Vice President Nixon on his ill-fated "good will tour" of South America. Long looked upon as the exclusive bailiwick of the "good neighbor" from the North, the increasingly hostile receptions given to Nixon, culminating in violent outbursts in Lima, Peru and Caracas, Venezuela, caught the State Department, Congress, and the American people in general by surprise.

Many have been aware for some time of the steady deterioration of the U.S. position in Latin America, but few thought it had gone so far or that it could erupt in such a violent way. Walter Lippmann called Nixon's trip a "diplomatic Pearl Harbor."

The initial reaction by Nixon and congressional circles was to place the blame on a small minority of Communists and console themselves with the thought that

basically most Latin Americans were outraged over the stonings and saliva attacks.

SHOW OF MUSCLE

Even if it were true that the demonstrators represented only a small minority, they picked up wider support when President Eisenhower sent Marines and paratroopers to the Caribbean ready to intervene in Venezuela for the protection of Nixon. Even though it was a snap decision by Eisenhower, it brought forth widespread resentment. This is the way Washington reacts to such situations, and it is of a piece with their show of muscle in the Middle East.

Two separate investigations by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have been started. One is to review the causes of the South American demonstrations, the other a world-wide review of foreign policy. There has been an "agonizing reappraisal" of the State Department's Latin American policy. With typical Congressional determination to get to the heart of the matter, the questions most agitating congressmen have been whether Nixon should have gone on the tour in view of the hostility, and whether adequate intelligence reports were received prior to his departure. While these matters are of some interest, they have all the earmarks of an investigation aimed at finding a scapegoat and rolling a few heads rather than a searching re-evaluation of policy. Perhaps it would have been better if the extent of the hostility to the U.S. were kept unknown.

These are criticisms of diplomatic techniques, not of American foreign policy. While it may be true that Communists played a leading role in organizing the students, the riots were a symptom of a deep-seated hostility to Washington's policies. To ascribe them to envy of the U.S., emotional and irrational nationalist outbursts, or even to juvenile delinquents as one congressman did, is only to prepare the ground for more tragic events in the future.

Even if only a small number actually took part, although in Caracas it ran into the thousands, there is growing recog-

(Continued on page 7)

Auto Negotiations Come to Head As UAW Girds for Long Haul

By JACK WILSON

Detroit, May 25

Three major developments took place this past week in the auto crisis which are bound to be decisive in determining the outcome of current negotiations between the United Auto Workers and General Motors, Ford and Chrysler.

(1) The Big Three car manufacturers and the UAW postponed negotiations for two days last week to appear jointly in making a plea before the National Labor Relations Board that the 93 petitions in behalf of 12,000 revolting skilled workers be denied and that the UAW retain collective bargaining rights over the entire industry. Five craft unions are fighting the UAW.

(2) At a special one day joint and then separate conference of delegates from General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, the UAW top leaders were authorized to scale down demands to a minimum package, including improvements in Supplementary Unemployment Benefits, increases in pensions, and other fringe areas. No mention of the profit sharing proposal was made in Walter Reuther's two hour speech outlining the new approach to the bargaining table as the June first expiration date approaches.

NO STRIKE NOW

(3) With only one or two dissenting votes, the special conferences of the UAW delegates voted to continue to work on the job without a contract, if necessary, after contract expiration time. Under no circumstances will the UAW be forced into a strike now, which as Reuther pointed out, would be an act of "insanity."

Rather than get taken in and trapped into a strike by following a slogan "no contract, no work," which would apply to some other situation, the UAW worked out a tactic that foils the corporations' efforts to squeeze the UAW into a position where it either simply renews the old contracts, or else is suckered into a strike.

Under the Taft-Hartley law, the UAW would still have full bargaining rights in most areas, even with the signing of new contracts, and the UAW has published a five page printed memo to its secondary leaders on how to carry out this policy.

What the companies can and may do is not put into effect a raise under the annual improvement clause of the current contracts or give the autoworkers a two cent cost of living raise under the "escalator" clause. This they are not obligated to do.

It should be noted also that at no time have the Big Three suggested that either the union shop or check-off clauses be modified or eliminated from the proposals they have made to the UAW. If they had done so, then the UAW would be in a life and death struggle from which it could not retreat even at the risk of a strike.

NARROW ISSUES

But for a strike to occur when the disagreements now are only in the area between a union minimum and a company minimum would be the height of stupidity and the UAW leaders know it, GM, for example, has already hinted it is willing to improve the SUB payments. After all, there are 154 million dollars in those funds. There are over \$750,000,000 in the pension funds whose benefits are mainly paid from the interest of this money.

Furthermore, the fear of the Big Three over jurisdictional warfare among craft unions, and thus their plea for the UAW to represent all workers in the plants indicates that they are prepared to meet demands for a pay hike for skilled workers, which everyone expects them to obtain.

Newspaper talk of a "lockout" of the UAW is pure hogwash, for this would not only put the current struggle into a different and decisive light, but also ruin all plans for the Big Three to put out 1959 models, since a lockout would tie up vital remodeling, tool, die and fixture changes.

NO BARGAINING

Events of the past week have put an end to the myth that there has been any serious bargaining going on since March 25 when talks began. Why the UAW kept the talks secret from the public remains to be answered. The delegates at the conferences were told what every follower of the bargaining talks knew. Nothing was going on but speeches. The Big Three have sat tight on their insistence of a renewal of the contracts, which would include pay raises and the escalator clause, and the union shop and check-off.

Only one of the Big Three, Chrysler, shaking from a loss of the market involved in a big management shake-up, may blunder into a position which could cause a strike, affecting the 50,000 workers left on the Chrysler pay-roll. In that case, Chrysler's future in the automotive business would be in doubt, for any further loss of the market, or a knock-down, drag-out combat with the UAW could put it on the path of Hudson and Packard.

The ruling of the NLRB before June 1st is expected to be in favor of the UAW, according to both union and industry sources. This will solve temporarily the issue of representation, but by no means ends the problem of skilled trades, for any settlement is likely to be criticized by the unionists who wanted to leave the UAW. Ample precedent exists in NLRB rulings for such a one-union representation decision, notably the National Tubing (steel) ruling in 1948, where craft unions were denied representation because of the integrated character of the industry involved.

CLASS STRUGGLE

There can be little argument over the fact that recent events have shaken up the dream world in which many UAW leaders on all levels have lived. For many of the negotiators the hard-boiled attitude of the Big Three has been a new experience. So far there has been no give-and-take which characterizes bargaining

and negotiations. The Big Three have acted as representatives of the capitalist class out to squeeze every advantage from the workers possible.

Nor has the comfortable belief that "Reuther has something up his sleeve," been sustained by events. Rather it is Reuther's new and firm warnings to the corporations, put in not too polite language, that they had better not accentuate the class struggle that has given them pause, and new offers from the Big Three are expected this week.

Walter Reuther posed for the UAW a question which will be answered by events. Is the UAW a dues-collecting agency, can it be transformed into such, or is the UAW a dynamic union? Reuther told the delegates that unless the UAW on all levels stands firm, and wins at least some of its acute minimum demands, the union will have gone the road of becoming a dues-collecting agency. The corporations' strategic aim is precisely to accomplish that goal.

The necessity of accepting a minimum package is not likely to soften the moods of either the skilled or unskilled workers. Quite the contrary. New contracts are more likely to be more in the nature of an armed truce than a basic peaceful settlement. For even improvements in all aspects of present contracts do not answer the pressing problems like unemployment, decentralization, automation, liquidation of old plants, and speed-up.

The prospects for turbulence within the frame-work of an uneasy truce are clearly indicated. These pressures suggest a new period for the UAW both internally, and in relation to social problems in general.

Washington Rally Goal of Peace Walk

Dr. Linus Pauling, outspoken scientist opposed to nuclear weapons testing, will address hundreds of demonstrators from all over the United States at a rally on Sunday, June 1, in Washington, D. C., climaxing a "Walk for Peace" to the White House, organized by a committee of leading pacifists and non-pacifists who have "appealed to men everywhere to oppose the nuclear weapons tests now going on in the Pacific and to work for the abolition of the testing, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons by all nations," the demonstrators left from areas as far away as the West Coast, Florida and New York in caravans that joined walkers from Delaware, Virginia, and Maryland at different times to walk the final distance to the capital and the White House, itself.

Along the route, the walkers are holding meetings, distributing literature and urging people to join them in working for the "survival of mankind." Asking people to sign petitions to Eisenhower and Khrushchev, "urging unconditional ending of manufacture and testing of nuclear weapons," the walkers have sent deputations to the Atomic Energy Commission, the Soviet, British and French Embassies, as well as to the White House making it clear they were for banning of all tests. Slogans such as "Peace in the World or a World in Pieces" were carried as part of the demonstration.

In the leaflet which called the Walk for Peace, the Committee said, "We will join with the crew of the *Golden Rule* and with the growing groundswell of world opinion in urging nations to take this vital first action toward universal disarmament."

The five Americans who as part of this general effort went to Finland in order to get visas that would permit them inside Moscow for the purpose of urging the Russian leaders to unconditionally cease testing of nuclear weapons have returned to America—mission unaccomplished.

It seems that the Russian leaders, who never hesitate in making grandiose statements about wanting peace, couldn't even face a delegation of American pacifists, who, by the way, have been very active in their own country protesting nuclear tests. Moscow refused to issue visas to the members of the delegation even after the Soviet Embassy in America assured them that it would be done. Could it be possible that the masters of the Kremlin don't always mean what they say?

ISL FUND DRIVE

Fund Drive Ends Near Top

The 1958 fund drive of the Independent Socialist League ended officially on May 15. After a very slow beginning, contributions began to come in at a respectable rate in the last 6 weeks so that \$8150 has been received thus far. Since the last report in the May 5 issue of LABOR ACTION \$3250 has come in, and we are confident that in the coming week many of the branches which are below their quota will reach the 100 per cent mark.

Some of our worst fears of the effect of the worsening recession have happily not come true. In particular we have been encouraged by the response of our Detroit comrades who went slightly over their quota.

Five areas—Seattle, the Bay Area (San Francisco-Berkeley), Detroit, Pittsburgh and Cleveland—have reached or exceeded their quotas. New York and Chicago are in easy distance of theirs. And we have been assured that there are solid pledges in these two branches so that the remainder of their fund drive will be completed in the next few weeks. It is expected that this is true for some of the other areas too.

Although there is still a way to go, we have been encouraged by the response from many of our friends and comrades who have once again joined with us in the task of carrying forth the message and program of democratic socialism. Many have made substantial contributions which represented real sacrifices on their part.

FUND DRIVE BOX SCORE

	Quota	Paid	%
Seattle	150	\$216	144
Bay Area	\$ 500	600	120
Detroit	450	455	100
Pittsburgh	175	175	100
Cleveland	150	150	100
New York	3800	3315	87
National Office	1150	959	85
Chicago	2000	1683	84
Los Angeles	650	356	55
Newark	450	154	34
Philadelphia	200	57	28
Buffalo	150	30	20
Oregon	50	0	0
Reading	50	0	0
Streator	25	0	0
Mass.	25	0	0
St. Louis	25	0	0
TOTAL	\$10,000	\$8150	82

But just as encouraging and heart-warming have been the many one and two dollar contributions from friends and sympathizers. These have usually been accompanied by an apologetic note regretting the fact that they are unable to send more, or a promise to send another couple of dollars soon. And these have served as a kind of moral backbone.

Finally we want to restate our determination to carry on the struggle to build a broadly-based democratic socialist movement in the United States. These last years have not been easy, as the tide of events polarized many socialists to support of either Washington or Moscow. Now these rigid alignments have been eroding and crumbling, and once again an independent socialist policy appears more viable to many radicals.

Once again we would like to urge our friends and comrades to fulfill their pledges if they have not done so.

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A Study of "Democracy" in the Cold War Deep-Freeze

The Elections in Rhee's South Korea

By JOHN HONG KEE

The elections to the National Assembly of South Korea were held on May 2nd. Syngman Rhee's Liberal Party won a 122 majority of the 226 contested seats. This victory fell short of the two thirds majority needed by the Liberals to block accession of the opposition vice president to the presidency in the event of Dr. Rhee's death. Both *Time Magazine* and the *New York Times* were cheered by this show of opposition to the not so liberal Korean Liberal Party. According to *Time* (May 12), despite "minor rural attempts at voter intimidation . . . freedom of franchise was registered. . . . It was clear that a two-party system was beginning to take hold. . . . Police harassment of anti-government politicians has slackened steadily."

The American press despite its occasional gagging at some of the gnats of the roughshod ways of Syngman Rhee always manages to swallow whole the camel of the South Korean regime and smile pleasantly and remark that things are getting better and better in Korea. The election itself and the political atmosphere in Seoul for the last several months, gives indications that not only do certain American editors have unusually strong stomachs but that they have a poor sense of smell when it comes to unpleasant facts regarding the "showcase of democracy in the Far East."

FRAMEUP AND TERROR

to take hold." This was facilitated by smashing and suppressing Korea's third party, the social democratic Progressive Party. Cho Bong Ahm and the rest of the leaders of the PP are in prison awaiting trial. Professor Yu Byong Muk and Kim Sung Soo have been temporarily released from prison pending appeal of their case to a higher court. Police intimidation and persecution of members of the PP continues unabated.

Nor is all sweetness and light in right wing opposition circles. One might take note in this respect of a report in *Time* (Dec. 30, 1957):

"But after two attempts on his life, Vice President John M. Chang has stayed home under heavy personal guard, consulting with his party's members behind barricaded walls."

Of course, *Time* might be excused for overlooking police persecution of Korea's socialists in their report that "police harassment of anti-government politicians has slackened steadily." But the fact remains that the opposition Democrat leader, John Chang (Chang Myun) still lives in guarded seclusion only too aware of police involvement in the two attempts on his life. The tearoom odds in Seoul are running 2 to 1 that Rhee's gunmen will not fail on their third try.

ELECTION RESULTS

The election returns underline the mechanics of power in this underdeveloped nation of Asia. As a result of the centralized police control over the rural areas and the confinement of the organized opposition to the large cities and towns a political deadlock has resulted. In the villages of the peasantry the Rhee candidates were swept into office by substantial majorities. In Seoul district not a single one of the sixteen representatives elected was a Rhee man.

The explanation? The temper of the city masses burns at a white heat. It was only two years ago when the funeral procession of the old nationalist warrior, Shinicky, turned into an enraged mob of ten thousand who stormed a police barricade shouting "Down with the Rhee Dictatorship!"

The police discovered in that hour of spontaneous mass fury that the citizens of Seoul, even without political organization were in no mood to be trifled with. Dr. Rhee and his police were rather badly shaken up on that day. In July of that same year (1956) when some seventy six legislators walked out of the National Assembly in protest of police interference in rural elections an armed cordon was thrown around the center of Seoul and army units were alerted out of fear that the masses would march into the streets in support of the opposition. Dr. Rhee

in consideration of the mood of his "beloved people" had one-way vision bullet proof glass installed in his limousine.

Police interference at the polling booths in Seoul would have only one result—mob violence. In the cities Rhee is forced to rely on police frameups of the socialists and terrorist attacks on the conservative opposition.

In the villages outside the urban areas the situation is different. Not that the peasantry is behind Rhee; quite the contrary. But the peasant cannot assemble ten thousand strong as can the people of Seoul and Pusan. Traffic on the roads, communication with the cities, is in the hands of the National Police. Even leading spokesmen of the Democrats have difficulty in penetrating into many regions during political campaigns.

In the traditionally rebellious southern provinces, where the opposition parties do manage to elect candidates, the ever-present police stations resemble small forts complete with walls with slits for rifles and machine guns. But for the most part, police power is dominant over the isolated village. In the past a spot check of voting booths on election day

by U.N. observers was powerless to prevent the year-long police intimidation that reduced the peasantry to docile voters for the Liberal Party.

From behind the walls of his armed refuge Vice President John Chang (whom the *New York Times* cites as "a man of integrity") has declared that the May 2nd elections were not fair that in the rural areas there was violence and interference in the voting. (Chang's cry of "Foul!" appeared on a different page of the *Times* than that of the editorial salute to democracy in Korea.)

THE IMPASSE

Thus the impasse of Korean democracy. As long as the centralized police network is controlled by the corrupt maggot horde of police officials, money lenders and speculators the *New York Times* can point to the victories of the opposition candidates in the cities and the victory of the Liberal Party in the rural area (the decisive area) and say contentedly "There will continue to be a majority opposition, and there will continue to be an effective opposition . . . the basis of the ballot is sound, as it should be. This is a government by consent of the governed."

In the meantime the economic problems of Korea will not be solved. The country's resources will be diverted into maintaining its huge army for the "march to the Yalu" that Rhee continues to croak about while malnutrition, disease and moral and social corruption rots

away the strength and hope of the exhausted people of Korea.

The solution that might suggest itself to many a Korean is: "Let us, the people of Seoul, Pusan and Taegu, seize power in the cities, and smash the nerve centers of Rhee's National Police!" But, to underline the obvious, Korean national politics does not occur in a vacuum. The Communist power in the North remains eager as always to introduce its own form of "liberation." And during the Kyung Mu Dai Riot of 1956 it was noted that units of the American army in Seoul and the nearby vicinity were placed on a twenty-four hour alert. What could their purpose have been?

WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE

Moreover the U. N. has given its stamp of approval to the "democratic" nature of the Rhee regime. The status quo in Korea is upheld not only through police persecution of Korean socialists but by all the holy and not so holy powers that reign over our unhappy planet.

Unification of Korea? A democratic program of economic development? Free elections? "One can't rush things. Democracy is a slow, difficult thing to achieve," an American U.S.I.S. official in Seoul once told an audience of Korean intellectuals.

Another ten years of the present rate of progress in South Korea and the years of imperialist enslavement under the Japanese may begin to appear as some happy dream of a golden age.

DISCUSSION ARTICLE

Wladyslaw Gomulka and Syngman Rhee

Does Their Rule Represent the Practical Limits of Democracy?

By GORDON HASKELL

Is the situation of the people of South Korea hopeless? That appears to be the conclusion reached by John Hong Kee in the last paragraph of his article in this issue of *LABOR ACTION*. And it brings to mind a letter by comrade A. Rudzienski (*LABOR ACTION*, April 7), in which he wrote: "The Polish masses . . . understand that in the present world situation they cannot win a more democratic regime than that presided over by Gomulka."

Warsaw is a long way from Seoul, and not only geographically. Wladyslaw Gomulka and Syngman Rhee are men of utterly different types who lead regimes of different social systems, dominated by different classes. And yet there is a striking similarity in the political approach by which John Hong Kee and A. Rudzienski reach similar conclusions about the prospects which lie before the peoples of South Korea and Poland.

In both cases, the authors emphasize the lack of democracy, or the very limited character of democracy in the respective countries. In both cases, the primary difficulty which confronts any mass struggle for democracy is not so much the power of the government to suppress it as the fact that the strategic-political position of the country makes it a key area in the world-wide struggle of the cold war. In South Korea, a mass struggle for democracy initiated by the urban masses against Rhee's terror-machine could result in intervention by the Stalinists and/or the Americans. In Poland, a struggle to replace the Gomulka regime by a democratic one could result in Russian military intervention, and a "Kadarization" of Poland.

That is all too true, and it makes a successful struggle for democracy and socialism very difficult and fraught with enormous dangers. It may turn out that neither the Polish nor the Korean peoples will be able to achieve democracy by their own unaided effort, as it were, and that they will win democracy only as part of a much broader struggle including the peoples of other nations, more fortunately situated than they are. But are they precluded, by their peculiar problems, from making an enormous con-

tribution to that broader struggle, and even from leading it, or inspiring it?

John Hong Kee writes that if things continue to drift in South Korea on their present course, they may get so bad that the days of Japanese colonialism will be remembered as a golden age of the country. Even allowing for poetic license, is it not likely that such a development would in the long run lead to the Stalinization of South Korea? It would appear that the Progressive Party leaders, whose courageous struggle is praised so strongly by Kee, are of this opinion. Thus they persist in their political efforts, despite imprisonment and persecution. And no matter how tough Rhee's regime may be, anyone who has pondered the history of authoritarian regimes knows that their cause is far from hopeless.

NOT HOPELESS

But in the event of a mass political revolt against Rhee's authoritarianism, is it not possible that the Stalinists would intervene from North Korea, and the American armed forces from South Korea? Of course it is possible; but it is far from certain. It all depends on the way in which the struggle develops, on the situation in which the Stalinists and capitalist powers find themselves at the time, and other factors. These are grave dangers. They might prove fatal to an attempt to establish democracy in South Korea. But the fact that they exist is not and cannot be an argument against a consistent, stubborn effort to win the people to a struggle for freedom, and to lead such a struggle once it has wide popular support.

In the case of Poland, with its vastly different development, the problem is nevertheless similar. While comrade Rud-

zienski seems to be arguing against a mass struggle for democracy in Poland he nevertheless has nothing but enthusiasm and praise for every actual manifestation of the struggle for democracy there. The reasoning here appears to be: it is all right to resist every effort to "re-Stalinize" Poland, because this can be done within the confines of "Gomulkaism." But it is wrong to seek to fight for an extension of democracy, for this could only be achieved against the Gomulka regime. Since a more democratic regime cannot be won in Poland today (because of the Russians), such a struggle is mistaken, and even irresponsible.

Actually, Comrade Rudzienski does not put it that way. His emphasis is rather on the ability of the Gomulka regime to maintain itself in the face of Russian and Natolinist pressure, which ability he ascribes to the masses' support to Gomulka as a symbol of anti-Stalinism.

AGAINST GOMULKA

But concretely, every struggle to maintain some of the gains of October, or to win a further inch, is directed not against the Russians, but against the Gomulka government. To be sure, the Kremlin may be pressing the government very hard, but it is in the nature of the satellite system that Russian pressure has to come through the individual national regime. It is a long time since any paper in Poland was banned by a Russian decree; any factory council suppressed by a Russian directive; any Pole thrown into a Russian jail.

In all capitalist democracies there are people and movements who oppose individual measures or policies of the government, but who do not propose to change the social or political system on which it rests. In view of the position of the country, should Polish socialists and democrats confine themselves to working for democratic reforms inside the confines of Gomulkaism; should they limit themselves to opposing further encroachments on the liberties they won during October, or should their objective be, like that of socialists and democrats

(Continued on page 7)

PRO and CON: DISCUSSION

Problems of Leadership and Democracy In the Intl. Ladies Garment Workers Union

What is the reason for the "gradual drying up" of the old-type sources of leadership" in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union?

All too frequently, certain comrades delve no deeper into this question than to imply a direct connection between the acute leadership problem and the prevalence of bureaucratism in the I.L.G.W.U.

That bureaucratic practices are an important contributing factor, there is no doubt in my mind. The stifling effects of trade union bureaucracy have been adequately dealt with in these pages, and so do not require extended comment from me. However, I believe that a thorough examination of the myriad internal difficulties facing the garment workers would reveal a somewhat more complex picture.

The I.L.G.W.U. is not the sole depository of bureaucratic practices in the AFL-CIO. And yet, an appreciable percentage of the garment workers' personnel difficulties are most peculiar to this union and to other related apparel unions. I refer to the problem of filling many vacancies created by the death or retirement of officials and staff workers of such old organizations as the I.L.G.W.U., Amalgamated Clothing Workers, etc.

Any serious discussion of these union's leadership sources must concern itself with the unique industrial conditions and rank and file history of the needle trades. A few examples should suffice to reveal the glaring inadequacy of any analysis of the I.L.G.W.U.'s leadership troubles that simply contents itself with pointing a lone, accusing finger at the old (easily recognized) demon—bureaucracy.

First, the I.L.G.W.U. now has a rank and file overwhelmingly composed (85%) of female workers, predominantly wives and mothers. These women, in many instances, are the only family breadwinners—most particularly in such long depressed economic areas as the Pennsylvania coal fields, a comparatively recent region of expansion and development for the garment industry. Hard pressed also are the Puerto Rican mothers working in New York garment shops—many burdened with sizeable families.

REASONS

The reasons why the old-time Jewish and Italian (socialist-oriented) workers are no longer prevalent in the I.L.G.W.U. are manifold. So, too, are the explanations for the failure of their children to follow them into the shops, as was the case in previous years. However, such an analysis is beyond the limitations of this discussion article. Be that as it may, the Puerto Rican and Negro women workers make up much (probably most) of the union's New York ranks today, with the latter gradually following the same path out of the shops as their Jewish and Italian predecessors.

It should not be too difficult to make a strong case for the contention that, even with the abolition of bureaucratic practices overnight, the huge and ever increasing Puerto Rican membership would still be unable to cope with many of the minimum requirements necessary—in the most democratic unions—for the successful development of union and shop leaders.

Besides the obvious language barrier, one of the biggest stumbling blocks is the fact that most Puerto Rican workers have a very limited degree of union consciousness. This, in large part, is related to the fact that most "New York Puerto Ricans" have yet to develop a sense of "big city," urban consciousness or awareness. It has been observed for example (by people specializing in work among Puerto Ricans) that swindlers, loan sharks, rent gougers and con men of all varieties find it relatively easy to

prey upon Puerto Rican workers. This is so because the latter are essentially still rustics from the interior (of P. R.), and like their U. S. mainland country cousins, can be sold a phony bill of goods by a fast and sharp talker, especially if he speaks Spanish.

The first generation "New York Puerto Rican" is still too countrified, too much engulfed in a rural and conflicting Hispanic culture to be able to sufficiently cope with the complexities and disciplines involved in living in a large North American city.

To be sure, many (probably most) of these understandable difficulties are bound to be greatly overcome in due time, when the older generation Puerto Ricans become more socially and culturally acclimated to their new way of living. Such changes are already quite visible in the children, causing numerous clashes between older and younger generations reminiscent of those between the earlier Jewish and Italian immigrants and their offspring.

For all of the reasons given and implied—including bureaucratic ones—the I.L.G.W.U. has been forced to develop new immediate sources for the supply of staff workers the union's Training Institute being a case in point. The exact ratio between bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic urges in this direction I do not claim to know, but I trust that this article has added a little more balance to the rather incomplete picture previously drawn by many comrades.

—P. G.

REPLY

Democracy, leadership, membership and bureaucracy combine in devious ways into a complicated problem and it would be foolhardy to get trapped in a simplistic analysis. That said, we are directed to the ILGWU by Brother P. G. who properly asks that we delve deeper.

The ILG is surely among the better unions. It has a 50 year history as a leader in the labor movement; its leaders have a socialist background; some perhaps still consider themselves socialist; in general we would say they are "socially conscious." And yet, this union with all its traditions cannot replace its retiring leadership with a socially conscious new leadership drawn from the ranks. It is not a problem "peculiar" to the ILG. Not at all. What is unique is 1. we have the right to expect more from such a union and 2. the present leadership is frank to admit the problem. In my opinion, what is most significant is this: in the absence of a rich and free democratic atmosphere even such a union stifles the initiative of its membership from below. This is not altered, only made more complicated by the added fact that the causes of the decline of democracy in turn are many and varied.

Brother P. G. points up the difficulties of drawing a new leadership from among workers unacquainted with unionism and new to factory life. Doubtless, we can explain with justice that it would be easier if their background were different. But, and here is the nub of the matter, does that explain away the failure of the ILG to create an adequate cadre of new leaders from among its members? I think not.

1. It is wrong to think of these new members as one homogeneous backward mass. We are dealing with hundreds of thousands of people. Give them an even chance and they will bring forth their leaders just as every working class movement everywhere has done. But for that, they need the opportunity to listen to potential leaders, to elect those whom they think are competent and defeat those who fail. That requires an atmosphere of thoroughgoing democracy and no benevolent, well-meaning officialdom however competent can substitute for it.

2. There are thousands of new mem-

bers true. But by 1934 the ILG already had enrolled 200,000 members. Later, new tens of thousands joined too. That is almost a quarter of a century ago. The union's present leadership has had a little lifetime to produce a replacement from among these workers. By its own admission it failed. Why? Certainly not because other, newer, more backward workers came in later. What of those who were there all the time?

3. Contrast the situation in the ILG with the United Auto Workers Union. Tens of thousands of Negro workers poured into the auto plants straight off the farms; even those who came from the cities had little experience with unions. And yet in 20 years the UAW has brought forth some of the most capable Negro unionists in the United States. At its recent special convention, Negro delegates dominated the discussions on both sides of all debated questions. And, if no Negro has yet arisen to the highest offices in the UAW it is not because of backwardness, but because even in a progressive and democratic union the calculations of inner machine politics act as a limitation upon democracy.

4. One might observe that the UAW is a "new" union and the ILG is "old." But what happens when a union gets old? The leadership tends to harden into an officialdom which discourages fresh leadership from pushing up from below. It is a tendency which has deep causes; but there it is.

5. How does the ILG propose to fill the growing gap in leadership? It sets up a special school; advertises under "Help Wanted" for liberal-minded students and well-meaning middle class youth together with some workers; and seeks to train them in the craft of organizing. But the ILG is creating not a new leadership but a trained staff. To whom is this staff responsible? Who trains it and raises it into office? Obviously not the rank and file below but the old leadership above. The gap between the ranks and the staff must become greater. Leadership in minds of the present officers is distorted into an appointed and dependent staff of employees. The very means selected to solve the problem make it worse. There simply is no substitute for a free, democratic atmosphere inside the labor movement. That, by the way, is what we hope the socialist movement can help to restore.

—H. W. BENSON

"We Have Not Forgotten"

When Jan Pestr, a communist official at Brno, celebrated his fiftieth birthday on February 5, 1958, a pamphlet appeared with candid comments on his character. It is common knowledge that Pestr took an active part in the trade union movement up till the year 1953, having served as President of the Brno district trade union. At this time Vaclav Pasek, then secretary of the central council of trade unions, was also in Brno and it was his task, on the instructions of the communist party's central committee, to put things in order at Brno. His main helper in the trade union sector was Pestr, who was responsible for sending no fewer than 100 to 150 trade union officials to prison, most of them being still in jail. As a result, Pestr could no longer be kept in the trade union movement, and he was given a post in the local communist party committee. The birthday pamphlet alleged that Pestr owed his successful career chiefly to denunciations. The pamphlet concluded thus: "We have not forgotten you, and you will be properly punished sooner or later." The pamphlet was signed by the "Federation of Free Trade Unionists, Brno."

From ICFTU Spotlight

Anti-Nuclear March In San Francisco

By GEORGE R. MACKENZIE

Berkely Calif., May 6

The Northern California Committee Against Nuclear Tests has sponsored another highly successful demonstration this time in San Francisco. It exceeded in size the Easter Sunday demonstration in the East Bay, which was reported in LABOR ACTION of April 21.

On Saturday morning of May 3, demonstrators assembled for a briefing, then moved out shortly after noon and marched toward Union Square. The procession, thickly studded with placards, extended over two city blocks.

As with the Easter Sunday demonstration, the placards gave evidence of resourcefulness and much dedicated effort, ranging in mood from piety to humor. In addition to the slogans seen before, new ones included, "The Golden Rule is a matter of life or death"; "End the bomb or the bomb will end us"; "We oppose bomb-tests by ALL nations." A drawing of a dinosaur was captioned "Died 1 million years ago—too much armor, too little brains."

When the procession reached Union Square, some of the onlookers there burst into applause.

Marchers circled the Square a few times, then converged from all four corners into the center, where they lowered their placards and maintained a silent vigil for five minutes in memory of the Hiroshima bomb victims and in support of the crew of the "Golden Rule."

BEN SEAVER

After the vigil they circled Union Square a few more times, then continued toward Market Street. They traversed the busier portion of Market Street, then headed toward the Central YMCA, where the procession ended. Once inside the Y, they filed into an auditorium and were addressed briefly by Ben Seaver of the American Friends Service Committee.

Seaver attacked the concept of atomic weapons as a deterrent, stating that a deterrent by definition is a measure which will be used under certain circumstances. In effect, he said, this means the United States has declared it is willing to allow life on earth to continue, on our terms.

Like its counterpart Easter Sunday, this demonstration showed many characteristics both interesting and heartening. While the 250 who turned out for the Easter Day demonstration broke all records for this area in recent times, estimates this time ranged up to 400. Public reaction continues favorable, relative to the recent past. The overt applause registered by some onlookers was something never before encountered by this writer in a demonstration.

A snowballing process appears to operate in these campaigns, in which numerical strength and broadness of composition encourage more of the same. A magnetism is exerted which draws into participation many old faces not seen around political activities in several years.

Political newcomers frequently ask questions about democratic socialism, and those who can supply the answers do not hesitate to do so. Given the successful working together of many divergent elements, a willingness to continue activity despite government intimidation, and a general increase of interest in things political by those participating, these campaigns give promise not only of success in achieving their declared goal, but of providing a valuable opportunity for the dissemination of radical ideas as well.

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Conversations in Yugoslavia

Student Life and Academic Freedom

By HAL DRAPER

We began with questions about the structure of the student organization, Yugoslav Student Union (ZSJ), which is the only student organization existing. It is the student section of the "People's Youth," which in turn is the youth section of the "Socialist Alliance"—the "broad" front which is the sole electoral party running candidates, as the extension of the CP.

There is no national specially Communist youth organization — no Young Communist League. In the university, there is a cell of party members in the same way as there are party cells in the factories. A majority of the Executive Committee of the Student Union, they said, are Communists, i.e., party members; and at first they said that "the leadership is more or less the same," subsequently modified by the statement that at least this was so last year, but that this year the secretary of the party cell is not also secretary of the Student Union—because the present party secretary felt he could not perform both jobs.

UNIVERSITY

The university is divided into faculties (law, humanities, languages, science, etc.), and for each class per faculty there are monthly meetings; the students of the whole faculty meet together about 2-3 times a year; and once a year the whole school meets to elect the top committee. In addition there are some regional clubs (where students from the same home area can foregather) which are not important; there may also be subject clubs (e.g., Romance Languages club); and there is a "debating club"—all of these being within the Student Union, not in addition to it. The "debating club," as far as I could gather, is a discussion club, and it is definitely the only sector of the Student Union where discussion on general topics takes place. Apparently however it is frequented by a very limited type, for when it was mentioned that last year this club held a discussion on the Hungarian Revolution, it turned out that only about 10-12 were present.

Later, while chatting, they also mentioned the "contract" scholarship system. At one point they had volunteered the information that the majority of the students are from families of "officials," few from workers' families. We were surprised; can't workers' children get scholarships? Yes, but even this doesn't bring many because while it may take care of their expenses at school, the workers' families need their children to earn money and cannot afford to have them attend school even free. Besides there are relatively few scholarships of the type we know.

The usual scholarship, they explained, came from "contractors" and worked like this: some institution, whether a government bureau or a private law office or other, would select a student and pay him a subsidy to carry on his studies on the condition that when he graduates, he goes to work for them. The reason is the small number of professionally trained people and the great need for them; hence this system. About 70 per cent of the law students, for example, are thus contracted out in advance for a future employer. (We thought of what a remarkable force for political conformism this system of indentured servitude was for intellectuals. The students already have their employers' brand on them, in advance.)

POLITICS

Was there a right to express different points of view in the Student Union? Ernest said, "Yes." Was there a right to advocate ideas different from the organization's? After very much hedging,

The following is a write-up of a talk between two American socialists and two students from the law faculty at the University of Ljubljana held in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia this spring. Arrangements for the discussion were made through the Yugoslav government Information Office. One of the students, Ernest, was a party member; the other, Lado, was not. We believe readers of Challenge will be interested in the picture this discussion gives of student life and political concepts among young people in Yugoslavia. Comrade Draper emphasizes in the write-up of his talks that these students while trying to hew as close to the official line as possible, when presented with a thought or argument stopped and really reflected on it rather than giving an automatic hack reply.—ED.

he finally committed himself to a "yes."

Is there a right, for example, to advocate (just advocate) that the government permit more than one party? He balked: that would open up the danger of a two-party system and we Yugoslavs don't think that's good.

I explained that I was inquiring at the moment not about what "we Yugoslavs" think, but about the right of some misguided individual to think differently; maybe even to form an independent club of people who had unpopular opinions. While they listened with great interest, I explained something of the fight for academic freedom in the U.S. and the kind of arguments traditionally used against it by reactionaries (implying, but not stating, the similarity between these and the Tito-Stalinist arguments against the right to dissent).

Lado, the non-party member, asked what happened in the U.S. if the authorities did not permit us to form a club on campus. I explained that indeed in the 30's there were cases of expulsions which occasioned very militant student battles, but that anyway we could always carry on our clubs and organizations off-campus. They seemed quite struck by the notion.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The we came back to the problem: Why couldn't dissident students here have the right to form a club to discuss their ideas? It took some effort to keep this question before them so that they had to bite into it, but it could be done. Ernest finally opined that a student would be able to express a viewpoint theoretically favoring the right to a second party—for example, in a discussion in the debating club; but if a few more students began to do so too, it would be considered that the business was getting too "dangerous" and a stop would be put to it.—Then, I inquired, you have the right to express your opinion but not the right to convince anyone?—Well, said Ernest, we have to avoid the danger of two parties.

Somewhere in the discussion, on the right to form a new party, Lado qualified his no with "Not now." I picked it up: when? At this point Ernest directed a short remark in Yugoslav to his friend Lado, who thereupon looked like the boy who has just dropped the best chinaware,

and at once informed me that I had misunderstood him: he had not meant to imply that a two-party system would be acceptable ever. From this point on, Lado spoke much less often and when he did, could not resist casting sidelong glances at Ernest to see how he was taking it. If I had seen this bit of theater in an anti-Communist film, I would have thought that the director was impossibly heavy-handed.

TWO CANDIDATES

At another point, Ernest launched the claim: It's not so that we have a one-party system; the truth is that we have no parties really; the Communist League is not a party, being just an "ideological group"; and the Socialist Alliance (which runs the candidates) is really just The People. Not long after this, I came back to Lado's slip about "not now." He explained again that I had misunderstood this reference to the future; what he had had in mind in saying it, he said, was the fact that in the future all parties would disappear. I reminded him that Ernest had claimed previously that this situation exists right now. At this point Ernest made a remark in Yugoslav to his friend: his tone, look, and gesture made me willing to give odds that what he said was: "Well, it looks as if he has us there..."

Later, Ernest mentioned that there might be two rival candidates in a cer-

tain election. (There had been 6 such cases in the national election just held, on a purely personal basis.) I asked: Does this also raise the specter of a second party? If the mere existence of dissident students raised such a danger that they had to be suppressed, how could it be that the danger was not raised by actual dual candidacies in actual elections?

They seemed more embarrassed by the logic of the question than I had expected. Ernest doggedly said: Well, there just has to be a right to have two candidates sometimes.

—But it does raise the danger of a second party?

—Well, it has to be that way.

—Then why can't we let students just have the right to advocate that the government change its attitude...?

—Well, that would raise the danger of a second party, so it couldn't be allowed..

But their heart wasn't in it, and we let it lie.

There was that debating club meeting on the Hungarian Revolution. It had taken place after Tito's speech in Pula, where he had laid down the line, including support of Kadar.

Had anyone at the club meeting discussed Tito's speech?

—Well, it was mentioned.

—What had the students present thought of the Kadar government?

—Most were for.

—How about the others—did anyone say he thought Yugoslavia should not support Kadar?

—Well, you understand many thought Kadar could do some good things...

But I did not get an answer.

New York Student SANE Group Stages Successful Institute

Columbia University was recently the scene for the New York Student city-wide Institute—"Youth Faces the Nuclear Age." Drawing over a hundred students from City College, Queens, Brooklyn, NYU, Hunter, the New School, Columbia, and a number of city high schools, the NY Students Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy made it possible for young people to meet together and discuss the basic world problems.

Following the keynote address by Robert Gilmore, Chairman of the New York Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, a long and lively discussion took place. Realizing at the outset of his talk that the audience was almost 100 per cent for the cessation of nuclear tests, Gilmore stressed the fact that the tensions of the world, which are causing a constant swing towards World War II, may be manifested in the nuclear arms race, but are much more fundamental. He pointed out that not only are the big powers not sincere in efforts to establish peace, but that by the very nature of their societies and leaders, it is almost impossible to get to the root of the world's problems and solve them. He urged, however, that those who want to work toward the solutions have the responsibility to act, for if they don't act, they are "dead."

THE ISSUES

Initiating the afternoon sessions with a discussion of "What are the Issues," Trevor Thomas, Executive Secretary of the National Sane Committee, gave some dramatic examples of the manner in which the U.S. government has managed to confuse the issue of testing and espe-

cially the distortions for which the AEC is largely responsible.

Following this "eye-opener," the conference was divided into five panels—International Relations with a subdivision of political and economic sections, Science, and two education panels. Assigned to the panels were various resource people or "experts" in specific fields including faculty members from colleges around the New York City area. The discussion leaders and reporters were mainly students.

Both the Political and Economic sections of International Relations panels dwelt for some time on the relationship of the American arms race to its internal economic problems. Many felt that one of the major reasons for U.S. emphasis on production of both nuclear and conventional weapons was due to the country's uneasy economic situation, in light of the present recession. The Economic panel questioned whether an economy that depended on heavy weapons production for its stability was a healthy economy and it was suggested that some serious investigation should take place concerning new methods for reaching such stability.

To the extent that the Institute provided a forum where youth could dig deep into the basic problems facing the world, it was clearly successful. Evident in all the discussions was the fact that the movement against nuclear testing has stimulated serious thought on fundamental issues. Furthermore it indicated the beginning of a reawakening on the campus. So that even if cessations of tests should become a reality, students may well not be satisfied with victory on this issue alone—they want to explore, discuss and act on solutions that will achieve a concrete and lasting peace.

The Threat of Government Regulation Spurs The Fight For Union Democracy

By H. W. BENSON

When the McClellan Committee, in gingerly style, turned away from investigating crooks to poke into the Kohler strike, it met with a chilly reception. Labor leaders would cooperate in the exposure of racketeers but bridled at the attempt to smear normal union activity. Now, the Battle of Committees is reaching a new stage: the danger is government control over unions; but the issue is becoming union democracy. An explosive combination.

Quickly, before the McClellan Committee began, the United Auto Workers had hastened to call for an impartial and fair Congressional investigation of improper activities by unions and management; it was eager to be willing and not reluctant. But when the Committee momentarily tired of hunting grafters and its fanatical right-wing sought to get at the "subversive" UAW, the union's newspaper editorialized in December: "To big business, the real enemy is not the corrupt union leader but the honest one. And because the UAW's prestige is all the greater in contrast to those exposed by McClellan's probe, big business is taking the offensive. . . . Like Senator Goldwater, big business greatly prefers the Hoffas and the Beckes." It was an early warning from labor that the Committee stick to its business of racketeering.

Things came to a head at the end of March when the Committee issued an interim first year's report. Without spelling out specific measures, it recommended legislation to regulate welfare funds and regular union funds and proposed laws presumably to guarantee democracy in unions. Later, in his own name, Senator McClellan worked up an omnibus bill to regulate union affairs. It would impose no less than 45 different rules for unions, including 19 by-laws prescribed for locals; 21 rules for International by-laws; and 5 general prescriptions to limit the authority and actions of International officers. (In another connection, Senator Knowland waved the anomalous banner of union democracy to induce the Senate to vote for his measures to control unions. Thus far, without success.)

Labor Leaders Attack

The demeanor of labor officials changed instantaneously. In late March, George Meany told the Senate Labor Subcommittee (the Kennedy Committee) that he categorically opposed laws regulating union internal life. On April 20, Al Hayes denounced the McClellan Committee report in unrestrained terms; "A handful of sins and sinners is magnified to paint a picture of a corrupt and graft-ridden labor movement while the mountainous effort of labor to clean its own house is reduced to a molehill of importance. The distortion is deliberate. And my statement is deliberate."

A month later, James Carey carried forward the slashing attack, this time against McClellan's personal proposals. These laws, said Carey, "would be a major move in the direction of fascist-type and soviet-type unionism." On May 13, at the convention of the Textile Workers Union, President William Pollack called upon the McClellan Committee to "pack up its prejudices and go home." He accused it of helping labor's enemies as the "spearhead of a campaign by reactionaries to shackle labor with new laws."

On May 14, Louis Hollander told the convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union that Congress should be investigated by a citizens committee appointed by President Eisenhower and that Congress should adopt a code of ethical practices to govern its own members. It came as part of a milder but unmistakable attack on the McClellan Committee. In a resolution, the union accused the Committee of allowing itself to be used as a "sounding board for anti-labor propagandists."

What Will Labor Movement Do?

McClellan and Knowland, Democrat and Republican, never friends of labor, campaign alike for government controls over unions in the name of democracy for the rank and file. We take for granted that their concern for the ranks is hypocritical; we know that their objective is to curtail the power of organized labor. All that is true. But they are able to seize upon a real weakness in the labor movement and they will win sympathy for their objectives among those who are sincerely disturbed over the lack of democracy in whole sections of the labor movement. At one time, the spotlight was on racketeering in labor. It was impossible for serious unionists to take refuge in mere vituperation. Labor had to make the record clear and press forward its own campaign against rackets. And now, if democracy in unions is called into question, it is not enough merely to denounce the motives of those who raise the issue, even when their own record on labor deserves rebuke. The question is posed insistently: what does the labor movement propose to do not only about racketeering, but this time about democracy as well?

Second thought are already in order.

On May 21, the Communications Workers of America

invited all seven members of the Senate Labor Subcommittee to attend its convention in Miami, June 9-12. In announcing the invitation, Joseph Bierne, president, said "The attention of the public and the Congress has been focused during recent months on the corruption and malpractices that have existed in a small number of unions. . . . Our members are fully assured of all their basic trade union democratic rights. Our conventions are a true reflection of the attitudes of our members and the decisions that are made represent the will of the rank and file delegates—the only kind of delegates permitted by our constitution." Obviously, the CWA feels that labor must prove its dedication to inner democracy.

In the *New Leader* on April 28, J. B. S. Hardman argues that labor, far from opposing laws suggested by the McClellan Committee to uphold union democracy, should support them. His article was excerpted with obvious approval by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in *Justice*. Hardman's career covers many decades in the socialist and labor movement; he is one of the very few American radicals—perhaps he remains a socialist—who writes in a serious way about unionism, democracy and society. Yet, he is willing to overlook the dangers of government controls over union affairs. It is hard to believe. But he and others think that it is hopeless to expect speedy self-reform from within the labor movement itself and he turns in pessimism to the government. "Some day," he writes, "unionism may be able to have its own Permanent Committee on Investigations; for the present the hand of government, if honestly applied, is needed."

Honest Government Regulation?

If honestly applied! There's the rub. What is involved is not a general principle divorced from the sordid realities of life. Even if we granted that under certain conditions, laws to regulate union democracy might be proper, that is hardly the case today. In practice, not be any historical or abstract standards, laws laws proposed in Congress are inseparably associated with the drive to curtail union political and economic rights and powers. In the concrete conditions of modern political life, it would be an act of pure abstract imagination to suppose that union democracy will be safeguarded by laws passed by Congress as we know it and enforced by any administration likely to take office.

And thus, unions face a new dilemma. If they accept laws to control their internal affairs, they lay themselves open to hamstringing regulation. But, if they flatly oppose all such legislation, their enemies will ride along on the slogan of union democracy. It was such considerations that doubtless motivated Meany in his second appearance before the Kennedy Committee on May 22. This time, he retreated from his previous position of outright hostility to all regulation and appealed for time; time, he said, to clean our own house.

What, however, does the labor movement propose to do with its time? In the campaign against racketeering, it moves slowly, but no one can criticize too harshly. It is a terrible problem; it is not easy to shuck off the accumulated crust of decades of demoralization. But there is the clear effort, the beginning of the fight. The aim of the AFL-CIO is forthright.

Union Democracy

Now, however, we are talking of democracy. The spirit of anti-democracy and high-handedness, like the toleration of corruption, arises out of decades of neglect and slow moral deterioration. It will not be changed overnight. But the labor movement can begin the change now; it can exercise its moral authority to revive, refresh, and strengthen democracy in the years to come. Unions are challenged not only by enemies but by friends, to show a new sensitivity toward democracy. Those that issue the challenge, we realize, are not all paragons of virtue but the challenge remains. How do our labor leaders react? We present as evidence two recent symptomatic incidents.

A pamphlet by Clark Kerr entitled, *Unions and Union Leaders of Their Own Choosing* was issued in December by the Fund for the Republic. Mr. Kerr is Chancellor of the University of California. What makes his little 20-page essay worth special attention is the fact that it is one of a series on labor and The Free Society presented by the Fund's Trade-Union Project. Kerr is chairman of its Committee of Consultants.

"The great current issue is the impact of the union on the freedom of the worker," writes Kerr. And he concludes that unions are not democratic enough and must be made more so. How to do it? Here, he suggests in a contradictory fashion that unions restrict themselves to a more limited function and at the same time become a "liberating force." Like Hardman, he will not rely upon the union movement itself and insists that the government must step in. "Action by the unions themselves," he writes, "would be most desirable and there has been a surprising amount of it. Experience here and abroad, however, suggests that it will not be sufficient, that behind the good intentions of most union leaders will need to stand the power of the law, as in the case of corporations in the past."

The pamphlet is reviewed at length in the AFL-CIO magazine, *Education News and Views*, by Al Hayes, chairman of the Ethical Practices Committee, a noteworthy fact. What is even more noteworthy, even startling is the fact that Hayes doesn't deign to notice what Kerr is writing about. He doesn't like the pamphlet one bit and even that cannot trap him into a discussion of the problem it raises. Hayes is especially interested in biographical detail and observes, "Mr. Kerr emerged from college in the early 1930's when labor . . . was smashing the bonds of industrial might which had held it in bounds for more than a century. . . . Labor welcomed the assistance of this addition to a handful of older liberals. And Labor is grateful to them for their emotional alliance to its cause and to the intellectual skill which they brought to it. Some few of that group are still numbered among labor's allies today. Others, like Clark Kerr, became disenchanted with organized labor when the skirmishes of the 1930's were past."

Just why have "others" become disenchanted? Are they just malcontents who hate to see labor get ahead or is it a reflection of something missing in our labor movement? For one thing, Hayes welcomes their support in retrospect but will not tolerate their criticisms today. It is, too, quite a coincidence that Kerr ceases to be "numbered among Labor's allies" just when he calls for increased union democracy. We could never learn that from a reading of Hayes review.

Will Not Face the Problem

Kerr wants government intervention. But then, so does Hardman with the sympathetic approval of the ILGWU. Granted, however, that they are both making a serious mistake in seeking Congressional action . . . do they point to a genuine problem, must the labor movement refurbish its democracy or is everything pretty much as it should be? In other words, is Kerr being condemned for seeking government action or for seeking union democracy? Hayes leaves all that in a shadowland. He just will not talk about union democracy at all.

On May 6, the UAW's International Executive Board issued a union Fair Election Code suggesting that all candidates for union office subscribe to it. We approach it with expectation. For, this is the UAW proud of its democratic traditions and the vanguard. At last, perhaps from within the labor movement will come a ringing reaffirmation of union democratic rights; the right to publish literature; the right to form caucuses; the right to a vigorous and public debate of all the issues. Something, in short, that would dramatize everything that the UAW symbolizes, implant it deep in the consciousness of active unionists so that democracy might become a respected, cherished and deep rooted permanent tradition. But, alas, we are disappointed.

A big debate is about to begin on the meaning and nature of union democracy; in Congress, in the universities, and we hope, even in the unions. But the author's of the UAW's code are too preoccupied with picayunish things. They are afraid that someone might use the UAW's democracy too robustly and they are eager to impose restraint. Candidates must "avoid any irresponsible action" and pledge, like trained Philadelphia lawyers, not to "disseminate, circulate, or otherwise place, or cause to be placed, before the membership or the public any assertion or representation which is false, deceptive, or malicious or which reflects falsely on any members character. . . . on and on, in the same involved and tedious fashion of a criminal code of restriction and limitation.

Not Enough Democracy

The trouble with our labor movement is that there is not enough healthy democracy within it, not in formal statutes but in actual practice. The best unions, are run benevolently and often efficiently by well-intentioned top officials who have at their command and disposal an appointed staff of hundreds of obedient employees; these, it is the rule, must not deviate or differ from official policy; they must be disciplined and responsible. Every little speech sounds just like every other; every union paper reads much like every other; before we turn the pages we know exactly what we will find therein. When an effort is made to publish a journal with some slight independence of mind, it founders for lack of support like *Labor's Daily* (or some years ago, *Labor and Nation*). There are few oppositions of consequence. The democratic spirit below deteriorates. The readiness of the ranks to fight within their unions for justice, decency, and for better leaders if necessary is crushed or subtly discouraged.

With this as the plight of our labor movement, the great UAW calls upon its candidates for office, vanguard of the vanguard of the vanguard, to be good boys and not to utter any naughty words at election time. This, we think, cannot last.

Everyone stands aghast at the sight of large unions corrupted and perverted by racketeers. How to encourage unionists to get rid of those who betray their trust and to build decent unions dedicated to the cause of working people? Here at once, the issue of democracy arises and it will not be downed. The labor movement is now pledged to get rid of racketeers and it has begun to do so. It has yet to make a serious pledge to revive its own inner democracy. It delays and delays; its officials refuse to see what is before their eyes. If the debate on union democracy is not seized upon to strengthen labor's democracy from within, it will be used from without against the unions.

The South American Tour — —

(Continued from page 1)

tion that the demonstrators reflected the attitude of the people. Victor Alba, writing in the *New Leader* of May 26, reports that "the majority of those who reflect public opinion in Latin America share the sentiments [of the demonstrators]—although they keep them under control—which the students in Lima and Caracas expressed openly."

"Granted that Communist hands were pulling strings that set these crowds in motion," wrote Tad Szuluc in the *N. Y. Times* of May 25, "it remains the shocking fact that the majority in them were not Communists and that a climate of unadulterated hatred must have existed to lead men, women and children to degrade themselves to the point of spitting in the faces of the vice president and his wife."

Behind these sentiments are both economic and political criticism of U. S. policies. Rather than expressions of envy or xenophobic nationalism they are based on solid grievances.

There is widespread and bitter complaint about the effects of the U. S. recession upon the Latin economies. Due to it, and the reduction of raw material purchases associated with the military stockpiling program, not only has there been a reduction of U. S. imports but the U. S. has begun to raise restrictions against copper (Chile), lead and zinc (Peru) and oil (Venezuela). In addition there has been a drastic decline in coffee prices affecting Brazil and Colombia. What makes the decline in prices and exports of such great consequence is that there is no other area of the world where the nations are so dependent on exports.

KREMLIN TRADE

In the face of the economic setback affecting the entire continent, the Kremlin has started a trade offensive. It has offered to buy Latin raw materials in return for certain types of machinery. With the decline of the U. S. market, South American countries have been tempted. One of the major purposes of the Nixon tour—which most congressmen seemed to forget in the light of its disastrous outcome—was to attempt to counter Russian economic penetration.

And one of the reasons for the hostile reception was that Nixon did not have the answers to the criticisms which were raised. The economic criticism went further than the backlash of the U. S. recession. It went to the heart of U. S. economic policy.

For the last several years, in reply to appeals for more capital with which to industrialize, the U. S. has been urging the virtues of the free economy. To the Latins this appears to be little more than hypocrisy. The U. S. maintains artificially high prices for its farm commodities at home through price supports, and

dumps its surpluses abroad. But the free market fluctuation can very nearly wreck the South American economies which are disastrously dependent on the export of one or two commodities. This is doubly hard to take since the price of manufactured goods which they have to import from the U. S. stays high.

FREE ENTERPRISE

The U. S. has also sermonized a doctrinaire insistence that Latin American nations who need more capital create the conditions which private capital would find more to its liking. It has been suggested to Brazil and Argentina that they admit American oil companies to participate in exploiting their oil fields. To the Latin Americans this has all the earmarks of a double standard; they think they have as much right to operate a mixed economy as does the U. S. or Canada.

A Brazilian editor, Herane Tavares de Sá, put it this way: "You make loans for railroads, for docks, for industry. Why can't you make a loan to our government oil company? Can't you understand we want to exploit our oil ourselves. To everybody in Brazil, it looks like oil companies are dictating your government policy." (*Times*, May 26.)

And these were the policies which Nixon was trying to explain and defend. Is it any wonder that the students were not impressed?

SUPPORT DICTATORS

Important as the reaction to the economic exploitation was, it probably would not have been enough to cause the anti-U. S. outbreaks if it were not for the friendship Washington has demonstrated to local dictators.

Victor Alba has pointed to one of the basic political problems facing almost every one of the Latin republics. "Latin America faces a number of problems which make the stabilization of democracy impossible: the problems of land, militarism and economic dependence on the U. S. Every time a government tries to solve the land problem, to keep the army out of political life or to take action harmful to certain big U. S. corporations, the military have taken power."

What Nixon tried to do is to explain that the U. S. does not necessarily favor dictators but because it does not want to interfere in the internal affairs of Latin countries, it can do nothing about it. This was essentially repeated by Dulles at his news conference of May 20.

Questions about U. S. support or friendship for dictators came up at almost every meeting and press conference Nixon held. He was asked about U. S. intervention in the overthrow of the Arbenz regime in Guatemala in 1954; about the Legion of Merit medal which former Venezuela dictator Marcos Perez Jimenez

received from Washington; and why were Perez Jimenez and his policy chief, Pedro Estrada, a man with a reputation as a torturer and inquisitor, admitted to the U. S. after the January revolution?

LEARNED LESSON

Whether Nixon was able to convince the peoples of South America of anything is unclear. But it is evident that he learned something from them. In reply to criticisms that his attempt to debate with the students of San Marcos University in Lima was beneath the dignity of his office he replied:

"There was a time . . . when a revolution in Latin America simply transferred power from one section of the elite to another. It had no mass base whatever. . . . Now you have a new group of leaders. . . . These are people coming from . . . the intelligentsia. . . . The Communists are concentrating on the universities and the labor movements. . . . We leave the field to them; or go in and debate these issues with this rising new force?"

Gomulka and Rhee — —

(Continued from page 3)

in South Korea, to seek to educate and mobilize a majority of the people to struggle for the establishment of a democratic regime?

The bitter fact is that the struggle for strictly a defense of the conquests of October, becomes of necessity a struggle against the Gomulka government. Who else can abolish those gains today? Though it could be possible at certain stages to wage the struggle against this regime in the name of its own original conquests; the more clearly the people who lead such a struggle, and the masses who engage in it understand what is really at issue, the fewer mistakes they are likely to make.

FOREIGN DANGER

In both Poland and South Korea the danger of foreign intervention no doubt weighs heavily on the minds of the common people as well as of the leaders and potential leaders of revolutionary struggle. The brutality of the Russian intervention in Hungary was designed to have exactly that effect on the peoples of Eastern Europe. In fact, it weighs so heavily that the last thing anyone need fear is that the peoples of these countries may engage in foolhardy, irresponsible, or lighthearted adventures at seizing power.

But the desire for freedom, for democracy, for self-rule continues to burn in the breasts of men to whom these attributes of civilized society are denied. And it is a peculiarity of the Stalinist system that since all phases of life are run and controlled by the government, a struggle for freedom on any level becomes a struggle against the government. Is it logical to hail and seek to support all such struggles as long as they remain partial, confined to this or that limited concrete objective, but to argue that conscious socialists and democrats must refrain from seeking to co-ordinate, generalize and transform such struggles into an assault on the regime itself, for fear of foreign suppression?

Such an argument may not be beyond the realm of logic. But rigorously pursued, it is all too likely to end up in a counsel of passivity and despair which eschews all struggles for democracy, even the partial and limited ones. For in a struggle in which the people limit themselves in advance to a defense of the very meager rights which they now have the government retains the initiative, has nothing to fear from the masses even if it represses them and is bound to win. The outcome of the "struggle" cannot be in doubt, and who would be

The purpose of Nixon's tour was to try to counter the Russian economic offensive. He tried to sell a line of negative anti-Communism, the virtues of the free market and benefits of private capital in lands struggling with the problems of economic development.

LONG LIVE FREEDOM

The only places where this type of anti-Communism went over, reports Tad Szuluc, were in "such dictatorships as the Paraguay of President Alfredo Stroessner—the man who achieved a summit of the straight-face technique when he blandly told U. S. reporters that the handful of students he had arrested for shouting 'Long Live Freedom' had proved to be communists through the very use of this phrase."

Nixon complained when he arrived back in this country that the South Americans do not understand U. S. policy. It would seem that the reason for his disastrous tour is that they understand it too well.

prepared to risk his freedom or his neck in such a hopeless enterprise?

Since both John Hong Kee and comrade A. Rudzienski are enthusiastic supporters of every actual struggle for democracy in the countries about which they write, it is clear that they do not accept the conclusion which appears to be inherent in their approach. While no one can object to sober realism in assessing all the perils and obstacles to the struggle for democracy in Poland, South Korea, or anywhere else in the world for that matter, an approach which concentrates on and is dominated by these perils can serve neither the men who risk their lives on the firing line, nor those who seek to gather aid and support for them from afar.

Historic Change Looms

While we might hesitate to draw any political conclusions from the following item which appeared in the *N. Y. Times* for March 17, we pass it along to those students of history who are capable of extruding deeper meaning from seemingly ordinary events:

"The days of the giants, when a Senator was a man with blacksmith's bellows for lungs and a bell clapper for a tongue, are long gone from Capitol Hill.

The Senate Rules Committee this week will poll the august chamber's ninety-six members on whether they want to have microphones and loudspeakers installed on the floor so that they can hear and be heard.

The poll was instigated by Senators Hubert Humphrey and Alexander Wiley, who contend that Senatorial vocal power is now so low that members can scarcely hear each other speak.

The trouble seems to be twofold. First the great orators are being superseded by rhetorical mice who read their speeches—often ghost-written—with the zest of an Elks clerk reading a treasurer's report.

Second, under the leadership of Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, a new style of address, best described as the Senatorial mumble, has come to flower.

The technique is to lower the head and address the shoelaces with the reticence of a man calling his bookmaker from a police station telephone booth.

An informal poll by this newspaper last week turned up surprising sentiment for the public address system, but the smart money boys say it will take years."

Punch-Drunk — —

(Continued from page 1)

and the Stalinists generally seek to exploit those conditions to their own advantage, but basically they exist independently of this intervention.

To recognize this does not mean to ignore the struggle between the U. S. and Russia, each with its respective allies and satellites, for hegemony and ultimate domination of the entire world. Far too often, however, the reaction in the U. S. has been as if this were the only important element involved. Hence the myopic view of these events which dominates Washington's thinking; and that of the great majority of Americans.

As catastrophe piles upon disaster, however, the impulse grows for a serious re-evaluation of the basic premises and assumptions of American foreign policy and of the image of America's role in world held by people from all sectors of the political spectrum. The tendency to sigh and shrug off these difficulties as the slings and arrows inevitably attendant on world leadership which must be born with patience and stoicism will hardly do. It will not do, above all, because it is simply another expression of an imperialist attitude which assumes America's divine destiny as world ruler.

As socialists, we would oppose American imperialism even if it were destined to dominate the world for a century. We are confirmed in our determination to oppose it by the conviction that not only is there no such prospect for this overlordship, but that the attempt to impose it will lead to untold suffering for the whole world, and above all, for the people of America. The liberals and the labor movement must start to think of a foreign policy which will work with history, with the strivings of millions for freedom, democracy, plenty and peace, and not against it.

Only when such a policy is achieved will the disasters give way to triumphs, worked for together and won together with the same peoples who are now rebelling against American overlordship.

YOU'RE INVITED

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

French Crisis Background — —

(Continued from page 1)

out of the income of the workers. The Algiers putsch and the neo-Gaullist operation are therefore not the result of an "itch for extra-constitutional violence" which is sometimes attributed to the French Right, but of the stalemate which social forces have reached within the framework of the parliamentary system.

Since the end of the war, the French bourgeoisie has been divided on almost all major issues, and has been unable to give itself a unified leadership. Even this crisis, the most dangerous of all, it has entered divided. Under the impact of the crisis, however, such a unified leadership is slowly emerging; it is not the modern, progressive, liberal group of technicians ("European" or "Mendésist") which could have saved the system by reforming it, but a different leadership, that of the vested interests and reactionary oligarchies: the spirit of Vichy under the banner of de Gaulle.

ROLE OF ARMY

A further characteristic of the crisis is the role of the army, which is now in a position to arbitrate between conflicting social forces. This situation is due in large part to the condition in which the Algerian war has been fought. From the beginning of the nationalist uprising in 1954, an increasing number of administrative functions were turned over to the military authorities: general administration, justice, health services, schools. As the war spread, and its character changed, more tasks were transferred from the civilian authorities to the Army, until the military were administering the country practically by themselves. General Massu of the paratroopers was entrusted with the administration of Algiers by Lacoste in order to break the nationalist offensive in January 1957; wherever fighting was heavy, other generals assumed comparable roles.

Thus the Army was led to assume political tasks while not receiving any real political guidance from the successive governments in Paris. But, while the state power in Paris had little or no reality, a very real power existed in Algiers: that of the "colons," of the reactionary oligarchy of landowners and capitalists led by men like Borgeaud or Alain de Sérigny, and supported by the "socialist" Lacoste. For about a hundred years, the power of the Paris government over Algiers has been more theoretical than real, and French policy in Algeria was determined by the oligarchy alone. No French governor could remain in power unless he carried out their policy. The alliance of the oligarchy with the Army in the course of the present war provided the French Right with the basis it needed for the establishment of an authoritarian regime.

We are now coming to the actual events. We have seen that the Right had come to the conclusion that the war in Algeria could not be prosecuted much longer within the framework of the parliamentary system and that its policies could only be carried out by an authoritarian government based on the Army, backed by Algiers and covered with the prestige of de Gaulle. The first stage of the operation consisted in provoking the downfall of the Gaillard government, as a penalty for preparing negotiations in Algeria. The acceptance of the Beeley-Murphy proposals for a settlement with Tunisia were interpreted—correctly—as a first step towards such negotiations. The next move was to be the formation of a government of "National Union," led by Soustelle, Bidault, Maurice Duchet and headed by de Gaulle.

THE RIGHT MOVES

By the end of the first week in May, however, it became clear that the crisis was not moving in this direction. The SP, for one, was refusing participation in any new government, thus withdrawing Lacoste from any future combination and weakening the position of the colonialist bloc. The Pflimlin combination was even more clearly oriented towards negotiations than Gaillard. At this point the Right decided that the time had come for direct action: the Algiers putsch on May 13 was supposed to reverse the trend and trigger off the forma-

tion of a "National Union" government. This move failed due to the energetic intervention of a group of liberal deputies (Edgar Faure, Mitterand, Mendès-France) who convinced a majority of the Assembly to invest the Pflimlin government in the night of May 13 to May 14. Instead of triggering off a fascist putsch, the Algiers "coup" provoked a reflex of self-defense among the parliamentarians and liberals.

It has been reported from reliable sources that while Pflimlin was fighting to constitute his government and to get it accepted by the Assembly Guy Mollet was negotiating with Bidault, Duchet and Co. on the basis of a "National Union" government and that, under the impact of the Algiers putsch and the propaganda of Mendès-France and his friends, the SP deputies supported Pflimlin in the absence of Guy Mollet and without his knowledge. As to Lacoste, his absence from Algiers and his role before the rebellion indicate at least passive complicity with the putschists.

The investiture of Pflimlin by the Assembly temporarily disoriented the putschists: "Committees of Public Safety" continued to be formed in the principal towns of Algeria, but in an atmosphere of confusion and without clear perspectives. The rebellion was floundering. A statement by Bidault, Soustelle, Duchet and Morice in support of the putsch was not enough to change matters.

VIGILANCE

The government announced its determination, in general terms, to defend republican legality and appealed to the loyalty of the Army. The trade-unions, as well as SP and CP, called for "vigilance" and asked the workers to be prepared to "defend the Republic," without specifying when and how this should be done. Small and limited protest strikes broke out in various places, local anti-fascist committees were formed, but the bulk of the working-class remained inert.

On May 15 the rebellion regained an orientation and a new impetus when de Gaulle made his first statement announcing his "readiness to take over the powers of the Republic." De Gaulle's intervention gave the rebellion a momentum which a Massu could never provide. The following day, Soustelle and the fascist leader Biaggi escaped police surveillance and arrived in Algiers, to prepare the formation of a counter-government which was formed on May 23.

On the republican side, the following events occurred: the SP entered the government; Jules Moch became Minister of the Interior and took in hand the whole police force. A "state of emergency" was voted by the Assembly for three months—the CP voting in favor—enabling the government to suspend all civil liberties and to prohibit all demonstrations. Four small fascist groups were dissolved and a number of arrests were made in fascist and military circles. Guy Mollet caused consternation on the Left by asking de Gaulle to clarify his statement, thus offering him a bridge to constitutional legality.

The working-class did not move. In Paris, the printers stopped the publication of a fascist paper; a "Committee for the Defense of the Republic" was formed, including the Radical Party, the SFIO, FO, CFTC, the PUGS, the PCI and almost all other groups of the non-Stalinist Left. Similar committees, with or without the CP, were formed in the provinces.

DE GAULLE MOVES

On May 19, de Gaulle gave his press conference, coming out clearly in favor of the army leaders in Algiers and of the putsch, rejecting Mollet's invitation to take power by constitutional means, condemning the Party system and making a bid for power on his own terms.

The CGT called for a limited strike during the press-conference, which CFTC and FO opposed and which was followed only by the Paris transport workers (subway, bus and suburban trains). No important changes have occurred since de Gaulle's interview except the formation of an Algerian counter-government. The situation remains an unstable and uneasy stalemate. The Gaullists, both in Paris and in Algiers, are putting pressure on the Pflim-

lin government to resign and to clear the way for a change of regime. The government is doing all it can to maintain the fiction that a normal and legal relationship exists between itself and the Army in Algiers, trying hard to act as though nothing of importance had happened. The SP, CP and trade-unions continue to call for "vigilance" in a general way; the working-class is motionless.

DIVISION ON RIGHT

What perspectives exist for each of the protagonists?

The neo-Gaullist camp is divided in several conflicting tendencies. There is, at first, the fascist and "Algerian" wing of the rebellion—the most vocal but not the strongest. The perspective of the Algerian "ultras" is to wage an all-out war in North Africa, if necessary involving the re-conquest of Tunisia and Morocco, the destruction of the Republic in France and its replacement by a right-wing police state which would guarantee their privileged position in Algeria. Needless to say, this perspective is an untenable one, at least in the present world situation. Whatever happens in France, one thing is certain: Algeria will be independent and the "ultras" will have to come to terms with the Algerian people. But the policy of the "ultras" nevertheless contributes to shaping the policies of the Right wing.

The perspective of the Army is different: it tends towards complete integration of Algeria into France, but on a basis of comparatively extensive concessions to the Arab population. In France, its perspective could be reconciled with that of the conservative Right, which is not eager to commit itself to an unconditional defense of the Algerian "ultras." De Gaulle himself has long been a supporter of liberal solutions to the colonial problem (a federation of autonomous republics) and a large measure of his support from the liberal Left is due to such assumptions. In recent days, the Army has gained control over the "Committees of Public Safety" in Algeria; the expulsion on May 21 of the Poujadist deputies Le Pen and Demarquet from Algeria is an indication of this development.

On the domestic level, the conservative Right wants an authoritarian regime capable of holding the working-class down. It would not have to be "classical" fascism: a few parties may be allowed to exist, including a semblance of Parliament and a domesticated rump of the SP. The CP would be outlawed and the CGT smashed. Such a regime would resemble not so much Franco's or even Salazar's as Horthy's regime of the 1930's in Hungary.

The neo-Gaullist camp has the initiative; what, then, is the perspective of the government? To last, to gain time. By holding out, it hopes to bring about the decomposition of the neo-Gaullist camp, which is incapable of solving any problem one way or the other—particularly in Algeria—if left to itself. What if the government succeeds? A return to the status quo ante is impossible, yet the forces behind the present government have no solutions to offer. The government has no long-range perspective.

CP GAIN?

Not so the Communist Party. If there is anybody in the present situation that cannot lose no matter what happens, it is the Stalinists: all they have to do is to wait to pick up the pieces. From the beginning of the crisis, the CP has discouraged mass action and has played the "republican" game in Parliament; although it is not doing anything, it is saying the right things, and on the strength of this attitude it is polarizing the support of the Left and of the working-class. The recent advances of the CGT in plant elections (particularly in the coal mines but also—relatively—in Renault) are indications of what is happening in this respect; so is the return to the fold of dissident intellectuals, such as Claude Roy.

Consequently, it is very unlikely that the leadership of the CP will attempt to mobilize the working-class for active resistance to a Gaullist putsch. First of all, it is reluctant to provoke a mass movement which will be difficult to control

once it is started; secondly, it is far from certain that the Russian government would not prefer a Gaullist government in France to any other solution: if de Gaulle came to power, it would mean in any case the collapse of NATO, of European integration and of US policy in Western Europe in general.

If it is driven underground, the CP will represent, more than ever, the only significant force opposing Right-wing reaction, and will consolidate its position in the working-class even more.

The perspective of the working-class is diametrically opposed to all preceding solutions. If the conservative Right and the CP are most likely to gain from the crisis, the working-class is most likely to lose.

WORKERS' ACTION

Yet, none of the disastrous events since 1954 would have been possible if the working-class had been present on the political scene as an independent force. The same is still true today: if the working-class intervened now, there would be neither fascist threat, nor Gaullism nor Algerian war within a few days. It is in the power of the labor movement to solve the crisis by calling a general strike on the basis of several concrete demands such as: cutting off of all supplies from the rebel government in Algiers; peace in Algeria on the basis of Algerian independence; impeachment and trial of the seditious generals, civil servants and deputies; satisfaction of the workers' economic demands. Strike committees could be formed in each enterprise that would remain in existence as long as these demands were not fulfilled. On the political level, the most likely outcome would be a government constituted by the SP and liberals, supported by the CP and controlled by the strike committees.

Unfortunately, any such perspective assumes a mobilized working-class with a high level of political militancy and consciousness. This we do not have. What we actually have, nobody knows for certain. It seems likely, however, that the working-class will not move unless directly and spectacularly provoked from the Right, and nobody can base their political strategy on the possible mistakes of the enemy.

There were three occasions for a general strike since the beginning of the crisis: immediately after the Algiers putsch, after the first statement by de Gaulle, and after his press conference. There will not be many such occasions in the future. It is possible that the government will hold on, and that the present stalemate will continue for several months, but the weakness of the working-class reaction to the events constitutes an invitation to the reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie to repeat the attempt.

Today the bourgeoisie is still divided over Algeria and foreign policy; in a few months, when the economic crisis comes to a head, these differences will appear relatively unimportant, and the bourgeoisie will establish its unity against the working-class on an authoritarian, right-wing basis. In all likelihood, the CP will have made enough gains by then to enable the bourgeoisie to fight any working-class initiative in the name of anti-Communism and—why not?—of the "defense of the Republic." In such a situation a general strike would come too late, as it would probably bring about the intervention of the Army and, as of now, the French working-class is in no condition to fight a civil war. Therefore, there is no time to lose.

NEW YORK LABOR ACTION FORUM

Friday, June 13

Democracy and Unions

Speaker: Lou Becker

Secy., Seamen's Defense Committee
Against Coast Guard Screening

LABOR ACTION HALL, 114 West 14 Street, N. Y. C.