The New
INTERNATIONAL

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL
A Marxist Review

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Vol. XVIII, No. 5 **SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER** **Whole No. 156**

NOTES OF THE MONTH:

The Eisenhower Victory

Major electoral campaigns perform two vital functions. The first, and by far the most important, is that they bring to political realization the silent and often imperceptible shifts in political sentiment which have been taking place within the various sections of society during the whole period preceding them. Elections not only register the nature and magnitude of these shifts; through them the major political parties are able to polarize the social forces which have been in motion, and to organize them into new configurations of real political power.

The second function is derivative from the first. It is the aspect of elections which Marxists have referred to when they have described them as "barometers" of social change, or more precisely, as yardsticks of changes in social and political consciousness. Although they are by no means the sole instrumentality through which the social scientist may judge and weigh the development of consciousness, in periods of relative political stability they offer them by far the most exact and extensive data on which to base an analysis.

In the recent presidential election in the United States the independent socialists were, unfortunately, in no position to participate effectively in the re-distribution of political power. At the moment, they do not pretend to play that kind of role. But the speed with which they may hope to reach a position of influence in political affairs depends to no small degree on their ability to perform their analytical function, on the accuracy and fruitfulness with which they can discern the meaning of the election as it affects the political development of the working class in general and the labor movement in particular, and on the skillfulness with which they can translate this meaning into the tools of political effectiveness: political program, political education, and political action.

It is far too soon after the event for anyone to lay claim to a full and complete understanding of all the factors which led to the tremendous electoral victory of Dwight Eisenhower in the election. Compared to what will be available in a few months, the data are far from complete, yet enough is known to serve as a basis for a preliminary estimate. It is, of course, extremely important to understand *why* a majority of the electors who cast their ballots on November 4 voted for Eisenhower. But it is equally important to understand *who* these electors were—that is, from which social classes they were drawn. For it is in the answer or answers to this question that a good deal of the social

dynamic and the longer-range consequences of the election may be discerned.

The crudest general data are these: Out of a total of almost sixty million votes cast, General Eisenhower got a few more than 33 million, while Governor Stevenson got almost 26.6 million. Eisenhower won majorities in 39 states, while Stevenson carried nine . . . all of them in the "solid South" and the "border" region. Eisenhower received 55 per cent of the popular vote to Stevenson's 45 per cent.

In this election ten and a half million more Americans voted than had ever cast their ballots before, sharply reversing the tendency of a declining vote for *both* parties which had evinced itself in the presidential elections of 1944 and 1948. The increase in the vote for 1952 over 1948 for the two major parties was a staggering 13.5 million votes. Although Eisenhower got about 9.9 million more votes than were received by Dewey in 1948, Stevenson still received almost 2.5 million more votes than were cast for Truman in the same year. The votes cast for the Democratic candidate would have insured him a smashing victory in any previous election in the nation's history. He received only 892,000 fewer votes than were cast for Roosevelt in his top year, 1936.

WHO VOTED FOR EISENHOWER, and who for Stevenson? It is on this question that much more extensive data will become available only in the future. Yet enough is known now to indicate the following conclusion, and that decisively: In their overwhelming majority the basic forces of the labor-Fair Deal coalition remained faithful to the Democratic Party. The organized workers, the Negroes, both North and South, the mass of the Jews, the vast majority of the Catholic workers, voted for Stevenson. The Democratic Party also retained the support of a considerable section of the poor farmers in the South, and of the white-collar "intellectuals" in the North.

Who voted for Eisenhower? And in answering this question it must be made clear that we are not talking about those who voted for the Republican Party, for there is an important distinction which will be gone into later. The answer is: everyone else. And although this answer may appear facetious, it is not. For the major significance of the Eisenhower vote is precisely that it represented a vast outpouring of the "unorganized" voters, which is another way of describing the sociologically amorphous mass of the citizenry which is usually politically passive and only enters the political arena when it is activated by the strong pull of one of the major classes, or when a state of social stalemate and frustration between these classes prods them into a temporary though sometimes frenzied activity.

Perhaps we can better understand who voted for Eisenhower if we first demonstrate the reasons for our contention that the basic social forces of the Fair Deal coalition remained intact for Stevenson. And we can most readily approach the problem by asking: from where other than this coalition could Stevenson have got two and a half million more votes than Truman polled in 1948?

Eisenhower received a relatively tremendous vote in the South. He won majorities in six Southern and border states, and great increases in the votes of all the rest. He gained powerfully in most rural areas, cutting into the Democratic vote not only relatively, but over large sections of the country in absolute numbers. For Stevenson to get a vote larger than Truman got in 1948 he must have not only held on

to his basic Northern and urban vote, but to have *increased* it to compensate for the loss of so much in the countryside.

Could this increase have come significantly from the *new* vote, that is, from the ten to thirteen million voters who had been passive for the past four, eight or twelve years? That is just about excluded as a major factor, except to the extent to which it applies to new strata of the working class who were activated in this campaign by the trade-union leadership. Everyone agrees that the "new" vote, the usually passive vote, was overwhelmingly for Eisenhower.

But from what other source could Stevenson's increased vote have come? From the prosperous farmers? From the old middle class of small businessmen, or the new white-collar middle class? Did the housewives leave their homes in masses to register and vote for him? Just to ask the question is to answer it.

But we need not, fortunately, rely chiefly on this kind of negative and deductive reasoning to arrive at the facts, even though it would be adequate to *indicate* what they are if no other data were at hand. To the extent that detailed information is now available it points inexorably to an *increase* of the vote of the organized working class for Stevenson in this election.

In a specialized study of seven industrial counties in Ohio and six in Michigan published in the *New York Times* for November 9 we get the following popular vote (in thousands):

OHIO	Stevenson 1952	Truman 1948
Cuyahoga (Cleveland)	323	258
Mahoning (Youngstown)	68	62
Stark (Canton)	55	48
Sumitt (Akron)	98	78
Hamilton (Cinc.)	141	135
Lucas (Toledo)	85	74
Franklin (Columbus)	87	85
MICHIGAN		
Wayne (Detroit)	616	490
Genesee (Flint)	56	45
Gent (Grd Rap'ds)	47	43
Muskegon	25	21
Saginaw	21	17
Hacomb (Mt. Cl.)	25	25

For the moment, we are not concerned with the implications of the fact that in eleven of these thirteen counties Eisenhower ran ahead of Stevenson, or even of the fact that in 1948 Dewey ran ahead of Truman only five of them. The fact we are trying to bring out at the moment is that in these thirteen counties Stevenson picked up some 266,000 *more* votes than Truman got last time. Did these come from a shifting across class lines, or from an intensification and consolidation of the conscious working-class vote?

Although the evidence is far from complete, it appears that even in cities where the Democrats as a whole lost heavily *proportionately*, the total vote for them increased, or at least, the defections were least evident in the strictly working-class districts. It was in the vast suburban areas, the habitat of the minor business executives and the white-collar aspirants to their jobs that Eisenhower made a real killing.

It has been said that the Democrats lost heavily among the Catholics, and particularly in those areas populated by people descended from na-

tions now behind the Iron Curtain. Eisenhower probably did make a dent in the traditionally Democratic "Catholic vote." But the Catholics in general must be differentiated from the Catholic workers, and particularly the organized Catholic workers. The Czech 20th Ward near Cicero, Ill., voted 64.67 per cent Democratic, and the most heavily concentrated Polish population in the United States in Hamtramck, Mich., was carried by Stevenson well over four to one.

Who, then, voted for Eisenhower? First we have the small though solid phalanxes of substantial businessmen all over the country. Then there are the traditional Republicans of all classes who have never forgotten or learned anything since Roosevelt infuriated them by keeping the unemployed from starving to death in the streets. These are the solid foundation of the Republican party, but by themselves they never have won an election and never will. This time, however, they were joined in their mass by the white collar workers, the small and minute businessmen of town, and country who have been spawned by the industrial boom, the wealthier farmers, millions of housewives who usually leave pursuits like politics to their husbands, unorganized workers and young workers to whom the depression is a legend, and who take their union-won economic status for granted, and a great mass of people in the South to whom labor organizations still look like an imported Northern menace only slightly less dangerous than the "menace" of equal civil rights for Negroes.

These groups in the population are usually politically passive. They are the most backward elements in society. They are the ones who would be last to join any great surge in political consciousness, who tend to sit on the sidelines when history is being forged by the active classes. But this time they marched to the polls in their millions, and from 70 to 80 per cent of them cast their votes for Eisenhower. Why?

The most general way in which the question can be answered is that the Democrats had landed themselves and the country in a blind alley. For them, there was no way out. Even during a political campaign, a period in which candidates of the major parties and their publicity agents are traditionally exempted from the usual social prejudice against people who make promises which they cannot and do not intend to fulfill, they could think of nothing to promise.

That is, perhaps, a slight exaggeration. It would be more exact to say that they could think of nothing *good* to promise which could be taken seriously by anyone. The only attempt they made in this direction was their promise to the Negroes to pass a Fair Employment Practices Act . . . but then there was the South, and there was Sparkman, and there was a record of eighteen years of power for the Democratic Party without such an Act . . . and there was the District of Columbia, controlled for eighteen years by a Democratic Congress with segregation and discrimination the daily scourge of its great Negro population.

But except for this feeble effort, what could they say? Did they promise lower taxes, which hit the workers hard and make the small businessman froth at the mouth? Not quite. They insisted, with dignity, that taxes will have to stay high for the duration of the cold war.

Did they promise to lower the cost of living? No, not as long as the armament program compels an unbalanced budget.

Could they hope to balance the budget in the foreseeable future? Hardly.

But then, perhaps it would remain unbalanced in order to pay for increased social services, like national health insurance? No, this was approached with discreet silence. The money is needed for less healthful projects.

Could it be that a vast program for building public low-rent housing is in the making? Nothing like that, said the Democrats by their silence.

Well, it appears that all our troubles in the economic field are caused by the cold war and even more directly by the hot war in Korea. How about ending that war?

Not on your life, said the Democrats. We are going to fight it as long as necessary to prove that we can outlast the Communists, and anyone who raises the hopes of the people for peace there is a demagogue or worse. The war in Korea is only a part of the world-wide struggle between our way of life and the Russian way of life and its solution will depend on the solution of the world struggle.

But how are we going to solve the world struggle? We have poured billions of dollars into the economies of Europe and Asia, and more billions into our own arms program. But we hear that in Europe the economies are still shaky to the point of collapse, and that they have not raised their own armament programs enough to make any relaxation on our part possible. Where is the end to this?

The Democrats replied with commendable honesty: we don't know where the end is, or if there is one. It will be a long, hard, thankless struggle. Even though you may not believe it, we have made progress, and things may start to break our way any year now. But the watchwords must be vigilance, sacrifice, and honor. In the meantime, count the blessings you now have and consider yourselves fortunate. We can't promise you more, and there may very well be less before the whole thing somehow blows over. But never forget that what you have you owe to the Democratic Party, and that when the Republicans were last in power you had much, much less.

Winston Churchill was once able to arouse the British people to a heroic national effort, and to increase his own political prestige immeasurably by promising them nothing but blood, sweat and tears. It is no reflection on the courage or the political awareness of the American people that a similar appeal has left them cold. They do not live on a small island under the direct military attack of a powerful foe. Their sons and husbands and sweethearts are not dying almost literally in the defense of their own homes. Their food is not being sunk by submarines, nor are their cities being obliterated by bombers.

The young men of America are dying in a little peninsula thousands of miles from home. To millions upon millions of Americans the war in Korea seems some kind of a ghastly nightmare, the product of an inexcusable diplomatic blunder. And less sharply felt, but almost equally burdensome appears the slow, deadly, inexorable emotional and economic drain of the world-wide struggle with Stalinism.

True, they have food and clothing and shelter and many of the conveniences and luxuries of life which are almost beyond the imagination of the workers of Europe, and quite beyond that of the impoverished masses of Asia and Africa. These things are valued by everyone, and by large numbers of the middle class and the organized workers they are almost taken

for granted. But they can be retained and improved upon only by the greatest exertion in the face of high taxes and a rising cost of living. The people are in a gigantic rat-race, even if the course is comfortably furnished and the contestants are well fed. And there is the pervasive feeling that the whole thing rests on unstable foundations, that their instability is somehow connected with the war in Korea, the endless expenditures and confusions abroad, and the "mess in Washington."

In the circumstances, what, after all, could the Democrats promise the American people, or even those sections of them needed for an electoral victory? Any promise of a drastic change with regard to taxes, the high cost of living, the level of federal expenditures, a thorough shake-up in Washington, the war in Korea or the cold war in general—any such promises would be a repudiation of their own administration. Any promises about new social gains in medicine, housing, or other social programs would also, in the nature of things, have to be promises for ever higher taxes in a country in which the budget is already unbalanced, unless it were connected with a brand new, large-scale assault on the holdings of the capitalist class itself. But neither the structure of the Democratic Party nor the necessities of retaining the support of the capitalists in the financing and execution of the armaments program permit such an assualt. And in any event, would not that smack just a little bit of "Godless Communism," the arch-enemy which we are being mobilized to resist and eventually crush all over the world?

So, for the future, the Democrats promised virtually nothing, or at least nothing better. But the Republicans were neither inhibited by the burden of their record, nor by the prospect of having to carry out whatever promises they might make. Their campaign was vague in specific proposals, almost ridiculously devoid of concrete program, but devastating in its impact.

From beginning to end, they were on the offensive. And in a period of uneasy social stalemate they chose the perfect candidate and the perfect slogan. Their candidate: a national hero who had never become identified with any particular social or political grouping in the country and who bore no direct responsibility for any of the major policies over which the parties had fought over the years; a man who was known for three major qualities: an architect of victory in war, a unifier of diverse interests in peace, and a stern but always friendly father of his countrymen in both.

Their slogan was as effective as their candidate: It is time for a change!

Your taxes are too high?

Ike will lower them.

But aren't high taxes caused by the armament expenditures?

No, they are caused by inefficiency and waste and corruption in Washington. Ike will change all that.

But even if all that is eliminated, won't the budget have to remain high to build arms?

Yes, it will, but Ike knows how to cut arms expenditures to the bone while increasing the armed might of the nation.

But how about the high cost of living—isn't that a result of the armament program?

No, it is the result of the inflationary policy in Washington. Ike is for a sound dollar, and you remember how much that used to buy before the Democrats squandered away our national wealth.

How about the war in Korea.

Ike will fix that. He will go over there and take a fresh look at it, and see what can be done. The Democrats got us into it, you know, and they say themselves they don't know either how to win it or how to stop it. Ike will find a way to do one or the other, or at least to get the Asians to do their own fighting and dying.

But the war in Korea, isn't that part of the cold war, and didn't the Reds start it in the first place? Will we really be able to end it unless they want to?

Well, Roosevelt gave Stalin Eastern Europe at Yalta and Teheran, and Truman finished the job at Potsdam. The Communists in the State Department and other key spots gave China to Mao Tse Tung and his Russian masters. Whom would you rather trust, the people who were responsible for all our defeats in foreign policy, or a man who showed that he knows how to win a war like Eisenhower did in Europe?

Well, how about the labor bosses and strikes which tie up the country?

Ike will fix that. He knows how to get people around the table and show them where their best interests lie. He'll be firm, but just; he won't let anyone mess around.

What about the Communists over here?

Ike will fix them. He doesn't go for that McCarthy stuff of smearing people, and he is firmly for civil liberties. But he will clean every Communist or Creeping Socialist out of power in Washington. You can rely on that.

While the Republicans were on the offensive throughout the campaign against the stalemate of 1952, while the Democrats were reduced to a pitiful "me tooism" and "you're another" response on these while attempting to shift the battle-ground to the burning issues of 1932-1936.

The Republicans attacked the open sores of corruption in Washington.

"You're another," shouted the Democrats as they gleefuly pounced on Nixon's private pork barrel, or dusted off the history books to remind people of something known as Teapot Dome.

"Ike will clean out the mess in Washington with a new broom."

"Stevenson can do some cleaning, too."

"The Democrats let Hiss and the other Communists sneak in and practically run the government. We'll clean them out root and branch."

"But we have been cleaning them out ourselves. Just look at our Smith Act and all the people we have sent to jail, and our loyalty program and our subversive list."

"The Democrats have passed no legislation for civil rights in twenty years. They never intend to pass any. Most of the States which have civil rights programs also have Republican governors."

"But the Republicans in Congress voted against the civil rights bills too."

"The Democrats who controlled both houses of Congress increased your taxes, inflated your dollar and raised the cost of living."

"But the Republicans voted against price controls."

"Who had the majority in both houses of Congress?"

". . . . . ."

Did the Eisenhower campaign meet the issues squarely? Did it offer the people a progressive issue from the stalemate in which the United States finds itself both domestically and on the world arena. Not at all. It was not designed to influence the progressive class in society which was given up as a hopeless job before the campaign even started. It was not really designed to win the Negroes who are over-

whelmingly working class in status and instinct. It sought only to neutralize the Negroes' adherence to the Democrats, as much as possible, while really playing for the support of the ruling class and the rascists in the South. It went heavily for the Catholics not as workers, but as anti-Communists, as anti-Atheists. It was not pitched to attract the urban intellectuals who have little influence except when allied with the workers, and fewer votes.

The Eisenhower campaign was directed to the frustrated middle class above all. They are the ones who chafe most under the high taxes and the rising cost of living. They are the ones for whom the rat-race to keep up their standard of living and to improve their social status is most galling. It was designed to appeal to the mothers and fathers with boys in Korea or who are of draft age; to the type of housewife whose social consciousness is limited to her struggle with the family budget; to masses of little people who have no organizations through which they can protect themselves even partially against organized business on the one hand and organized labor on the other, and who seek a strong, fatherly leader to protect them instead.

HERE WE WITNESSED one of those classic situations which arise every now and then in the period of capitalism's decline. For one reason or another, the major social classes have stalemated each other. A social movement which had been able to make progress in one way or another, and through which the society had been solving its problems more or less adequately had come to a complete stop. While it was in motion, it had succeeded in neutralizing the most backward sections of the population, and in dragging wide layers of the rest along with it. But new social conditions, new problems had robbed it of its dynamic, and it had found no new source of energy with which to replace it. The old social classes which it had fought are too discredited to be able to return to power under their old symbols and with their old leadership. But they are able enough and powerful enough to find new symbols and new leaders which promise an issue from the frustration of the backward masses.

Where have we seen this most clearly in recent history? In the closing years of the Weimar Republic, of course. There the causes of frustration were far more acute and compelling than they are in America today. The capitalist class had far less room in which to maneuver, and therefore was compelled to select a leader and a movement which was almost as dangerous to itself as to the workers. And the Nazis were able to attract to themselves not only the desperate declassed elements of their brown and black shirted legions, but the vast middle class, and the reactionary peasantry, and the housewives who were convinced that whatever you might say about the Nazis, it was time for a change.

The working class did not go over to Hitler during his rise to power despite unemployment and under-employment. They were split between Stalinists and Social-Democrats, an aspect of the situation which bears no similarity to what is going on in America. But the great mass of them stuck to their Social-Democratic Party and their trade unions and their democratic allies until all of them were thrown into concentration camps together. They did not go over to the class enemy, but they did not offer leadership to the broad masses of the people either. They just stood pat on

their gains, while their leaders explained that there were all kinds of difficulties in the way of resuming the road to full employment and socialism.

Here the situation is not so desperate, and there is no effective fascist movement which could thrive only on real desperation. The working class and its natural allies stuck to "their" party in overwhelming numbers because to *them* the Republicans smelled at a distance of a thousand feet of big business, the Taft-Hartley symbol of union-busting, and depression. The Negroes stuck not because they have any real illusions about the Democrats as a party, but because in the North it was the party of labor and the liberals, and in the South there was no road to political influence outside of it. Above all they stuck because despite the fact that no laws had been passed to protect them they had improved their condition measurably during the war and since, and because they too, like the rest of the workers could smell the open class enemy at a distance. The Jews and the foreign-born workers stuck because they recognized that despite all its deficiencies in this respect, the labor movement and the fair-deal leadership has been their main champion in America, and because they could not fail to discern that the organized rabble of the lunatic fascist fringe feels much closer to the Republicans than it does to the Democrats.

These groups stuck to Stevenson. In fact, they did more than stick. They were more firmly devoted to his candidacy than they had ever been to that of Truman. They wore Stevenson buttons, and they talked Stevenson to each other and their friends, and they campaigned for him. Yet their mood was not one of hope for a better day. It was permeated by the fear of a worse one.

But the white-collar workers, and the little business men, and many of the unorganized workers who regard the unions more as a barrier to good jobs than as a friend, the mothers with boys in Korea, the backward masses who had not bothered to vote before . . . they came out and voted. They voted for the General with the big smile who can bring people together and fix things. They voted for an end to the mess in Washington, for a hope of an end to the war in Korea, and in any event, come what may, they lashed out for a change.

The rôle played by the "Communist" issue in the campaign has tremendous symptomatic importance. In retrospect it appears that it may not have had quite the weight which it appeared to have while the campaign was in progress (see below on McCarthy's vote in Wisconsin). Yet there is no doubt that it played a significant rôle.

The Republicans used the Hiss case and the revelations about various Stalinists who had worked their way into some prominent positions in American society to create the impression that Stalinism is a serious internal menace to the country, and that the Democrats have been "soft" toward the Stalinists at best, and in secret collaboration with them at worst.

They sought to whip up a real hysteria over the "Communist menace," and not without success. The Democrats had prepared the ground for them over the years with their "loyalty" program, their subversive lists, their Smith Act, and the legal and extra-legal hounding of the Stalinists and anti-Stalinist dissidents by their ubiquitous FBI. On this issue the Democrats, often led by their most "liberal" spokesmen, were forced

into a most cowardly and even despicable "me too" rôle.

Although we would be the last to deny the fact that just before and during the last war the Stalinists had succeeded in acquiring positions of considerable influence in many sectors of American society, it is evident that today their strength and influence are at an all-time low in the United States. The *function* of the anti-"Red" hysteria in America is today chiefly that of singling out a vulnerable scape-goat on which to vent the fury of frustration for the inability of Ameircan foreign policy to deal successfully with the *real* Stalinist menace in the rest of the world.

This frustration is felt not only by the officials responsible for this policy, but by the people as a whole. It is a specific reflex to the pressures of the cold war. Even though Eisenhower's victory may well tend to relieve the fear which has been created that "Communists" are directing American foreign policy in a manner favorable to Stalin, it is probable that the anti-Stalinist frenzy will be turned from government as its object to other sections of our society.

It is indeed heartening that McCarthyism has shown itself weaker than many had feared. Yet this does not mean that the anti-"Red" hysteria has passed its peak, or that there is any reason to expect its abatement in the future. The basic cause for this menace to the civil liberties of our whole society is the success of Stalinism on a world scale, and the inability of a policy of military containment to defeat it. As a Republican administration can be expected to be even less successful in combatting Stalinism internationally than were the Democrats, both it, and particularly its reactionary wing, can be counted on to utilize the emotional safety-valve of the "anti-Red" drive at home.

THE BACKWARD MASSES EXPRESSED their frustration, and took their revenge on the Fair Deal. But they did not do it altogether wildly or blindly. Their prosperity makes them cautious even in revenge. They like Ike, but they are dubious, or at least they lack enthusiasm for the Republicans. This was expressed in the fact that almost everywhere the General ran ahead of his ticket, that the Republicans were only able to pick up a net gain of one seat in the Senate, and that they gained control of the House by the slenderest margin enjoyed by any party since 1930. It was expressed even more strikingly in the virtual *repudiation* of the extreme right wing of the Republican Party.

Senators Jenner of Indiana and Malone of Nevada just barely squeezed through on Eisenhower's landslide. And the Wisconsin Wretch, McCarthy, ran far behind both the presidential and gubernatorial tickets in his state. Three other reactionaries of the "class of '46," Kem of Missouri, Cain of Washington and Ecton of Montana went down to defeat. Ten states voted for Eisenhower but chose Democratic Senators, and only one split its ticket the other way.

The same pattern was repeated in the House of Representatives, where all seats were up for re-election. The Republicans made a net gain of twenty-one seats over 1950 out of a total of 435. In twelve Northeastern and Western states which voted for Eisenhower, the Democrats retained all of their seats in the House.

The middle class and the usually passive unorganized mass came out and expressed their frustration by voting for a change. As they were given no leadership by the labor-Fair-Deal coalition, they had no alternative but to express their desires by voting for a *conservative* symbol of change. But Eisenhower was not a symbol of black reaction, and those who were got their come-uppance.

It is of the utmost importance that this be grasped in its full significance. It has been obscured chiefly by the tendency of the labor bureaucracy and the Fair Dealers to paint Eisenhower and the real core of his leading cadres in the blackest hues. As their own "movement" had been retreating, socially speaking, steadily since 1940, they sought to create the illusion that it had been forging ahead by holding up before the electorate a picture of the Republicans in headlong flight to reaction. Just as the troglodytes of Republicanism tried to convince the people that the real choice in this election was between "socialism and democracy," so the Fair Dealers tried to scare them by proclaiming in effect that their alternatives were between "democracy and fascism." The truth was in neither of them.

The shift was to the conservatism of the permanent war economy, not to the conservatism of Herbert Hoover. It was a shift to a conservatism which recognizes and accepts the major social reforms of the early days of the New Deal as built-in features of American society which may be chipped at a little but which must not be touched in their essence. The shift was to a conservatism which recognizes that the labor movement is here to stay, and that the problem is not to destroy it, but rather to *integrate* it into the structure of the permanent war economy.

The first impact of Eisenhower's election has been, quite naturally, to stun the labor and Fair Deal leadership, and the working class and other groups which have accepted their ideology and their picture of the social dynamic as the only ones possible. By the same token, it has greatly encouraged not only the conservative elements, but also the extreme reactionaries. It is only necessary to keep ones ears open in any place where the undifferentiated public assembles to know that the racists, the anti-Semites, the union haters, the 100 per cent Americans are in a state of high euphoria. They feel that their day has come at last. But actually, it is still a long way off.

The depth of the stupefaction of the labor leadership and the liberals is a function of their misunderstanding of the era in which we live. This misunderstanding was most clearly revealed in the kind of campaign they conducted, in the symbols, both positive and negative, with which they sought to rally the masses to the Democratic Party.

Quite understandably, they sought to win with the same kind of campaign which had won for them in every election since 1936. Essentially, Stevenson ran against Herbert Hoover and the great depression which started in his regime. He ran for the reforms of the New Deal, and for the prosperity of the war economy.

The working class and its natural allies recognize the Republicans for what they are, the chief spokesmen of big business, and hence voted against them. But it is questionable whether even for them the old symbols retain their potency. The major reforms of the New Deal are now accepted as an integral part of the American Way of Life, and Eisenhower could promise, more or less in good faith, to leave them intact. After twelve years of prosperity, the traumatic effect of the depression on all layers of American society is beginning to wear off. Truman could still invoke its memory with success in 1948, when the country

had once again experienced a slight post-war recession with unemployment (even though mostly temporary) reaching four to six millions at its worst.

But in 1952 the attempt of the Fair Dealers to claim credit for the current prosperity, either for themselves or for their New Deal ancestors, was too fanciful to convince anyone except those who were determined to be convinced in advance. Even the Fair Deal professors of economics know, and admit privately, that our prosperity is based on the armament economy in general, and the war in Korea in particular. And the masses who have not been initiated into the "new methods" devised by the Fair Deal to prevent depression even without armaments take this as a matter of course. (The "new methods" are frequently referred to by Fair Deal publicists, but never described. They are, no doubt, being kept a dark secret to be sprung on an unsuspecting public at the proper psychological moment.)

The domestic issues which gave meaning to the Fair Deal-Republican dichotomy for the past twenty years have not been solved. Bct they have been submerged by, or rather, subsumed into the problems of the cold war, of the struggle between the imperialisms of Stalinism and American capitalism. However slowly and dimly, and with whatever gross distortions of understanding, the American people have grasped this fact. They know that their own prosperity is linked to the armament economy, and that this in turn is a function of the struggle for the world. Although they have, by and large, accepted the necessity of this struggle, they have not accepted the consequences which follow from it.

This is particularly true as they do not feel that the struggle is being waged successfully. The bloody stalemate in Korea is only the most dramatic symbol of the stalemate in the rest of the world. At the moment, the people are not worrying about a depression, though they know that its recurrance is always a possibility. At the moment they are more concerned with high taxes and high prices and the mess in Washington and the world.

The Fair Dealers have misunderstood this era because they cannot accept the permanent war economy as the only basis for continued prosperity. To do so would be to shatter the illusion that they have discovered the magic formula whereby capitalism can be maintained without depressions and without wars on an ever-ascending scale of welfare and progress. But that is the image of American society by which they live. By this image all that is necessary is to keep re-electing Fair Dealers to office, and to keep on subsidizing capitalism all over the world. Finally Stalinism will evaporate as a world menace, and the Europeans and Asians, educated in the mysteries of American know-how will combine in a happy family of nations under the divinely ordained leadership of no one but the Fair Dealers themselves.

Just how long this illusion could have been maintained if Eisenhower had not won the election, it is hard to say. It is not excluded that if the Republicans had chosen Taft, and if they had conducted their campaign along strictly Taftist lines, they might have backed out of victory.

The fact is that Eisenhower dragged the Republican Party to victory with him, and that in doing so he dealt the Democratic Party as we have known it a blow from which it may never recover. This brings us to an

assessment of the trends which the General's victory are likely to set off for the future.

IT IS A COMMONPLACE to refer to the sobering effect of office on even the most irresponsible opposition. We have stated above that the Republicans were not inhibited in their campaign by the prospect of having to carry out whatever promises they might make. This was true even though it did not induce them to make very many concrete promises. They did not have to.

But now they are saddled with the cold war and the permanent war economy as the basic framework of capitalist existence. To operate successfully within it, they must maintain a considerable degree of national unity. They cannot do this and at the same time mount a major assault on the working class or its organizations. They cannot even hope to hang on to the electorate which they coaxed to the polls unless they at least make a gesture on taxes and the high cost of living. And most serious of all, for them, they cannot hope to stay in office for more than one term in the event either of major reverses in foreign policy or of a serious recession in this country.

Even while wallowing in their slough of despondency, the Fair Deal publicists can hardly suppress a morbid chuckle of anticipation in their columns. It has been a matter of common knowledge before the elections that the critical period for the American economy would come sometime toward the middle or end of 1953. With a levelling off of the armament economy projected for next year, the surpluses of the productivity of American industry will tend to begin choking the pores of the economy. In Europe the signs of contraction are beginning to show up already. This means that any prospect of dumping the American surpluses abroad is reduced.

With the economic difficulties of the decayed capitalist régimes in Europe piling up, any successes in the cold war appear highly unlikely. Further reverses, and possibly major ones are much more to be expected. And the Stalinists are not being at all helpful with the turn projected by the recent congress of their internationally ruling party in Moscow. They are preparing to exploit every economic difficulty to the maximum.

The Republicans are not Fair Dealers, even though they are confronted with an intensification of the problems which had kept the Fair Deal at dead center or in a slow retreat for the past eight years. Taft and Taber will drive to cut expenditures at the expense of the people, and Eisenhower will not resist them. The right wing of the Republican party will seek to harry the labor movement both from the halls of Congress and from behind their corporation desks. Although it is quite likely that Eisenhower and the moderates will seek to restrain them in the interest of the war economy, the crises in class relations which are bound to arise will force decisions on them which are made in the heat of battle . . . and these decisions are even less likely to be favorable to labor than were those of their Democratic "friends." (Remember Truman's proposal to draft the railroad workers into the army to break the rail strike of 1946?)

Yet it must be emphasized, once again, that we have witnessed a conservative turn in the country, not a swing to reaction, let alone to fascism. The Republicans will always have to remember a few hard facts: (1) Stevenson got enough votes in the last elec- to win any normal (numerically) con-

test. (2) The labor movement is intact, and showed increased political organization and strength in the elections. (3) Any major and direct assault on the standard of living of the people in this country, or on the labor movement, would no doubt generate sharp class conflict and the most vigorous working-class resistance and such an assault would play right into the hands of Stalin and the Stalinists all over the world.

In the meantime, however, there is another problem and it is a pressing one. What will four years out of the White House, and a minimum of two years out of the Federal patronage troughs do to the Democratic Party?

THE RECENT ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN and its results in the balloting on November 4, have already shown a remarkable disintegration of the old relations of power inside the Democratic Party coalition.

In the South, the party has fallen apart at the seams. And although the evidence is yet far from complete these seams appear to run, strangely enough, pretty close to the class cleavages whose very existence is denied by our Fair Deal deep-thinkers. It is true that in the South all social relations are distorted by the incubus of racialism even more than they are in other parts of the country. And it is also true that racialism is still strong in the white sections of the new industrial working class of the South, which has only come out of the hills yesterday, so to speak. But it is quite clear that the bolt to Eisenhower in the South was led by the capitalists, both old and new, of the area. The oil millionaires of Texas probably gave as much money to the Eisenhower campaign as the masters of Wall Street.

To whom can the Democratic Party leadership in the South turn in an attempt to rebuild the shattered structure of the party there? Of course they will seek to compromise, to make deals, to appease many of the leaders who turned against them. They have certainly had no principled objection to working with the big landowners, the cotton merchants, the arrant racists and reactionaries who have dominated the Southern Democracy for so long, and they can be expected to have none in the future.

But the leading cadres of reaction in the South have turned against them in this election as they did in 1948. They cannot be trusted to maintain elementary party loyalty in the future. There can be little doubt that their Congressional representatives will continue to coöperate with the Republicans as they have done in the past. They have shown their basic affinity to the Republican Party in legislative matters for years, and they have now twice demonstrated that this affinity is so strong that they are willing to coöperate with them even in an election where power was directly at stake.

From a primitive urge of self-preservation, the Democratic Party would have to seek new bases of strength in the South. And if the ruling class lines up solidly with the Republicans, where could they look? Primarily to the same elements there who form their electoral base in the rest of the country: to the organized workers, the poor farmers and tenant farmers, the enlightened section of the middle class, and yes, to the Negroes.

Such a course could be dictated by political logic, but whether it will actually be pursued is a different matter. The Democratic leaders do not have any intention of transforming their organization into what would clearly be a class political party in the South. Their interests are those of liberal capitalism, not of the working

class and the Negroes, and their own desire and ability to coöperate with the Southern Democracy is one of the most conclusive demonstrations of that fact.

But for the labor movement, either as part of the Democratic Party or as an independent force, this course is the only one possible. Their intentions in the matter were demonstrated at the last Democratic Party convention in Chicago, where they attempted to purge a section of the Southern leadership from the party. Even though the party leadership itself has much in common with the Southern bourgeoisie, to the labor movement it is an implacable enemy in both the economic and political fields.

Even if nothing else had happened, a deep and probably unbridgeable breach in the Democratic Party of the South would bring about a new configuration of forces in the party nationally. But much else happened, and it will continue to happen.

We have already pointed to the fact that in the North, the tendency of the organized industrial workers to stick with Stevenson was much more pronounced than was that of the rest of the urban masses who had been, more or less, in the Democratic camp up till now. Not only did they stick, but for the first time the union leadership found, that by and large, where they conducted an aggressive campaign independently of the old Democratic machines they were able to get out the vote, and an even bigger vote than ever before. It is a remarkable fact that in this campaign in which the old-fashioned Democratic machines in city after city revealed their weakness, the Liberal Party in New York and the new labor-Americans for Democratic Action machine in Philadelphia were able to gain votes against the stream.

The success of the labor political organizations and the failure of the old machines dealt a further blow to the relation of forces within the Democratic Party. If the party had won despite this development, the labor leadership might have continued to tag along behind their friends in office for some time to come.

But now they have no friends in office, or at least almost none who are in a position to do anything for them. Throughout the country the Democratic Party organization is bound to weaken and to begin a process of disintegration now that it is deprived of its life-blood of patronage. But the labor movement and its political arm have never depended on patronage for their existence. They have a different base, and it remains intact. Their chief reason for clinging to the Democratic Party was the conviction that this was the only way in which the more direct and open representatives of their major enemy, the employers, could be kept out of office. They will now discover that their movement can survive even under the new conditions—survive and grow.

So far we have sought to demonstrate that the relation of forces inside the Democratic Party coalition has been drastically changed in this election and that it will be changed even more fundamentally as a consequence of the Republican victory. Labor has emerged not as the petitioner who had to content itself with the best compromise it could make on program and candidates in a coalition in which the cards were stacked against it before the game started. The labor movement now emerges as potentially *the* power inside the Democratic Party.

But between potentiality and realization there is that well known gap. Only a foolhardy person would seek

to predict at this time what the future relations of the labor movement will be to the Democratic Party. The most that one can hazard is to indicate possible lines of future development. Which ones will actually be realized will depend on factors which cannot be known now.

The city machines have proven themselves weaker than before, and the party is deeply torn in the South. But the Democratic Party still has a lot of life and kick in it. Its leaders will bend every effort to re-constitute it and re-organize it more or less on the old model, but with "more energetic" personnel. They certainly have no intention of abdicating to the labor leaders, just as the latter have no intention of taking over their functions.

But the changed relationship of forces cannot help but increase the friction among them. This does not necessarily mean that the friction will raise the temperature to a point at which continued collaboration becomes impossible. There will be all kinds of countervailing pressures which will tend to lubricate the rubbing surfaces. The actual development will be determined primarily by the course of the economy itself and the manner in which the working class and its leadership reacts to it.

Even before the Eisenhower victory there was considerable evidence pointing to a new type of participation of the labor leadership in politics and in the Democratic Party. In this campaign over large sections of the country the American Federation of Labor's Labor League for Political Education, and the Congress of Industrial Organizations' Political Action Committee conducted a far more vigorous campaign for Stevenson than they had ever conducted for Roosevelt or Truman, and they proceeded generally *outside* but parallel to the regular Democratic Party machines. It appears that they were frequently far more successful than the Democratic regulars in getting out the vote for Stevenson. Even now, right after the common defeat, it is evident that there is a great deal of contempt and bitterness among the active union politicos for their Democratic colleagues.

If, in the period ahead, the labor movement finds itself under strong pressure from the capitalists backed up by the Republican administration, it will naturally look to its Democratic allies for help. It is quite possible that they will get much *less* sympathy from them now that they are out of office, than they got when Truman was in the White House, and that was never too much. Such an eventuality could easily force them to seek to form a new organizational base for their political activity; that is, to form a new party of their own.

Although such a development is to be ardently hoped for and advocated by independent socialists, a different course is not at all excluded. As the labor leadership still thinks of politics almost solely in terms of immediate electoral victories, they may be driven into an even more conservative course by this defeat than that which they had been following in the immediate past. They may be convinced that their only hope is to cling even more tightly to the skirts of the Democratic Party, and to play an even less prominent rôle inside it. It is certainly too early to predict. It is not too early to seek to drive home to the advanced workers by every means available the *strength* which labor's semi-independent instrumentalities displayed in this campaign, to seek to convince them that only a further and broader organizational development of them, and a bolder and politically more independent course can serve their true political interests.

In this connection it is pertinent to draw attention to the remarkable achievement of the Liberal Party in New York. Their own candidate for the United States Senate, George Counts, got 461,229 votes. In 1950 the Democratic candidate for the Senate, Lehman, got 312,594 votes on the Liberal line. Even though Stevenson also polled a heavier vote on the Liberal line than did Truman in 1948, the Counts vote was greater than that for Stevenson.

It may very well be that the Liberal Party picked up a good portion of the 1948 Wallace vote in this election. Furthermore, the Democratic candidate for the Senate, Cashmore, was a little-known party hack whose nomination had been opposed by many Fair Dealers as well as by the Liberals. Nevertheless, the ability of the Liberal party to make headway in New York City against the Eisenhower tide showed that even in this election, with its conservative swing, an independent labor-based party has attractive power.

It will be some time before the vote received by the Socialist Party and other minor organizations is known. It is impossible to state in advance whether or not this vote will prove to have shown a significant increase or decline. In an election the outstanding aspect of which was the feeling of frustration of a large mass of the people with the cold war and specially with the war in Korea, one could normally expect a heavier protest socialist anti-war vote.

Yet the campaign was also characterized by greater heat and emotion than any in recent years, and by a greater organized effort on the part of the leadership of the labor movement. The Democratic candidate had a particular personal appeal for intellectuals in the labor movement, on its fringes and on the campuses, and it is on these groups that socialists in America have in recent times counted for a goodly portion of any vote they get.

The campaign itself clarified two things about the socialist organizations in this country. It underlined the organizational weakness of the Socialist Party as nothing else could have done. Their failure to get on the ballot in some of the key states (California, Illinois) was chiefly a result of the vicious electoral laws passed by the major parties which make it virtually impossible for organizations without enormous resources to place their candidates before the electorate. But even where the SP was on the ballot, its campaign was virtually nonexistent. The Third Camp adherents in the SP are going to have to take a long and hard look at the situation in their organization and come up with some serious answers. A "party" which cannot conduct an electoral campaign even within its accepted limitations must find another reason for organizational and ideological survival.

The other fact demonstrated about the socialistic groups was the almost simon-pure Stalinist-type campaign conducted by the Socialist Workers Party. Anyone listening to their radio and television speeches would have sworn that he was being addressed by one of the Stalinist-front groups. Their campaign was "anti-war" in the typical "peace campaign" manner. If there had not already been enough evidence of the distance the SWP had travelled in a pro-Stalinist direction to justify the Independent Socialist League in withholding its endorsement, the campaign itself would have furnished it.

In this campaign the Independent Socialist League urged a vote for the candidates of the Socialist Party (or in states where they were not on the ballot, of the Socialist Labor Party) as a socialist vote of protest against the policies of both major parties, and particularly against their pro-war orientation. The justification of this policy did not lie in expectations of a large increase in the socialist vote, but in offering the most conscious political people in the country a method of expressing their opposition above all to the cold-war foreign policy of both parties and specifically to its most futile expression in the war in Korea.

The over-all results of the campaign show that among broad masses of the American people the war in Korea is highly unpopular, and that the cold war itself is beginning to have a strong impact on mass consciousness. The Democratic Party went down to defeat primarily because it bears responsibility for the policies which led up to the war and the war itself, and because it could give the people no satisfactory answers in the direction of a new and more fruitful foreign policy.

The most dangerous aspect of labor's continued allegiance to the Democratic Party is its blind adherence to its foreign policy. Its determination to prevent Stalinism from spreading over the globe is commendable; but its inability to see that this can be accomplished successfully only by a truly democratic foreign policy, by a foreign policy which supports the struggle of the backward nations to free themselves from imperialism and from their own reactionary social institutions; and its failure to recognize that in Western Europe Stalinism can be defeated as a political force only by lining up with the socialist movements in a struggle to replace dying capitalism with a new social order—this blindness leaves only the *conservatives* in a position to make capital out of the pre-war and war weariness of the American masses.

The political task of the independent socialists remains the same after the elections as it was before: to educate and urge on the advanced militants in the labor movement a course toward the political independence of their organizations and the working class from the deadening alliance with a section of the capitalist class in the Democratic Party, and to urge upon them a foreign policy which will make the American labor movement a staunch adherent of the Third Camp of the peoples against the imperialisms of both Washington and Moscow. This task they will continue to perform with ideological firmness while taking into account the difficulties and the opportunities created for them by the new dynamics of political power which have been set in motion by the elections.

Gordon HASKELL

In the Coming Issue of the NI

AN ANALYSIS OF THE 19th CONGRESS OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

by Max Shachtman

Two Eras of War

A Chater from Zinoviev's Analysis of the War Question

We begin herewith publication of another chapter from the famous *The War and the Crisis of Socialism*, by G. Zinoviev, parts of which have appeared in these pages in the past. The work, written in the war years of 1915-1916, was refused publication in Russia by the Czarist censor. After the first 1917 revolution, its publication in the middle of the year was prevented by a reactionary raid on a Bolshevik publishing house in the course of which the composed material was smashed. The first Russian edition appeared almost exactly at the moment of the second 1917 revolution. It is now hard to find anywhere in the world, and impossible to find in Russia. Its author, old Bolshevik, colleague of Lenin, first chairman of the Communist International, was first expelled from the Russian Communist Party by Stalin, then imprisoned, then foully murdered. With all the criticisms made of Zinoviev during his great days—criticism much of which was not unjustified—he was and remains one of the greatest popularizers of revolutionary Marxism, one of the influential teachers of the new generation of Marxists that rose from the First World War. In this work the reader finds Zinoviev at his best. We have chosen this section and what follows for translation and publication here for its historical-analytical and instructive value to all serious students and miltants. It is especially valuable for demonstrating the manner in which Marxists dealt with the concrete problems of wars in the past. It does not—for it cannot—aim to provide automatic answers to war problems of our own time; but it does provide illustrations of the Marxist's method of arriving at such answers.—Ed.

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The history of the 19th Century began with a strong counter-revolutionary movement which was directed against the French Revolution. The fate of the internal development of revolutionary-republican France became dependent upon the neighboring monarchical states of Europe. The French Revolution had no stronger foe than its *external* one. The whole Napoleonic epoch was primarily the product of the wars France was forced to fight in order to resist the struggle of the European monarchies against the French Revolution. There is not a historical epoch that illustrates so clearly the connection between domestic and foreign policy as do the years 1789 to 1814. In his book on the relationship of foreign to domestic politics, Rudolph Goldscheid says quite rightly: "Domestic policy proposes, but foreign policy disposes." It is just as right when he says further: "The history of any people is the history of its neighbors."* France of the year 1789 was forced very soon, in the course of events, to learn that there could be no talk about securing the achievements of the Great Revolution without undertaking a whole series of defensive and offensive wars beyond the border. The monarchical states which surrounded France threatened her with direct assault, with subjugation by alien rule. This continuing threat was a great obstacle in the path of the French Revolution, but nevertheless it was precisely this that endowed the revolutionary movement with greater strength by stamping it as national and thereby embracing the entire forces of the nation. Under the Damoclean sword of the threatening hostile invasion and of alien rule, all the people of France united, with the exception of the high royal aristocracy, a handful of coun-

*Rudolph Goldscheid, **Das Varhältnis der äusseren Politik zur inneren. Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des Weltkrieges,** pp. 14, 30.

ter-revolutionary émigrés and the representatives of the royal dynasty who joined quite openly with the foreign monarchical powers in machinations against the revolution in their own country. Aulard is right when he says, in his *French Revolution,* that the European coalition that united against France was hurled back by the municipal and Jacobin organizations.

"It was surely the need for defense from alien rule that gave the impulsion to the movement for the national state," says Bauer in his *Nationalitätenfrage.* The wars of the Great French Revolution are a classical example of the *national* wars of the early capitalist epoch. When the French Revolution attempted to fling the revolutionary torch into the neighboring lands, when it declared war upon all the European kings and absolute monarchs, it was only an act of self-defense. It was not enough to crush absolutism within France and to settle accounts with Louix XVI. For the victory of the French Revolution to be complete, absolutism *outside* of France had to be smashed or, at least, it was necessary to guarantee the defense of France from external assault. Newly-arisen France had to be protected from alien subjugation. At the time of the first triumph over the old régime, this task could not be envisaged in all its scope by the politicians and the institutions of the French Revolution. But it was placed on the order of the day very soon after the first victories. In purely empirical ways the leaders of the French Revolution recognized that to secure the revolutionary achievements, a number of external national wars were necessary, that to secure the French Revolution France herself would have to be surrounded by a whole series of daughter republics. The Convention later followed a planned and thought-out policy in this direction. The situation became ever clearer. Either the new republican government would withstand the assaults of foreign powers and introduce the republic in the neighboring lands, or else the absolutist neighboring lands after a number of wars would not only have to overturn the republican régime in France and restore monarchism, but also bring the country under alien rule, perhaps partition it and annex parts of it to other countries.*

Thus the revolutionary struggle of the French became a *national* cause. Thus this grandiose movement, which opened an entirely new epoch in history, gave us a classical example of *national* wars which had an enormous significance for history and the progress of mankind.

"Liberté des mers! Egalité du droits de toutes les nations!" [Freedom of the seas! Equal rights for all nations!]—proclaimed the inscriptions on the banners of the French army at the time of the revolutionary wars. Naturally these watchwords had nothing socialist in them. The slogan of the "Freedom of the seas!" was merely directed at England which dominated the seas. The slogan of "equal rights" signified merely equality of rights in the *bourgeois* sense.

At any rate, however, they were wars which defended the *bourgeois revolution,* which were directed *against feudalism,* and which created the bourgeois-democratic national state; and to that extent they contributed to progress.

"Precisely upon the basis of nationality did the Declaration of the Rights of Man develop the fundaments of all liberal demands: *'Le principe de toute souverainité reside dans la nation.'* [The principle of all sovereignty rests in the nation]"—writes Lamprecht.* The French Revolution opened a new epoch of history in this respect, too. In it is found the strongest expression of the endeavor of the victorious bourgeoisie to set up, secure and defend the national state. National subjugation—in its greatest, baldest form—was the law in the epoch preceding capitalism. *The rise of capitalism was expressed in the endeavor to set up independent states, i.e., to eliminate oppression by foreign states.*

There were adequate *economic* causes for this. Rising capitalist commodity exchange imperiously requires the elimination of small states, of so-called petty-statism. It needs a unified customs system, a unified legislation. The bourgeoisie must endeavor to make the national state as strong and big as possible. State dismemberment and separateness are antagonistic to this capitalist development. Arising capitalism requires large economic territories consolidated into states.

If the capitalist states were to be allied among themselves through free commodity exchange, if they were to *constitute a single economic domain,* then capitalism—as Otto Bauer rightly remarks—could fully reconcile itself to the dismemberment of the nations into a mass of small independent states. In reality, however, the capitalist state almost always constitutes a more or less independent economic domain. Customs tariffs, tax policy, the system of railway tariffs, the difference between prevailing laws, etc., all this causes difficulties in trade between the various independent states. Hence, arising capitalism strives not only for a simple national state, but for a *great national state.* The more populated an economic domain, the more numerous and larger the enterprises can be in which any commodity is produced. As is known, the large size of an enterprise means the diminution of production costs and the rise of productivity. All other things being equal, it means a greater division of labor, it affords the possibility of improving communications, etc. It is much harder to learn about a foreign market than to learn the conditions of the native domestic market.

All these advantages of a great state were clearly perceived by the peoples of the 19th Century, directly observed by them. They all saw how France bloomed with the fall of the customs barriers that separated the French provinces. Every state—only one people; every people—one state! So read the principle of arising capitalism. Obviously, a *small* state is not only *economically* but *politically* weaker. The capitalist needs a state that can defend his interests, by armed force if need be. In this respect too a *great state* is once again an advantage. This was another reason for the endeavor to free co-nationals from foreign rule and to bring them into the national state.

Of the present-day great states, not a single one was a national state from the beginning. On the contrary, they all rose as national states, or better yet, as conglomerates of tribes which did not yet constitute nations in the true sense of the word. Most of these states still bear the traces of their being composed out of various nationalities. In public life, a complicated phenomenon seldom appears in a pure, undistorted state. Despite that, we are entitled to characterize the period of 1789 to 1871 as the epoch in

*It should not be thought that the struggle of revolutionary France against the monarchist powers was caused **only** by the struggle of the bourgeois-democratic social order against the feudal, although **this** was the predominant cause. Competition between France and England in the colonial field also played an essential rôle.

*Karl Lamprecht, **Deutsche Geschicht,** Third Part, **Neueste Zeit,** Vol. III, Berlin, 1907, p. 353.

which absolutism was eliminated and in which the *national states finally* rose in Europe—an epoch in which a series of national wars were fought to achieve this goal.

The birthplace of the present-day state is the land in which capitalist commodity production first arose and developed—Italy.* The first modern states were the rich Italian city republics, in which the capitalist class knew how to use the state as an instrument of their class policy. But nonetheless, Italy was split up in the course of history into a mass of small and large states that were later robbed by Spain, France and Austria. Italy achieved complete national unification only after all the other European great states—with the exception of Germany.

The struggle for the national state filled many decades of the 19th Century; it assumed extraordinarily dramatic forms, led to a series of wars and popular movements; and gave the impulsion to a series of revolutions.

The struggle for the freedom of Italy, for the unification of Germany and the liberation of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Rumania from Turkish rule, the struggle of Poland for the restoration of the Polish state up to the uprising of 1863—all these are links in one and the same chain of events. All these are historically extraordinarily important episodes from the epoch of the struggle for the national state. In the Balkans, this struggle was drawn out until 1912-1913, and as late as 1914-1916, in the World War, we hear its faint echo.

By and large, the era of national wars, for Western and Central Europe, came to a close with the year 1871. The new imperialist epoch may be complicated here and there with elements of the national struggle—we are not dealing with a pure and whole undistorted phenomenon here, either—but there is no doubt that it is now a matter of an entirely different period in principle.

The struggle for the national state was a long-lasting process that took up many centuries of history. "Since the close of the Middle Ages history has been working toward constituting Europe out of great national states," writes Fr. Engels in a posthumous work, *Gewalt und Oekonomi bei der Herstellung des neuen Deutschen Reiches.** "Only such states," continues Engels, "are the normal political organization of the European ruling bourgeoisie, and are likewise the indispensable pre-condition for the establishment of the harmonious international coöperation of the peoples without which the rule of the proletariat cannot exist."

With the development of trade, of agriculture, of industry, and with the simultaneously consolidating position of the bourgeoisie, national sentiment grew everywhere, and the mangled and oppressed peoples began to strive for unification and independence. The revolution of 1848 therefore set itself the task everywhere—even in France where national unification was already accomplished—of fulfilling not only the general demands for emancipation but also to the same degree the national demands of the peoples.

After 1789, the "madness-filled" year 1848 was the most important historical event of the era which came to a close in 1871. The bourgeoisie finally felt itself to be the most important power in that Europe which had awakened to new life. Regardless of how the year 1848 actually turned out,

*Cf., Otto Bauer and Karl Kautsky, **Nationalität und Internationalität.**

*See this series of excellent articles by Engels, published by Bernstein in the **Neue Zeit,** 1895-1896, Vol. XIV, Book I, p. 679.

the bourgeoisie was now fully aware that the old days, the old lethargy, was at an end once for all. As a consequence of the gold mines discovered in California and Australia, and as a result of a series of other circumstances, there began a development of world trade relations and a growth of commercial business such as had never before been dreamed of. The bourgeoisie of every country had to think of how best to adapt itself to this development in order to guarantee its share.

Engels, with Germany primarily in mind, described in detail the economic situation of the time in Europe. The bourgeoisie felt it to be an untenable state of affairs when it ran into new customs barriers every couple of miles; it was just as unbearable that the units of weight, measurement and gold were so different and chaotic, that industry was hampered at every step by bureaucratic and fiscal obstacles, that national dismemberment and petty-statism became a direct hindrance, felt by every bourgeois, to the development of industry. Hence—the striving of the bourgeoisie for a united national state. "From this it may be seen," Engels remarks, "how the demand for a united 'Fatherland' possessed a very material basis." (*L. c.,* p. 680f.)

National Wars and National Revolutions

THE MOVEMENT TOWARD the national state was *inevitable.* But this is not to say that everything went off smoothly, that there were no elements that offered resistance to this historically necessary process. There were always different forces interwoven, actions and counteractions, elements of attraction and repulsion, of advance and of reaction, a progression and a retrogression.

Across the road to achieving the national state, historically necessary and conditioned by the whole economy, stood the dynastic interests of the reigning houses, stood the interests of the nobility and aristocracy who took up the struggle against the bourgeoisie, stood the interests of all of counterrevolutionary Europe. That explains why the road to the national state had to pass through a series of wars and revolutions.

After 1814, the wars and the revolutions were divided more or less according to plan. They followed each other in short periods: 1820-1823, 1830-1835, 1859-1870. Even bourgeois historians have recognized a certain periodicity of wars and revolutions.* Engels pointed out in 1885 that since the French Revolution (which lasted from 1789 to 1815 if all the events connected with it are counted together), revolutions and in general important political overturn were being repeated in Europe periodically, about every 15 to 18 years: 1815, 1830, 1848-1852, 1870/1871.

The wars of the French Revolution began under the sign of the struggle against alien rule, under the sign of the defense of national liberty. The Napoleonic epoch turned these wars into their direct opposite. Napoleon trampled the national feelings of many peoples under foot. Then Napoleon was vanquished. It must have been thought that now the principle of national liberty would have to win. In actuality, things looked different. The road of national liberty was blocked by *dynastic* interests. At the Congress of Vienna (1815) were assembled not true representatives of the people, but princes and diplomats.

*See, e.g., Seignobos, **Die politische Geschichte des gegenwärtigen Europa,** Vol. I, p. 2.

To the Congress of Vienna—as Engels said—the smallest dynasty meant more than the greatest people. Germany and Italy were once again dismembered and made into small states. Poland was partitioned for the fourth time; Hungary was subjugated. The European map was chopped up as though the specific aim was being followed of revealing, on the one side, the shamelessness and stupidity of the statesmen and diplomats and, on the other, all the impotence and helplessness of the European peoples at that historical moment.

The situation which the Congress of Vienna created in 1815 was pregnant with a whole series of new convulsions. The national aspirations were suppressed with a harsh hand. But they soon reappeared. They could indeed be put off for a certain time, but there was no way of killing what lay at the basis of the entire era, what was deeply rooted in the economic life of that time.

The national movements in Europe celebrated their resurrection in the second and third decades of the 19th Century. They were brought forward by the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829, on the one side, and by the July, 1830, revolution in France, on the other.

In direct connection with the Russo-Turkish war, the Greeks began their war of independence. Therewith began those movements in the Balkans which have continued down to our own days.

Further movements began after the July revolution in France: In Belgium, for emancipation from Holland's rule; in Poland, for national independence from Russia; in Italy, for national liberation from Austria's yoke. In all these countries, the uprisings were prepared by long years of national oppression. The July revolution only gave the impulsion, it accelerated the events which had matured in the course of history.

The 1815 Congress of Vienna had divided the countries in accordance with its own judgment, as it appeared to it to be most favorable for the reactionary monarchies of Europe. The kingdom of the United Netherlands was such a fruit of the reactionary policy of the Holy Alliance. Belgium was joined to Holland under the scepter of William I (of Orange). The powers who had defeated Napoleon needed the united Netherlands as a strong defense against France.

Belgium was thereby placed in actuality under the rule of Holland, William of Holland exercized a daily growing pressure upon Belgium. This pressure was felt by the Belgians in every field. At the union of Belgium with Holland, the former had only 30 million guldens in debts and the latter 2 billion guldens. Despite this, the burden of the general state debt was divided equally between Belgium and Holland. Dutch was proclaimed as the current language for Belgium as well.

All this had to lead to unrest. In 1828 and 1829 the movement was expressed in the form of petitions. For the protest petitions, 70,000 signatures were gathered the first time, and 300,000 the second. At first, the Belgians only demanded reforms, only a far-reaching autonomy. But the movement grew gradually and the demand for complete independence, complete separation from Holland, was put forth. William now hastened to make a few concessions. But it was too late. At the end of August, 1830, under the influence of the July days in Paris, the unrest in Brussels became stronger. On July 24, the king's birthday was to be celebrated. On the streets of Brussels appeared placards with these notices: on the 23rd there will be fireworks, on the 24th illumination, on the 25th revolution.* An uprising broke out in Brussels; the movement spread to other large cities of Belgium. The Belgian soldiers of the united army went over to the side of the insurrectionary Belgian people. Dutch troops went to war against Belgium. The bombardment of Antwerp, become famous in history, began. The Belgian National Assembly proclaimed the independence of Belgium. William of Orange continued to resist, toward which end he entered into various international combinations. The struggle lasted almost a decade. Only on April 19, 1839, was Belgium finally recognized as an independent neutral state. And from then on the monarchy was consolidated in Belgium. . . .

The July Revolution found just as strong an echo in Poland. The Polish uprising of 1830 was crushed by armed force. . . . We do not wish to dwell further upon it. . . . Its historical significance is generally known.

In 1831, a series of national-revolutionary insurrections began in Italy—Modena, Reggio, Bologna, Parma, etc. Like a raging storm, hatred swelled against the Austrian yoke. Austrian troops, in union with "patriotic" oppressors of the Italian people, choked the movement with blood and iron. Gallows, bayonets and prisons were the order of the day. Thousands of fighters for Italian freedom fell as victims. . . .

Every great overturn, every European revolution, every great war of that epoch brought forth immediately national questions and produced national movements. For in those days, it was *these* questions that were the hardest of all; almost all the conditions of the events of the time were based upon them.

For one or two decades the struggle for national freedom was suppressed. By an immense exertion of energy, this deferment was won by the counterrevolutionary European alliance. The revolutions of 1848 once again placed the question of the national state on the order of the day. But while the question was again posed, it was again not solved. None of the 1848 revolutions ended with a full victory of the people. The intervention of the reactionary states again exercized in places a decisive influence upon the outcome of the freedom struggles of the peoples. Mention should be made of the intervention of Russia in the Hungarian revolution.

The wars of the epoch that lies between 1848 and 1871 bore a predominantly national character. This fact does not, however, mean that there were no other wars in this period of time in which mere lust for conquest was decisive, wars caused by the colonial policy of old colonial states like England. This was the character borne by England's wars against China in 1840, 1856, 1860. Such was the Russo-Turkish war of 1828 which was localized at the time, and in many respects such was also the Crimean War which was complicated by the intervention of foreign states. Then, in the national epoch, the *national* war was complicated by the fact that from time to time elements were added to it that aimed at the robbing of colonies. In the present epoch of *imperialist wars,* national elements may indeed appear from time to time, but in reality such elements play a quite subordinate rôle. The epochs are in and of themselves quite different. . . .

The year 1848 shoved the national problem into the foreground. And the more the representatives of the old régime since the counterrevolution of

*A. Stern, **Geschichte Europas 1830-1848,** Vol. I, p. 100.

1849 endeavored to suppress the national aspirations, the greater was the strength with which the movement unfolded among the oppressed nationalities. The national question became the most important question in Europe, the cardinal point of all European politics. Life placed this question so much into the foreground that a figure like Napoleon III was able to build up his entire career in the domain of international politics solely on the national problem. The Bonapartist game of the "nationality principle" was the alpha and omega of his "system"! Throughout the almost twenty years of his exclusive rule of France, he followed his "nationality policy." And later on, the second outstanding figure of this epoch, Bismarck, owed the rôle that fell to him to the same "nationality policy."

There is of course a great difference between Napoleon III and Bismarck. The former oscillated between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the latter between Junkerdom and the bourgeoisie; the former represented France which had for many long years played the rôle of oppressor of foreign peoples (Germany in the first place), the latter represented the interests of dismembered and oppressed Germany. But Napoleon III and Bismarck had many features in common; the whole epoch had placed its ineradicable imprint upon them both. Engels and Marx were entirely right when they asserted that Bismarck was Napoleon III translated into German.

Napoleon III pursued his nationality policy, in one of Bismarck's words, for the sake of tips. Bonapartism could maintain itself *inside* of France only if it consolidated its position on the *international* arena, if it succeeded in getting France to play one of the first fiddles again in the European concert, and from time to time to bring home "tips" in the form of annexations and compensations. But such was the spirit of the times that a politician like Napoleon III had nothing left to realize this task with than the *exploitation of the liberation struggles of oppressed peoples* against alien rule. Napoleon III always had a political instinct. He sensed correctly that a process of immense importance was involved here, that the national question would remain on the order of the day until the question of the national state was solved, and that with a correct exploitation of this problem enough political booty could be carried off to last a lifetime.

During the Crimean War, Napoleon III first proposed to organize the national war of all the *Caucasian* peoples against Russia; and then—the uprising of the Poles and Finns. During the Italian War (1859) Napoleon sought, with the aid of Kossuth, to arouse the Hungarians against Germany. In general, the whole "Italian" policy of Napoleon III, his whole policy of supporting Italy against Austria, was inspired by the same aspiration: to gain for himself the benefit of the matured social pre-conditions for the national coming together of oppressed and separated peoples.

"The famous nationality principle is a Bonapartist invention which has the aim of consolidating Napoleon's Bonapartism inside of France. . . . After the *coup d'Etat* of 1851, Louis Napoleon, Emperor "by the Grace of God and the Will of the People," had to find a watchword, which would appear to be democratic and popular, in order to cover up his foreign policy. What could work better than the nationality principle?"

Thus wrote Fr. Engels on the "nationality policy" of Louis Napoleon* as early as 1866, that is, four years before Napoleon III's star sank.

The Congress of Paris, convened after the Crimean War in 1856, brought a great political victory for Napoleon III. He not only managed to get Bonapartist France a position again among the great powers, but exacted in addition autonomy for the Rumanian people and the discussion of the *Italian* national question. In these two countries, the national question served him as an object of speculation—just as the national dismemberment of Germany represented for him a still bigger and more profitable speculation.

Legend has it that Napoleon III, back in his earliest youth and then after acceding to the throne, took the sacred oath to devote his life to the emancipation and unification of Italy, the younger sister of France, linked to her by a common Latin culture. But Napoleon III must have forgotten this oath later, and Orsini, the friend of Mazzini, was obliged to remind Napoleon III of his Hannibal's oath by an attempt on his life. . . .

In reality, things were a good deal simpler. The Italian unification and all the national questions that were connected with the Italian unification, were only an *object of selfish business* for Bonapartist France. The tremendous national uprising of the Italian people, the stormy and passionate movement which gripped every stratum throughout Italy, which produced a series of national-democratic insurrections and figures like Garibaldi and Mazzini—this movement was utilized for its own purposes by the French Bonapartist bourgeoisie through its business managers and diplomats. In 1859, Napoleon III rendered active assistance to Sardinia against Austria. In 1866, he helped Prussia against Austria by means of his neutrality. Both times he allegedly supported national unification, first the unification of Italy, then of Germany. But the course of world history would have it that the national unification of Italy as well as Germany should be realized only after the overthrow of Bonaparte in the war of 1870-1871.

The wars of 1859, 1864, 1866 and 1870/1871 were closely connected with one another. Only in their sum did these four wars bring with them

*Frederic Engels, What Have the Working Classes to do with Poland? (To the Editor of the **Commonwealth.**)

the unification of Italy and Germany and the overturn of the Empire in France. That is why we wish to pursue systematically the events during these four national wars.

The National Unification of Italy

NATIONALLY SPLINTERED ITALY (like Germany) was, as we already said, a veritable treasure for Bonapartist France. The whole foreign policy of Napoleon III was oriented toward this splintering and the wars and popular risings following from it. As Engels once asserted, Napoleon III regarded the exploitation of the national movements in those two countries as an inviolate right for exacting "compensations" for himself. And so long as it was a question of Italy, Napoleon III's policy was crowned with success.

Since 1849, Italy was ruled without restraint by Austria, against which a general discontent manifested itself increasingly in this mangled and subjugated land. The national movement in favor of the unification of Italy became stronger by the year. The economic development of the country imperiously demanded unification. This task could no longer vanish from the order of the day, it awaited some sort of solution.

But in addition the international diplomatic situation was also favorable to an uprising against Italy's oppressor, against Austria. Napoelon III clung to that. After the Crimean War, Austria became the point of attack of all the governments. The Crimean War had brought all of them but poor results. The Western powers (England, France) were not serious about conducting the war. After the war, they accused Austria that the outcome of the war could be blamed only upon *its* irresoluteness—in reality, however, it was their own behavior that caused the outcome of the war.*

Besides the dissatisfaction on the part of England and France, Austria naturally drew the dissatisfaction of Russia. The aid which official Russia showed Austria in Hungary in 1849 was badly repaid by Austria during the Crimean War. Naturally, the assault upon Austria was now consoling to Russia. Since Napoleon had England, Russia and Italy on his side, he had no need to take any account of Prussia which, after the Congress of Paris, was generally treated only from above. The war against Austria for the liberation of Italy "up to the Adria" in the spring of 1859 was therefore proclaimed in accord with Russia. Thus it happened that not only selfish Bonapartist France fought for the idea of people's liberation and for national unification, but also old reactionary Russia! A sight for the Gods! The national movement in Italy was a progressive one in and of itself, it was evoked by the circumstances of economic and political life. And this movement, deeply rooted in life and progressive under the conditions of the time, was utilized by the dark forces of reactionary Europe for their own, self-seeking aims! That is how history wanted it.

Early in 1859 the war was declared and in the summer of the same year it was already at an end. Austria's position in Italy was not definitively

*Engels called the Crimean War an enormous comedy of errors, in which one must ask at every step: who is it that is deceiving the others? But this comedy cost mankind almost a million human lives. England conducted the war in order to prevent a further growth of Russia at the expense of Turkey. But outside these limits, it was only a "sham war" for England and France. And Russian diplomacy of the time succeeded in turning this war into a series of severe defeats for Russia. See the article of Engels in the **Neue Zeit**, 1895-1896, Volume XIV, Book I, pp. 682, 693.

eliminated. The point of complete unification of Italy, as prescribed in the program, was not reached. Only Piedmont was expected. In return Banapartist France received Savoy and Nice. Napoleon III got his *pourboire* [tip]. The dream of the Bonapartists was being fulfilled. The border of 1801 between France and Italy was reëstablished.

The Italian people could naturally not be satisfied with this outcome of the war. In order finally to achieve the unification of Italy, not only a war was needed, but also a revolution. And in order to *secure* the unification of Italy, not even war and revolution in Italy sufficed; three more wars and the revolution in France were required for that.

In Italy, at that time, big industry was just then beginning to unfold. The working class was still far from being expropriated and proletarianized; in the towns, the workers often still owned their own means of production; in the village, small peasant property prevailed, or else there was the tenant who worked only occasionally in various branches of town industry. For these reasons the energy of the Italian bourgeoisie was not yet paralyzed by the presence of class antagonisms between it and the mature, class-conscious proletariat. (*L. c.*, p. 684.) The revolutionary spirit of the Italian bourgeoisie had not yet fled, history had still proferred it a revolutionary mission.

Austria remained the national oppressor of Italy. It supported Italian splintering. Inside of Italy, Austria had more or less devoted friends among the Italian princes, the regents of certain Italian provinces. The elimination of national splintering signified for these princes the loss of power and income. Only under the protection of a foreign power like Austria could they maintain their régime of oppression within petty-statism. In the public opinion of the country, the hostile attitude toward the Italian princes therefore was bound up with the hostile attitude toward hated Austria. The rule of the princes was identified with the alien rule of Austria. The anger and the hatred toward Austria was carried over to the Italian rulers. The national movement against the external alien rule of Austria thus became at the same time a revolutionary movement of the Italian people against its own rulers, against its own Italian princes. The Italian princes constituted an obstacle in the way of the unification of the Italian fatherland. In order to achieve the emancipation and unification of the fatherland, the Italian people not only had to render the external foe harmless, but also to beat down the internal foe. Moreover, the politically progressive element of *similar* national movements lay precisely in this, that they absolutely had to lead to an irreconcilable struggle (often even to the point of civil war) of the popular masses against the highest summits. . . .

In Italy—thanks to the conditions described above—the town bourgeoisie became the pioneer fighter for national independence. It was supported not only by the urban popular masses, but in substantial measure also by the landed nobility, whose interests were also often harmed by the régime of the princes, who were Austria's servitors. This enormously strengthened the power of the national movement of the Italians. After the war of 1859, the main task that remained was the overthrow of foreign rule in Venetia. An intervention by France and Russia was now impossible. The national-revolutionary movement in Italy became broader and took on an ever

stormier tempo. On the scene appears the hero Garibaldi. With about a thousand volunteers he vanquished the kingdom of Naples, inflicted a harsh blow upon Bonaparte's interests, and attained the actual unification of Italy. Italy became free, and its unification was essentially completed. And this was attained not by the wily chess moves of Napoleon III, but by the revolution. . . .

But for really complete unification, even after 1866, the adherence of Rome was lacking. The defeat of Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian war was necessary in order to attain the incorporation of Rome. In August, 1870, the French troops of Napoleon III were forced to leave Rome in order to support the French position against the Prussian armies. Pope Pius IX nevertheless rejected all peace negotiations with the King of Italy aimed at the incorporation of Rome. Thereupon King Victor Emanuel II took to force. On September 20, 1870, the Italian army began to shell Rome. The Eternal City surrendered. The population of Rome voted 133,681 to 1507* in favor of joining the Kingdom of Italy. The unification was complete. In a short time the residence of the king could be shifted to Rome. . . . *(To be continued.)*

*Cf., Gottlob Egelhaaf, **Geschichte der neuesten Zeit,** Stuttgart, 1908.

G. ZINOVIEV

The Horrors of Chambers

Fact and Fantasy in Chambers' Revelations

The abundant skill of Whittaker Chambers as a writer is revealed in the way he has dramatized his career as a second-rate Stalinist functionary in the legal as well as the illegal apparatus, making himself appear as a star performer. Without the fortuitous circumstances of the Hiss case, however, Chambers could never have been catapulted to such public fame. Yet, in less skillful hands, the story of his "ordeal" in the long pages of *The Witness** might well have been a bore. Despite the chioroscuro tones of this utterly humorless work, and the atmosphere of unrelieved doom and gloom which pervades its pages, the book is an exciting narrative.

What makes the book important is the political climate of our times, for, whatever else it may contain, *The Witness* is concerned with the essence of politics in the Western world today: the struggle to defeat world Stalinism, the mortal enemy of bourgeois society, as well as of socialism, the working class and all humanity.

Chambers confronts the reader with a dilemma: the necessity of a war against Stalinism which, he asserts, capitalism cannot win. This does not, by any means, reflect the prevailing mood of the bourgeoisie. The problem faced by it, and especially its liberal wing is how to organize a successful struggle against Stalinist totalitarianism without at the same time destroying all of organized society.

The dominant trend is toward war. The Right would wage that war with or without the maintenance of democracy and democratic institutions . . . it all depends. The liberal wing also believes that war is inescapable, but it would prefer to wage the war democratically, through the extension of its new ideal, the "mixed economy," as the means of curbing reactionary monopoly capitalism.

In the present world situation, Chambers' book is a call for a Crusade of the Right. That is why the liberals, unavoidably united with the most backward segments of society around the principle of pure and simple anti-Stalinism, have been shocked by the essentially reactionary nature of *The Witness*. Pure and simple anti-Stalinism, on the other hand, seems to me to explain Sidney Hook's extravagant commentary in his critical review of the book when he wrote that "this volume (is) one of the most significant autobiographies of the twentieth century . . . throws more light on the conspiratorial and religious character of modern communism, . . . than all the hundred great books of the past combined (how the hundred great books of the past could have shed any light on the twenty-five year old Stalinist phenomenon, only Hook could venture to suggest)." Time will show that *The Witness* does far less for our understanding of the Stalinist phenomenon than dozens of other books have done, including several writings of Hook himself. It teaches us less than nothing about the basic characteristics of Stalinist totalitarianism.

The outstanding characteristics of Stalinism have been described long

*The Witness, by Whittaker Chambers, Published by Random House. 808 pages Index. $5.00.

ago, while Chambers was still one of its agents, by the socialist and Marxist movement, by the Trotskyists of the Thirties, and above all, most intelligently, by the Independent Socialist League and the *New International.*

The Witness is typically American in reflecting the political thinking of a section of the most powerful bourgeoisie in the world, its saber-rattling and its insularity. It is inconceivable that such a work could have been produced in Europe where the witch-hunt atmosphere is absent; it is inconceivable that a European Stalinist agent, in breaking with that movement, would have embraced God and Religion in so primitive and philosophically reactionary way that Chambers did. At least, we know of no such similar occurrence though there have been many agents of the Stalinist underground who did break with it. In the majority of those instances, the men broke on avowedly political grounds without seeking safety and salvation in the supernatural.

What surprises is not that Stalinism was able to spawn a Whittaker Chambers, but that so tiny a figure as he could, as a result of the Hiss case, in the current political climate of the country, rise to the level of an important figure. What saddens is that this depressing book is hailed by so many as a work of genuine stature, even by critics who assert that there isn't a single important thought in the book, or by those who reject almost every historical, political, and philosophical premise of the author.

One or two of the more perspicacious reviewers of the *The Witness,* correctly observed that the book would redound to the ultimate benefit of Stalinism, for Chambers reveals in his thinking, his religious conversion and zeal, his medieval philosophy, and above all, in his present politics that he remains a Stalinist type. Throughout the book there is ever-present, whether consciously or not is of no importance, that reverence for power, typical of Stalinist cynicism which Chambers has in abundant quantity.

If you take Chambers' belated description of the evolution of his break with Stalinism as the gospel truth, then you must conclude that he was not fully possessed of all his senses. But he was, and the book shows him to be an extremely conscious and often sagacious interpreter of his acts and his goals.

Despite Chambers' contention that his break with Stalinism was the result of a protracted evolutionary process, the facts show that it must have occurred rather abruptly. Though intending to convey that the process of disillusionment was a long one, Chambers himself unwittingly reveals that it occurred rather swiftly.

Until now, even the most critical reviewers have granted that the book is an "honest" account of Chambers travail, his role in the Stalinist party, his political doubts, and finally, his resolution to sever all ties with Stalinism. Yet we believe that giving Chambers all the benefit of doubt, his account of the break with Stalinism strains logic, if not credibility. Unhappily, the political situation, has made an objective appraisal of the book difficult. Critics may, for example, deplore Chambers' reactionary attack on philosophy, science, materialism and the significance of modern industrialism, as Hook does. They may, also, deplore his attack on the New Deal and Roosevelt as many others do. But for all of that, the unifying force of pure and simple anti-Stalinism, which makes of the fight against Stalinism a simple thing, excuses

many things, and the critics lend their several authorities to raise the stature of the man and to strengthen his essentially reactionary influence. The failure to understand the nature, significance and place of Stalinism in modern history leaves many critics confused and disarmed.

We believe that there is one other factor which makes itself felt in the reviews and which explains in part the perplexity of so many critics. It has to do with Chambers' religious conversion, which lies like an opaque film over his story. Yet it is considered bad taste to question a man newly come to God. It just isn't done. The assumption is made, that since the man has turned to God and religion, his description of the conversion must be true. How can a man lie about something so close to his soul? What right has another man to judge? If the story of his conversion is true (can it be false?), then everything else he writes about himself must, by the same token, be true. For no man can bare his soul as Chambers did and not be truthful about it. Fortunately, the literature of modern psychology and psychoanalysis teaches us much about the complexities and contradictions of man's conduct; it warns us against accepting the obvious, the expressed and avowed motives, and prepares for the surprises of the unconscious, the unavowed, the concealed. Good manners aside, the truth is more important than Chambers' conversion. He has no right to use God and Religion as a shield, but if he does so use them, they should be ignored, if we are to seek the truth and judge the credibility of his testimony.

CHAMBERS BARES MUCH of his character by what has already been termed the masochistic revelations of an unattractive personality. There are moments when he writes as though he lay on an analyst's couch describing the very depths of the childhood and family misery that went into forming the character of the man. Though we are unable to understand the full significance of the traumata of his childhood life, the effects these had on the malformation of his personality, are described somewhat fully by the author himself.

It appears that a rather repulsive act, not uncommon among children, which occurred at school in his early boyhood, imbedded itself so deeply in Chambers consciousness that he is able to write: "I think it was at that point that I developed a deep distrust of the human race." His whole early life was one of solitude. He had no love from his father, and no friends. He felt himself unattractive to girls and avoided their company. The absence of family warmth, of the lively existence of children's society, the sympathy and affection of mature people, only added to a bleak, empty and harmful environment. These explain in part, the cold, suspicious and essentially cynical nature of the man he became.

Chambers reached maturity in the years following the First World War. The economic and political world crisis of the time had a radicalizing influence upon him. He describes this development as it occurred while attending Columbia University. A trip to Germany during the inflation period of 1923 confirmed his radical views. He came back from Europe a communist. Now, the reasons why a man becomes a socialist are many: some are attracted by its ennobling ideal; others by intellectual conviction that Marxism supplies the answer to evils of modern society and the hope for the future of man; still others become socialists through the

economic, political and social pressures of capitalism. Once a socialist, however, a man becomes attracted to its ideal, its promise for mankind, no matter how his political conversion occurred. Insensitive indeed is the man who becomes a socialist and who has no regard or emotional feeling for the promise of the good society which socialism conveys. Such a man may cite scripture, and understand "historical law," and the "processes of history," but he remains a poor socialist, indeed.

Chambers conversion to socialism is a cold-blooded process, based on an icy objectivity. He saw Europe and he saw capitalism in disintegration. He was convinced that it was a doomed society. The future was represented by the Russian Revolution. Placed alongside the decay of European capitalism it reflected the power of the new, the promise of the future, and above all, it was successful!

In accepting Marxism and the pre-Stalinist communist movement, Chambers says little about its theories and principles, its program and policies, its strategies and tactics. The book is ideologically barren and this is all the more striking if we bear in mind the stages of political development which through Chambers lived. This, too, is an index of the man, for it becomes apparent that in becoming a socialist, he was motivated solely by a personal war with society and was never able to transcend this narrow motivation in the interest of the greater ideal. One can detect in Chambers' "political system" a respect for power *per se*. He was picking a winning side and this is reflected in the way he became a member of the Communist Party and the work that he did. You do not feel any surge in the man upon becoming a socialist; there is no sentiment, no emotion.

This is what we do learn! Whittaker Chambers joined the Communist Party in 1925. Almost immediately he became a functionary of the party by obtaining a post on the *Daily Worker,* of which he soon became an editor. Even though he was assigned to a branch, night work on the paper prevented his attendance at meetings. Although other night workers attended day branches, Chambers never sought out the affairs of the basic unit of the party. He was a member at the top, and as a result, became identified with the party bureaucracy.

In a party riven with factionalism, going through the process of transformation into a Stalinist organization, he manages to work quietly doing his job, i.e., writing upon the instruction of political superiors. He never expresses his own ideas, his own interpretations of events and problems, but merely writes on reflecting the rapidly changing positions of the party. Chambers says, he was repelled by the struggles which raged around him. He tried to rise above them. He was offended and aghast at the bitterness of the factional quarrels when there was so much to do towards the building of the party. Foster Group, Lovestone Group, Cannon Group, the expulsion of the Trotskyists which marked the first decisive step in the Stalinization of the party —all of this, the real political life of the organization, interested him not at all. There is not a single reference to a single political idea in this whole section of the book.

The story he tells, however, is incomplete. His indifference to the political struggles, to the ideas in dispute, and to the great schisms which developed, above all in the Communist International, were balanced off

by a faith in the current party leadership, the Lovestone faction. It happened to be the leadership of the party, and that was enough for Chambers. He supported that leadership and that is why he had the reputation in the party of being a Lovestonite. It was this adherence to the Lovestone leadership which was responsible for his subsequent sabbatical leave in 1931 and 1932, an action which Chambers now describes as his first "break" with the Stalinist movement.

Although he "left" the party, the party did not take him seriously. And even when he refused to appear before the Control Commission as requested, the party permitted him to write for the *New Masses,* its cultural magazine. In 1932 he became the editor. Chambers could never have assumed this post if there was any question about his loyalty, and he does not in fact, deny that he was loyal to the now completely Stalinized party. It was as editor of the *New Masses,* that he joined the party underground relinquishing a post he enjoyed so much. After a brief period with the party underground he graduated into the Russian military intelligence.

Now, in *The Witness,* Chambers describes with considerable skill that almost from the very beginning he was assailed by doubts about the movement and his work in it. He describes himself as an almost innocent man, more gullible than the average. His doubts about the movement drew him to religion. All of this began, he says, years before he actually broke with Stalinism!

Now, let us see what it is that strains logic and credibility, in the Chambers story. On page 26, he writes: "There is a difference between the act of breaking with Communism, which is personal, intellectual, religious, and the act of breaking with the Communist Party, which is organizational. *I began to break with Communism in 1937. I deserted from the Communist Party about the middle of April, 1938.*" (Emphasis mine—AG) The reader is asked to focus these dates sharply in mind, for they reveal Chambers' effort to absolve himself from Stalinist guilt, in what we shall attempt to show is reconstruction of his political biography.

We use the word reconstruction, because that is the only accurate way to describe the kind of personal history which Chambers has written. We do not doubt Chambers, the Stalinist; we do not challenge his description of the Stalinist conspiracy, or rather, that single aspect of it which engaged him. But we do say that the autobiography which he constructs is entirely too smooth, too pat, too self-serving for complete acceptance. Let us see why.

1925. The Witness recites the events which led to the suicide of his brother Richard Chambers. Whittaker Chambers had a close relationship with his brother though their lives followed different paths. The brother lived a hopeless existence, finding life oppressive and not worth living. Like Chambers, he had a strong suicidal urge. But where Chambers saw a way out of life's despair in the hope of socialism and in the activities of its movements, Richard Chambers saw only emptiness, wastefulness, uselessness. They conversed quite openly on the matter of suicide, Richard trying to convince Whittaker that they ought to take their lives, the latter urging his brother to become a socialist and find a reason for living. He pleaded in vain, for his brother replied that all were alike—capitalism socialism, communism, freedom, dictatorship—

life itself was oppressive and therefore nothing mattered. Unable to convince his brother, Chambers found himself saying suddenly: *"The Kingdom of God is within you."*

Chambers reproduces this incident in the book for the obvious purpose of impressing the reader with his innate religiosity; that even though he became a communist and then a Stalinist, he was not one of the Godless, but really a believer, if unconsciously. Is this really credible? We have only Chambers' word that the event occurred as he described it. The reader should remember that at the time it occurred, Chambers was about to embrace the Communist Party. He had no strong religious background and regarded himself as an atheist. He was endeavoring to win his brother to his beliefs, to make a communist of him and to inspire him to live on the basis of a new revolutionary doctrine. The brother rejects Chambers' plea in behalf of the vitality of life and struggle. "I was," said Chambers, "speaking as a Communist." But if all that Chambers could finally find to say in answer to his brothers' mood is that "the kingdom of God is within you," we can understand Richard's laughter and reply: "That's junk." In any case, it would seem that this final plea, coming from a revolutionary, a communist, a man who would redeem the world, was about all that Richard Chambers needed to convince him that his way out was the only one.

1928. We have already mentioned the fact that Chambers was a functionary from the beginning of his membership in the Communist Party. The pages dealing with the first years of his membership are noteworthy in their failure to refer to the ideas of the pre-Stalinist party, the program it followed or the activities that occupied it. Yet these were important years in the political history of the movement. It was precisely then that the historic struggle between Stalin and the Left Opposition was taking place in the Russian party and the State. Stalin was already reaching out to take over the Communist International which he did speedily.

This great dispute was no mere struggle for power. It revolved around the basic ideas of Marxism and socialism. It saw the adoption of the anti-Marxist doctrine of "building socialism in one country." There was involved the whole matter of what program the International should follow, which course of internal construction should be taken by the Rus sian party. The International was shaken by the conflict, yes, even the isolated and somewhat backward American party. Behind the apparently blind and pointless factionalism in the American party, was Stalin's fine hand manipulating all, fanning the factional quarrels today, cooling them tomorrow, but always keeping them alive until he succeeded in breaking down a recalcitrant native leadership into a docile Stalinist cadre. What has Chambers to say about all this? Literally, not a word!

Yet, in 1928, when he read the cable announcing the deportation of Trotsky to Alma Ata, in Siberia, Chambers wrote that the event left an "ineradicable char" on his mind! Why? There is no motivation for the remark. So "ineradicable" was this "char," that Chambers soon became an agent of Stalin.

The relation of this incident is one important test of Chambers' credibility. It might be said that in those years it was quite possible that Trotsky was a hero in the eyes of Chambers as he was to the revolutionary movement everywhere. There is no evidence of this, however, in Chambers' book. The deportation and expulsion of Trotsky was accepted by him, as it was by most party members, as a necessary step in the defense of the Revolution against one of its brilliant, but erratic and undisciplined sons. In any case, we have Chambers' word that his revolutionary heroes were of another type altogether. Ordinarily, a person, young or old, when becoming a socialist has his heroes, but as a rule they are the great masters of socialism, Marx, Engels, Kautsky, Plechanov, Lenin, and Trotsky, or such great leaders as Kier Hardie, Jean Jaures and Eugene V. Debs. In the case of Chambers they are none of these, none of the thinkers and none of the great leaders. They are Djerjinsky, the organizer of the revolutionary Tcheka; Eugene Levine, who when sentenced to death for his participation in the Bavarian Soviet of 1919, said: "We communists are always under the sentence of death"; and the Russian revolutionary Kalyaev, who in protesting the flogging of prisoners in Siberia, drenched himself in kerosene and set himself aflame! The name, Carl, one of which Chambers assumed in the underground was in honor of a young Letish terrorist named Karl Trauberg. The attraction of these personalities for Chambers seems indicated; they were symbols of the conspiratorial, of physical struggle, of terror, of pain, of death.

So, we say, Chambers comment about Trotsky's deportation, a sentiment which was not repeated when the Trotskyists were expelled from the American party, seems incredible and illogical, when placed against the evolution of his career.

1929. In this year, Jay Lovestone, indisputable leader of the Communist Party, supported by the overwhelming majority of the membership, was removed with his faction, from the leadership of the party. They were shortly thereafter expelled from the party and reconstituted themselves as the Communist Opposition. Chambers, who supported that leadership, and was known in the party as a Lovestoneite, remained silent throughout the period of the official campaign against the Lovestoneites, whose greatest crime was that they supported Bucharin, the official leader of the Communist International, at the precise moment when Stalin's "corridor congress" had already decided to remove Bucharin and to destroy him politically and, eventually, physically.

The Foster faction, together with the craven renegades of the Lovestone group, was subsequently to reconstitute a new leadership in the party whose only claim to this position was a declaration of unquestioned faith in the leadership of Stalin. Chambers writes that he was "confused and troubled" even though he survived the purge of the party after Lovestone's expulsion. He said he felt he had "no moral right to continue editing the *Daily Worker* where I had daily to set forth a political line with which I found myself in deep disagreement. . . ."

The events surrounding the expulsion of the Lovestoneites were "something for which nothing in my Communist experience had prepared me and which would soon cause my first break with the Communist Party," Chambers writes. At the time he thought the event had simply "the imprint of the peculiarly malevolent character of Joseph Stalin, his personal perversion of what in itself was good." It was only much later that he learned that it "was not that Stalin is evil, but that Communism is more evil, and that, acting through his per-

son, it found its superemely logical manifestation." So at that time his break was not an intelligent one, he adds, and therefore was not a real break at all.

What Chambers felt at the time really was outrage at the decapitation of a leadership which he supported. The Lovestoneites, however, were expelled in 1929 and Chambers' outrage did not assert itself until . . . 1931! How did he break with the party? He merely walked out of the *Daily Worker* office. He did not rise to his feet and protest, he did not write anything, he did not publicize his break (he was to repeat the same thing in 1938), and . . . he did not join the Lovestoneite or any other political current outside of and opposed to the Communist party. He was, in effect, a non-dues paying, non-card holding party member.

The test for this is the attitude of the party toward him. This we know by years of experience. Chambers never responded to calls from the Control Commission to appear and explain his conduct. Yet, he managed to write for the party's cultural magazine, in 1931 and 1932. He became the editor of that magazine in 1932. Now this could never have happened if the party had regarded Chambers *persona non grata,* and Chambers knows this to be the fact. The party permitted him to contribute to the *New Masses* and to become its editor because it regarded him to be a safe member and a victim only of pique. If his appointment as editor of the *New Masses* is not sufficient proof of this, then certainly his invitation to become a member of the underground apparatus, clinches the point.

1932-1938. We have passed through "the kingdom of God," the "ineradicable char," his "first break with the Communist Party." Chambers' career in the Stalinist movement now begins to zoom. In June, 1932, he was "invited" to become a member of the party's illegal apparatus. The invitation created a minor crisis for Chambers, but it was short-lived. Despite the objections of his wife he did join the party underground. Before long he was assigned to the Russian Military Intelligence and remained with it until he broke away in the middle of April, 1938.

Why did he join the underground? We believe it was in accordance with the man's nature. The misanthropic Chambers, remember, had always a "deep distrust of the human race." He "never had any real friends" and always felt that "I am an outcast." Evidently, never very comfortable in his relations with either individuals or groups of people, he felt attracted to a clandestine, lone existence, where responsibility for his actions would be on the heads of others. Despite his "misgivings" he is able to explain: "As a Communist, I felt quiet elation at the knowledge that there was one efficient party organization and that it had selected me to work with it."

The "quiet elation" was for a man of his temperment really enthusiasm. The ordinary person is repelled by the kind of activities and existence which composes the life of the espionage worker. It is a life based on subterfuge, misrepresentation, disguise, and entrapment of people. The espionage agent is a silent servant in a profession whose aims and strategy are uncontrolled by the participant. Independence of thought and action would violate the profession's credo: carry out instructions. Yet the circumscribed existence which his new role required gave Chambers a sense of being and power. Listen to how he describes his own reaction:

"There was also a little electric jab in the thought. In the nature of its work, such an organization could not pick its personnel at random. Therefore, for some time, it must have been watching me. Unknown to me, eyes must have been observing me. . . . It was clear that, reaching out, from where I could not tell, something completely unforseeable had happened to me, which could only mean a turning point in my life."

(My friend, Max Shachtman, told me that as early as 1929, long after the expulsion of the Trotskyites from the party, Chambers confided to him that he was then working for the GPU. Just exactly what this meant is hard to ascertain. Chambers may have acted as a courier on occasion, used his address for secret mail, or run errands for the illegal apparatus. The point is, that Chambers told this to Shachtman with evident pride. No greater responsibility could have been given him than to work for "the Russians." This helps to explain why Chambers so readily joined the GPU apparatus at a time when he presumably "broke" with the Party. And we are right in assuming that the party knew its man well.)

Chambers dropped out of all public life. From then on and for the next six years he remained a devoted, indefatigable worker for the Stalinist underground apparatus. It was an unspectacular activity, sometimes of little or no value, since he was more often than not a courier. But all of this was only preparation; before long he was assigned to one of the Stalinist cells in Washington to act as the liaison between the Russian representative of the Intelligence and the cell of government workers. In the book version of his life, Chambers asserts that even though he functioned in this apparatus and carried out instructions, the seed of his break was long ago implanted, unconscious though it may have been. The reasoning is teleological. The break began with the affirmation: The Kingdom of God is within you; it continued with Trotsky's deportation and the expulsion of the Lovestonites. So that even if Chambers did dig deeper into the Stalinist movement and serve it in a most loyal and efficient manner, this was only the conscious, the material, and therefore, superficial man acting. The soul of Chambers was preparing itself for the inevitable break with Stalinism. The reader therefore, should have nothing but compassion for the material Chambers, the Stalinist agent.

Within this period of six years, Chambers alludes to several important episodes to prove that in reality (that is, reality for a mystic) he was moving away from Stalinism.

Episode one: 1933. In that year, when he was already an underground agent, his wife became pregnant. The decision to have the child was a turning point in his life, because "If the points on the long course of my break with Communism could be retraced, that is probably one of them—not at the level of the conscious mind, but at the level of unconscious life."

Episode two: 1935-36. The great purges in Russia began in 1934 and lasted for four years. Along about 1935 or 1936 Chambers began to feel that something was wrong! Let him describe in his own way:

"In 1935 or 1936, I chanced to read in the press a little item of some nine or ten lines, perhaps less. The story said that Dmitri Schmidt, a general in the Red Army, had been sentenced and shot in Russia. I have forgotten whether it said 'for treason'. I had never heard of Dmitri Schmidt be-

fore. I still do not know anything more about him. He is a ghost who appeared to my mind a few hours after his death, evoked by a few lines of type.

"I do not know why I read and reread this brief obituary or why there came over me a foreboding, *an absolute conviction: Something terrible is happening.*" (Emphasis mine—AG)

Why is it incredible that Chambers should be shocked at this event and that it should give him reason to pause? Because up to that point, and after it, he remained indifferent to the violence of the Stalinist counterrevolution. Trotsky had been deported from Russia and hounded by Stalin across the European continent. Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bucharin had been arrested and jailed. Rakovsky was in exile. The terror after the Kirov assassination went on unabated. Frame-up trial followed frame-up trial. The pistol shots in the Lubianka rang without cease. Hundreds and thousands of the outstanding figures of the revolution had been destroyed or were wasting away in Siberia. The suffering of none of these touched Chambers. He lived through a counterrevolutionary terror which began in the late twenties and remained indifferent to it, according to his own story, until he read an item about the execution of an unknown Red Army General. But if it gave him cause for disturbance, enough to call it to the attention of his underground boss, J. Peters, it had no effect upon his work. It changed nothing in his way of life. He continued on as a Stalinist agent with even greater enthusiasm—if one is permitted to use such a word in relation to Chambers —than ever.

In an effort to lessen his guilt of silence and acquiesence to Stalin's reign of terror, and to explain away his own culpability in remaining an agent of this regime, Chambers dates the Stalinist counterrevolution to coincide with his final break in the year 1938, when in fact it had already taken place almost ten years before. It was the success of that counterrevolution which made the purges and trials possible. The success of the counterrevolution also brought Chambers into the Stalinist apparatus. So Chambers does not want the reader to miss his kindly, Christian compassion for those purged: He writes:

"The human horror of the Purge was too close to me to grasp clearly its historical meaning. I could not have said then, what I knew shortly afterwards, that, as Communists, Stalin and the Stalinists were absolutely justified in making the Purge. From the Communist viewpoint, Stalin could have taken no other course, so long as he believed he was right. The Purge, like the Communist-Nazi pact later on, was the true measure of Stalin as a revolutionary statesman. That was the horror of the Purge—that acting as a Communist, Stalin had acted rightly."

By what Communist, and not Stalinist, theory? What idea? What single thought? By none! Every totalitarian, reactionary, terrorist movement, carries on its violence against individual man and society because it believes itself to be in the right. Every dictator destroys any opposition to his rule, unleashes a reign of violence against the people because he believes himself to be right. The dictator and the totalitarian movement behave in this fashion—in the name of society and for the good of the people. But why must the rest of the world accept the premises of their terror and violence? Chambers can write as he does, because despite his

conversion, despite his Christianity, he remains in ideology, in temperment, a Stalinist. Stalin is not a great revolutionary statesman; he is an evil counterrevolutionary who has set back the progress of society. He represents power, the evil inherent in unbridled ower, power for reactionary purposes. It is this power which still fascinates Chambers.

Episode three: 1936. In the summer of that year, the Chambers and Hiss families went house-hunting to Bucks County, Pennsylvania. The Chambers family found a lovely stone house near New Hope. The family, including Chambers' mother, spent a congenial holiday there during the Christmas of 1936. Of what importance is this sentimental vignette to the Chambers' story? Merely this: "In retrospect, it is clear that our life in the stone house had influences on us which, at the time, and even much later, we did not realize. I suspect that in that simple, beautiful and tranquil haven, and from the warm neighborliness of the Marshalls, *a subtle chemistry began its work, which if it were possible to trace it, would be found to have played an invisible part in my break with Communism.*" (Emphasis mine—AG)

Episode four: 1937. At this time Chambers is supposed to have read *Assignment in Utopia* by Eugene Lyons, and its "fierce indictment of the Soviet Government and Communism . . . was one of the books that influenced my break with Communism."

Episode five: The exact year is not stated, but sometime in this period, Chambers states that he read Prof. Vladimir Tchernavin's *I Speak for the Dead.* The book had such a profound effect upon Chambers that he concluded about Russia and Communism: "This is evil, absolute evil. Of this evil I am a part." He is now shaken for the . . . how many times was it, six, eighth, tenth time?

It would appear from Chambers autobiography that he was in an almost continuous process of breaking with Stalinism. The dates run closely together: 1928, 1929, 1931-32, 1933, 1935, 1937. By 1937 life had become completely intolerable and he must break quickly with his movement. But not yet. He was to go on for another year and half, quietly, efficiently and loyally executing all his assignments.

In 1937, after the purges, the stone house, Lyons and Prof. Tchernavin, Chambers was preparing the introduction of his new boss, Col. Bykov, to Alger Hiss. Of Bykov, he said: "He was, in general, so unimpressive, his manner was so rude and his cynicism so habitual, that I was afraid that his effect on a man like Alger Hiss . . . would be a little short of disastrous." And so solicitous was Chambers about the underground, that even though he was breaking with the Communism which was "absolute evil," he began ". . . to prepare Alger for a disillusionment. I warned him not to expect too much, that *Bykov was by no means the best that the underground had to show, but that in him we served the party and not the man.*" (Emphasis mine—AG)

At another undated meeting with Col. Bykov in this period, he took the initiative to suggest contacting for the underground, an explosives chemist, with whom another apparatus had once had relations. Still later on in 1937, he spent an evening with Julian Wadleigh at which both discussed their troubled lives. Chambers says "it was the night when I faced the fact that, if Communism were evil, I could no longer serve it, and that that was true regardless of the fact that there might be nothing else

to serve, that the alternative was a void." It was that void, *having no one to serve,* that kept Chambers working on for another year in the Stalinist apparatus, and caused him to remain silent for so long after he broke with it.

Chambers speaks of the "screams" of Stalin's victims, and their effect upon the devoted Stalinist. What Chambers does not say, is that through the whole period of the several Moscow Trials, the formation of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, and the Commission of Inquiry into the Moscow Trials, headed by John Dewey, he was silent —the screams did not reach his ears. He would not have been the first Stalinist to have heard and remained silent. What is incongruous is that he remained silent when he already believed his movement to be "absolute evil."

Of what purpose is this summary of Chambers' rationalization of his career as a Stalinist agent? Is it only to say as Manes Sperber writes in the *The Burned Bramble* that all of it is "as untrue as all autobiography?" No, there is truth there, but Chambers cannot tell the whole truth; he is not an objective historian or politician.

THE STORY OF HOW he broke with the apparatus and the movement forces doubts about his version of the affair and the purposes of his actions. Was he disillusioned truly with Stalinism? Very likely. But the book does not, despite its great length, make very clear the propelling reasons for it, except that he lost faith and believed the movement was evil. But he had not yet joined a church. In the whole period between the preparation for the break, the break itself and his future association with the church, he devoted his time to a brief attempt to win to his side those people in the apparatus whom he liked; then he went into a silent underground of his own. Safeguarding the life of his family and his own from the long arm of Stalinist vengeance was his paramount aim. What Chambers did when he became an informer, however, was something he was determined not to do in 1938.

I believe it is fair to say that Chambers wished only to retire to an anonymous existence; to leave the party quietly and to live quietly. The great motives which he now spins for his "courageous" decision to come out into the open are part of the vast construction of the book.

In 1938, Chambers decided that the only way to escape the vengeance of the Stalinist underground was to go underground from the apparatus itself and to show the party that he meant it no harm, planned no public demonstration or exposures. His own awareness of the problem is clearly stated in the book:

"When a man deserts from such a concentration of hidden power as I have described, and the much greater power that lurks behind it, he challenges the underground in the one condition without which it cannot exist: its secrecy. The mere fact that the deserter, by an act of his own will, stands outside the control of the Communist Party is a threat. All revolutionary experience shows that there is only one guarantee of a deserter's silence: his death. Both the Communist Party and the deserter know, too, that if he goes to the police and informs against it, it will scarcely be worth the party's while to kill him. Thus, a race often develops in which the party's killers try to reach the fugitive before he can reach the police."

Actually, experience has shown that not everyone who has quit the Stalinist underground, made public his break with Stalinism and put himself at the disposal of a national state, escaped the Kremlin's pistol. But many have survived by doing exactly what Chambers described above. Why, then, did not Chambers avail himself of this measure of safety? Apparently because none of the great and moving principles which he now describes as the reasons for his course during the Hiss affair were in his consciousness then.

So quietly did Chambers depart his post, and so clear did he make it to the Party that he intended it no harm, that when he began to work for *Time,* the Stalinists and Stalinoids welcomed him and told him how glad they were that he got the job and not that Trotskyist, Philip Rahv. It is impossible, of course, to speculate what the Party and the illegal apparatus actually thought about Chambers actions. It is possible that in the beginning they believed that Chambers was merely repeating his action of 1931 and 1932; that it was harmless pique asserting itself once more. For, again, Chambers did nothing, said nothing, wrote nothing. The apparatus and the party were safe from exposure. This was true for a time, but as we now know, it was not a short time. Almost a decade passed before Chambers, who made one timid effort in 1939, spoke out fully and completely. He cannot, even with his own interests uppermost in mind, and with amazing skill for rationalizing the past, make out a good case for the long years of his silence. After reading the long chapters on the period in which he finally decided to become informer, it becomes clear that the decision to do so lay more in the pressures which were imposed upon him from the outside than from any inner moral urgings. The real explanation for his strange behavior is that there was no ideological basis to his break with Stalinism at the time it occurred. The following paragraph will show that in 1938 there was no doubt in his mind that his future as a Stalinist would remain unchanged.

Chambers has used God and religion as a shield for his equivocal conduct and only the great services he performed for the government freed him from the necessity of defending legally his own ambiguous activities and evasions which continued up to the very eve of the Hiss trial. For "until 1937, I had been, in this respect, a typical modern man, living without God, *except for tremors of intuition. In* 1938, *there seemed no possibility that I would not continue to live out my life as such a man. Habit and self-interest both presumed it.* I had been for thirteen years a Communist; and in Communism could be read, more clearly with each passing year, the future of mankind, as, with each passing year, the free world shrank in power and faith, including faith in itself, and sank deeper into intellectual and moral chaos." (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

The sudden break followed. Chambers went underground without undertaking any great crusade for God and liberty. It was in 1938, some months after he quit the apparatus, that he first met Isaac Don Levine, the notorious "expert" on all things radical.

Chambers talked to Levine about writing "two or three pieces about the underground, notably the case of Robinson-Rubens. *Nothing came of the project, about which, in any case, I was only half-hearted."* Levine urged *"me to take my story to the proper authorities. I had said no."* Chambers was still wary. But Levine told him he would try to arrange a

meeting with President Roosevelt and that reassured Chambers and he agreed. At this point the narrative is halted and months pass and we come now to the fateful year of 1939.

Apparently Levine did not succeed in arranging a meeting with Roosevelt and in the meantime Chambers began to work for *Time* magazine. He now made the acquaintance of General Walter Krivitsky. It was Krivitsky who convinced him to become an informer. Krivitsky is dead and there is no way to test the veracity of Chambers' story, particularly that Krivitsky asked him to arrange for his instruction and communion into the Episcopalian Church, a tale which other acquaintances of the ex-general find hard to believe.

In any case, in September of 1939, *almost a year and a half after he left the Stalinist apparatus,* Chambers made his first disclosures to Adolph Berle, then Assistant Secretary of State. The meeting was arranged by the insistent Levine. Chambers named the groups to Berle and listed the members who composed them and their activities. Berle made notes of his disclosures for the purpose of informing the President of Chambers' story. The facts about what happened then become quote obscure. Roosevelt is supposed to have laughed away the charges against Hiss. The administration did nothing. And, Chambers, too, did nothing. Neither he nor Berle remember too clearly what he reported. All that remains of this meeting is a written memorandum which the assistant secretary made at the time.

Chambers returned to his post at *Time* magazine. He was next visited by the FBI in 1941, the first time he had ever seen its agents. They came to see him because Ludwig Lore, now deceased, had denounced him as a Stalinist agent. FBI agents came to see him again in 1942 and 1944. He claims to have told the FBI's representatives part of the story of *The Witness*—not all of it by any means, however. They were as excited about it as Berle was in 1939. But nothing came of their visit in that year or subsequently.

Chambers now believes that it was because of the alliance between the U. S. and Russia during the war and the fundamental affinity between Stalinism and the New Deal. He asserts that the failure of the FBI to pursue their visits and to use his material was the "resolute lack of interest outside the FBI circles far above it (the Roosevelt administration) . . . which was slowly becoming an open secret known to government officials and newsmen. Meanwhile my own feelings about informing underwent a decisive change."

Chambers was now advancing up the promotional ladder at *Time* magazine and had decided that since the administration would do nothing about his disclosures, he would shift his fight against Stalinism to his columns in *Time* magazine!

Many of Chambers' opinions about the role of the administration in this period are based on inferences, as he frankly admits. But he need not have retreated so quickly. He could have gone to the Un-American Committee of the House and thrown the spotlight of publicity upon the Stalinists. Surely, that reckless body could have accommodated him as they accommodated lesser lights in the period of its complete disregard for congressional decorum and legal procedure. But Chambers didn't avail himself of this accommodating body. He *preferred* not to pursue the matter, because the initial impulse for his disclosures to Berle was not the desire to begin a crusade against Stalinism, but to respond to the political exigencies created by the Hitler-Stalin pact in August of 1939.

When war broke out in September, 1939, Russia was an ally of Germany and was to remain so until August, 1941, the month the Wehrmacht swept across the Russian borders. The correct inference to be drawn then, is that Chambers acted out of a cunning appreciation of the meaning of the Hitler-Stalin pact and the outbreak of the war, which must eventually involve the United States. In 1939 he had "no heart" for the business of informing. At the most he wanted to write a few articles on the underground and let it go at that. The pact and the war spurred Chambers on to Washington. But the first failure of the administration to respond enthusiastically convinced him to withdraw. And, of course, the evolution of the war which made Russia an ally of the United States undoubtedly militated against the hope that he might succeed after his first failure. It wasn't until many years later, in the reaction which followed the war, that Chambers had his second chance, and under the pressures exerted upon him, became the witness that the government sought against the Stalinist agents in its midst. What happened in the years of 1947-48-49 are too familiar to require any comment by us. Hiss was finally convicted and Chambers felt himself vindicated. For us, that is of the smallest importance. Without prior knowledge of a single fact which Chambers related about the Stalinist conspiracy, our understanding and appreciation of Stalinism was sufficient for us to assume the existence of a vast Stalinist underground here and abroad, wherever it could establish itself.

Chambers, however, has given an insidious interpretation to the exposure of the underground. He has assisted the reactionary, Neanderthal elements of the Republican Party to make a political issue of the affair, namely, that the Stalinist underground conspiracy could only have existed and prospered in a Democratic, New Deal Administration. There is a partial, but insignificant truth in this. But the whole charge is dangerous because the truth is, and Chambers knows this to be a fact, that the Stalinists seek to penetrate any state administration and have succeeded on a world scale to do so, whether the regimes are reactionary, reformist, or even fascist. The Chambers line (and McCarthy's and Nixon's too) is dangerous and disarming because it proceeds on the theory that Stalinists could not penetrate a Republican administration. We are not experts on the profession of espionage but common knowledge compels a rejection of that theory. The only way any administration could neutralize the Stalinist conspiracy, or any other nation's, is by counter-espionage, or the revelations of an ex-agent like Chambers.

IN THE VERY OPENING of his book, Chambers begs the forgiveness of society by describing the immensely moral and brave decision he made to act as informer. Naturally if he were going over to a winning side, it could be said, with considerable justification, that he became afraid and acted out of cowardice to embrace the most powerful political and military coalition in the present world situation. But, no. Chambers would have you believe quite otherwise. He writes about his elation at the decision to leave the Stalinist movement thus:

"This elation was not caused by any comparison of the world I was leaving and the world I was returing to. By any *hard-headed estimate, the world I was returning to seemed, by contrast,*

a graveyard. It was, in fact, the same world I had abandoned as hopeless when I joined the Communist Party in 1925. Only, now, its crisis, which a few men could diagnose thirteen years before, had reached the visible brink of catastrophe. And still that stricken world did not know the nature of the catastrophe. . . ." (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

In order to leave no room for doubt, Chambers adds:

"I wanted my wife to realize clearly one long-term penalty, for herself and for the children, of the step I was taking: *'You know, we are leaving the winning world for the losing world.' I meant that, in the revolutionary conflict of the 20th century, I knowingly chose the side of probable defeat. Almost nothing that I have observed or that has happened to me since, has made me think that I was wrong about that forecast.* But nothing has changed my determination to act as if I were wrong—if only because, in the last instance, men must act on what they believe right, not on what they believe probable." (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

No doubt, but in the case of Chambers, he has discovered, late in life, to be sure, God, and it is God, the all-powerful, the omniscient and the omnipotent, that has given him the strength to go on with his great crusade, even though this same God and his newly found religion, failed him on several occasions in his great travail, and will eventually fail him if we take earnestly his opinion about the world struggle just quoted.

Chambers does not always remember what he writes in this large book. For elsewhere in its pages, he states the matter of his role in the folowing way. It was a question of whether this "sick" society could "still cast up a man *whose faith in it was so great that he would voluntarily abandon those things which men hold good, including life, to defend it.*" (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

Who is Chambers talking about? Himself, of course. For truly, is he not a brave man to have such faith in this society though it be "a graveyard," the "losing world," the one which will undergo "probable defeat" at the hands "of the future." This is a man of great faith, indeed!

The story of Chambers' return to God, religion, and the 15th Century, is dreary and despairing. It is essentially primitive; in parts it is altogether adolescent; it is his "enlightenment" through the adoption of new dogma, the religious dogma, the religious dogma of the believer. His assertions about God and Religion are Stalinist in manner and tone, for they proclaim that his is *the* God, the New Testament, *the* religion, in a world divided between the Believers and the Godless."

At the risk of taxing my kind readers, I shall return once more to a new "origin" of Chambers disillusionment with Stalinism. While a number of "breaks" have been cited, all of them tending to show that Chambers actually began to break from the Communist Party even before he joined it, we are compelled to cite one other because it introduces us, at the same time, to Chambers' religious conversion. His break with Stalinism began, as he claims and as you already know, before he "heard the screams" of Stalin's victims. "I do not know how far back it began," says Chambers this time. But "avalanches gather force," you know, and he finds a new date for his break with Stalinism. The year nineteen thirty-four. He writes:

". . . I date my break from a very casual happening (now he is certain, you see—A. G.). I was sitting in our apartment on St. Paul Street in Baltimore. It was shortly before we moved to Alger Hiss's apartment in Washington. My daughter was in her high chair. I was watching her eat. She was the most miraculous thing that had ever happened in my life. I liked to watch her even when she smeared porridge on her face and dropped it meditatively on the floor. My eye came to rests on the delicate convolutions of her ear—those intricate, perfect ears. The thought passed through my mind: 'No, those ears were not created by any chance coming together of atoms in nature (the Communist view). They could have been created only by immense design.' The thought was involuntary and unwanted. I crowded it out of my mind. But I never wholly forgot it or the occasion. I had to crowd it out of my mind. If I had completed it, I should have had to say: Design presupposes God. I did not then know that, at that moment, the finger of God was first laid upon my forehead." (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

God, indeed, had even spoken directly to Chambers. During his great personal crisis, when the Hiss case was brought into the open, and when he felt he could not go on, that he must surrender to his weaknesses, he heard His voice. It occurred one day as he was coming down the stairs of his home in Baltimore:

"As I stepped into the dark hall, I found myself stopped, not by a constraint, but by a hush of my whole being. In this organic hush, a voice said with perfect distinctness: 'If you will fight for freedom, all will be well with you.' "

What God meant by freedom, Chambers does not say, but what the author of *The Witness* means is clear enough. He describes it by saying that "freedom is a need of the soul, and nothing else."

No wonder Max Ascoli is forced to write: ". . . it is difficult to see how Chambers' god can keep his part of the compact, for he is a horribly weakened god, abandoned by large masses of men who have gone to the other side—the side which Chambers maintains is winning. There is not much hope to be found in this book that the trend may be reversed and that the attempt to stop Communism can be anything but a suicidal foray on the advancing conquerers. Yet, through Chambers, this god asks for the tribute of men ready to die."

With that declaration, however, it is easy to understand the evolution of this man from authoritarian Stalinism to authoritarian religion, from political dogma to religious dogma. Both conversions, the Stalinist and the religious, are cooly and calculatingly achieved with a similar cynicism about mankind, society and life in this world, and man's real history.

What is wrong with this world, asks Chambers? Is it economics? Obviously not. "Economics is not the central problem of this century. It is a relative problem which can be solved in relative ways (!). Faith is the central problem of this age. The Western world does not know it, but it already possesses the answer to this problem—but only provided that its faith in God and the freedom He enjoins is as great as Communism's faith in man."

Is this what will win the masses of the world, the great bulk of the peoples who inhabit Asia and Africa, to the struggle against Stalinism? Does a Stalinist break "because he must choose at last between irreconcilable opposites—God or Man, Soul or Mind, Freedom (Chambers' brand) or Communism." The Stalinists must be roaring out loud, indeed, if this is the Western program of struggle against it. But there is no halfway house for

Chambers, the man who had "tremors of intuition," to whom God has spoken directly and personally. He lumps together and condemns science, rationalism, the Enlightenment and human progress.

All of history is so simple that Chambers can pronounce: "There has never been a society or nation without God. But history is cluttered with the wreckage of nations that became indifferent to God, and died."

Chambers reduces the world struggles to his own terms as: "Faith in God or Faith in Man? is the challenge." And he answers this challenge by declaring that the world can only be saved by "Faith in God." He identifies intelligence, science, materialism, rationalism and progress with man, and then equates these with Stalinism! Therefore, only theists can resist Stalinism and save mankind, asserts this morbid and cynical man. Mankind thus has only one of two alternatives: worship God or Stalin! Is it any wonder that a Pennsylvania judge called the book propaganda for Stalinism?

The truth is that Chambers has no genuine sense of values, no high purposes, no real moral faith in life and man. He is a self-confessed mystic, and a nihilist. He still retains a deep distrust of the human race, shows no passion for mankind, for the life itself. His return to the soil is a flight from life. That is why he concludes his book by describing his wait for death. No wonder, Ascoli wisely wrote that "According to Chambers, a well-spent life seems to be a form of staggered suicide."

THE VICIOUS POLITICAL CONCLUSIONS of Chambers brought a sharp protest from his liberal critics. In ending his story he explained his difficulty in exposing the Stalinist apparatus not on his own malefactions but the obstructions of the Democratic administration resting upon the "philosophy" and practices of the New Deal. Here he joins hands with the most reactionary forces of American life.

"The simple fact," writes Chambers, "is that when I took up my little sling and aimed at Communism, I also hit something else. What I hit was the forces of that great socialist revolution, which, in the name of liberalism, spasmodically, incompletely, somewhat formlessly, but always in the same direction, has been inching its ice cap over the nation for two decades. This is not a charge. My opinion of that revolution is not at issue. It is a statement of fact that need startle no one who has voted for that revolution in whole or in part, and consciously or unconsciously, a majority of the nation has so voted for years. It was the forces of that revolution that I struck at the pont of its struggle for power."

Elsewhere he writes:

"I saw that the New Deal was only superficially a reform movement. I had to acknowledge the truth of what its more forthright protagonists, sometimes unwarily, sometimes defiantly, averred: the New Deal was a genuine revolution, whose deepest purpose was not simply reform within existing traditions, but a basic change in the social, and, above all, the power relationships within the nations. It was not a revolution by violence. It was a revolution by bookkeeping and lawmaking."

There follows then an indictment of Congress, the Supreme Court, and all other agencies of the government as the instruments of this revolution. Is Chambers naive? Does he really believe the above? Or is he a mischievous, malicious, diabolical creature. He may be all of that, but he is certainly an irresponsible one. The whole thing is simply incredible for below the level of the writing, in the man's heart and mind, is a vicious hatred for all progress, even meagre bourgeois progress, if it violates in any way the dark, reactionary moods of the ex-Stalinist, Chambers. It would be a vain and thankless task to discuss this "statement of fact." For Chambers, this indictment of so large a segmant of American bourgeois society, the majority, it would seem, only narrows his host of believers and makes the struggle against Stalinism more hopeless even than he avers. In psychological terms, it would seem that in his own lunge toward self-destruction, he would take the whole world with him.

The absence of clarity of the liberals, ex-radicals, ex-socialists and ex-Stalinists on the nature of Stalinism, creates enormous political difficulties for them and prevents them, for example, from speaking out more bluntly on Chambers and his book. They have looked at the skilfull writing and admired it. They have read his vigorous description and indictment of an aspect of Stalinism and praised it with far less intelligence than we had expected. Some are appalled at the book's authoritarian tone, its religious absolutes, and its dogmatic assertions —the style of them borrowed from the Stalinist school of knowledge.

What they will not recognize and understand is that Stalinism is a new social and political phenomenon, without precedent in history, and the product of modern social conditions in bourgeois and Russian society. To say that it emerged from the mistakes, of the Russian Revolution, from the movement of Marxism and socialism, is not to say very much instructively about it. By the same token, Marxism, socialism and the Russian Revolution arose out of capitalism; they could arise out of no other social order.

Stalinism is a distinctively new social movement having nothing in common with the great ideas of Marx and the great ideal of socialism. The great Socialist vision of a classless society has been replaced with the reality of a Stalinist class society. Freedom from class oppression and exploitation has been replaced by a new class oppression and the worst exploitation that modern man has known. The hopeful democracy of the early Revolution, a Revolution which the Western bourgeoisie helped to strangle, has been replaced by the most immense and intense police regime known to us. There isn't a single important idea in Marxism, not a single socialist ideal, embodied in the Stalinist regime. Stalinism is something new in social development and it should not be difficult to see its characteristics as a new exploitive society based upon collective, or more precisely, state ownership of the means of production—a new class division between the dominant bureaucratic collectivist regime and the mass of people. It is a productive system based in considerable part on slave labor.

Stalinism is the greatest enemy of the working class, of socialism, of the future. But by the nature of its system, it is also anti-capitalist. It employs socialistic slogans; it appeals to the masses demagogically, yet cleverly exploits its desires and needs. It is successful because the bourgeois world, reactionary and motivated by retrogressive self-interest, produced, in turn, by its class nature and class interests, does not begin to understand how to struggle against this vast plebian movement.

The liberals and the Exs join the reactionaries in treating Stalinism as

though it were socialism, the Russian system as Marxism. In this way they play into the hands of reaction; they stimulate opposition to the merest of reforms and the least of the hopes of the liberals. To reactionaries, the "mixed economy" is merely another form of collectivism and therefore socialism.

What great hope, what vision, what future do these new friends and defenders of bourgeois society offer the new generations of the Western world? None but war and military victory over Stalinism, a military victory that could never be achieved without the veritable destruction of all society. In ranting and raving, as the bourgeoisie does, that Stalinism is conspiracy, the liberals and the Exs strengthen the Kremlin. It is not the spy or the espionage organization, or even the Stalinist agitator, who threaten society. It is the objective social condition, the poverty, the misery, the hunger, the suffering and the hopelessness of present society that gives Stalinism its strength.

Granville Hicks almost touched the problem in his review of Chambers' book when he wrote: "I have talked to undergraduates about the character and the danger of Communism, only to be asked to give them a program that would do for their generation what Communism did for mine (he is referring to the dynamic character of Stalinism in the crisis of the Thirties), and I have realized with despair that I had failed to teach them the one lesson I wanted to teach—that our basic mistake lay in demanding *the* way of salvation."

Was that the mistake? Or was it that he offered them *no* way of salvation. Having fled Stalinism, which he mistakenly identified with socialism, he now rejects socialism itself. In rejecting socialism, the common ailment of the Exs, he has nothing left to offer except that he failed to teach that "our basic mistake lay in demanding *the* way of salvation." His dilemma will become even greater when he attempts to describe the *ways* of salvation. For he will remain where he is now, without *any* way of salvation but the counsel to await social doom and to hope in vain that somehow, somewhere and in some way, mankind will emerge from its present impasse. Who will be inspired with this message? It is on such emptiness that the "spirit" of Chambers soars.

The discussion over Chambers' book emphasizes again that only socialism can free society from the threat of Stalinism, for as long as capitalism remains, as the barrier to all social progress, Stalinism will be with us. Of the many things that have been said about *The Witness,* one thing, however, has been omitted: it is, if nothing else, a well-invented book.

Albert GATES

In the Coming Issue:

another chapter from

THE WAR AND THE CRISIS OF SOCIALISM

by G. Zinoviev

Correspondence

To the Editor:

Don Harris' review of *The Organizational Weapon,* by Philip Selznick, in the May-June issue of the NEW INTERNATIONAL is basically sound as a criticism of Selznick's main thesis: Stalinism is the result of the "inherent logic" of Leninist principles of organization. He might have pointed out that in his concluding chapter Selznick insists on "the *subordinate* role of organizational activity in the struggle against totalitarianism . . ." since "great social issues, such as those which divide communism and democracy, are not decided by political combat," etc. This is purely formal genuflexion in the direction of politics, of course, and has little to do with the rest of the work which is nothing less than a *Handbook to Defeat the Commies by Purely Organizational Means* as the blurb so clearly points out. Thus, as a theoretical inquiry into the relationship between politics and organization the book is a failure, even though it contains some interesting *descriptions* of present-day Stalinist organizational methods.

Unfortunately, Harris takes this opportunity to dismiss, in a rather offhand manner, Selznick's *area of investigation* as a significant subject for scientific inquiry, by asserting:

> Different conditions (!) call forth (!!) parties of different types and organized according to different principles.

If this is true then there is obviously no need for an independent investigation of political combat or organizational concepts. But part of these "conditions" are the theories, attitudes and methods—the conceptions of organization—held by the people who make up the party. If these have no (or little) influence why will Harris be found heatedly defending the organizational practices of the *Independent Socialist League* against those prevailing in such organizations as the I.W.W., the Socialist Labor Party, the S.W.P., the British Labor Party or the American S.P.? If a minority (part of the "conditions") of the I.S.L. arose demanding a monthly renewal of leadership, or the principle of no re-election, on what grounds would he argue against it?

HARRIS DOES RECOGNIZE that "the working class needs parties of a different kind." (It is interesting to note that fifteen years ago he would have written "a *party* of a different kind" thus showing that he has learned a valuable *organizational* lesson from the rise of Stalinism). In practice, of course, no one waits for the "conditions" to produce these kinds (what kinds?) of parties. People set about building parties based on certain "principles" (constitutions, structures, internal methods of operation, etc.) and even socialists manage to perform this thankless task fortified by the happy thought that "there can be no rules for creating a socialist party . . ." (an irresponsible statement) and ". . . much less for 'guaranteeing' it from degeneration . . ." which is true but beside the point.

The point is that the working class has had parties of *many* different kinds (not to speak of the endless array of unions, cooperatives, friendly societies, leagues, etc.), and that a systematic inquiry into the relations between organization and politics is perfectly legitimate and could prove helpful to socialists. Since Harris has not made such a thorough investigation (neither has Selznick for that matter) what evidence prompts him to

rashly refuse "any independent significance" (hastily changed to "a predominantly influential role" as though these two formulations were not miles apart) to the organizational question?

Not only is this attack on the idea of "guaranteeing" a party from degeneration a second-rate *hedge* (since it is possible to smoke out organizational practices which *contribute* to bureaucratization without directly and immediately determining the policies of a party), but it unwittingly cuts down our effectiveness in attacking Stalinist organizational practices (others as well) which are repugnant *in themselves*. Any persistent (long-term) use of certain organizational methods (in this Harris is correct) is intimately connected with the politics (social character) of the given organism. That is, a permanent tension or contradiction in the two realms would sooner or later become intolerable. But this commonplace observation does not automatically solve the problem of the specific weight of each "factor" in the process. We know, for example, that the *bureaucratic conservatism* of the Cannon regime in the *Socialist Workers Party* contributed heavily to its *political* degeneration in the direction of Stalinism and is probably *decisive* at the present moment in inhibiting the growth of a pro-socialist faction in the organization. How else can we explain the dead silence which eminates from the ranks of this (once Trotskyist!) party as its leadership heads toward complete organizational-political capitulation to totalitarianism?

Harris would probably agree with most of this but that did not prevent him from formulating his criticism of Selznick in a mystical-deterministic manner which leans in the direction of organizational fatalism. In so far as this tends to inhibit a sympathetic and experimental (at least open-minded) attitude toward organizational forms and methods, it has definitely become a reactionary obstacle to Marxist thinking in this area, and is harmful to the present needs of the socialist movement. This attitude has not prevented fruitful and necessary changes in the *Independent Socialist League;* it should now give way before an active *interest* in the problems of democracy and organization and the application of what can be learned to immediate problems.

There is, for example, the immediate and pressing question in present-day England of countering the social democratic tendency toward bureaucratic collectivism with a practical and concrete program of democratization. To believe that this problem has only a political dimension is to shut one's eyes to reality. Next to the Tories, the greatest obstacle to socialism in England today is the bureaucratization of the nationalized economy. One of the greatest obstacles to the *Bevan movement* is the undemocratic character of the working-class organizations (the unions, the B.L.P., etc.) To solve the problem of workers' control independently of the political struggle (like the Fabians) is useless; to "solve" it with general phrases such as "democracy" or "real democracy" is to refuse to recognize the problem. If the left wing of the Bevan movement were armed with a concrete, practical program for the democratization of the British Labor Party, and made this one of its principle demands, it would do more toward congealing a truly socialist faction than any other means. If it demanded the immediate and thorough structural democratization of the unions controlled by the Bevan faction, if it proposed, perhaps even as possible strike demands, specific measures toward workers' control of the nationalized industries, this would also be a *political* blow against the Tories and against the bureaucratized right wing. Why should it do this if it is convinced that organization (structure in this case) has no "independent significance"?

If, with Lenin, we insist on the crucial character of organization to the socialist revolution, and the struggle for workers' power which prepares the way for it, then the Independent Socialists should encourage thinking and action along these lines.

Robert MARTINSON