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***The End of Socialism:
A Review of Isaac Deutcher***

By Max Shachtman

Crisis in French Stalinism

By A. Gramsci

BOOKS IN REVIEW

35¢

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The End of Socialism: A Review of Isaac Deutscher

An Analysis of Deutscher's Biography of Leon Trotsky

A biography of Leon Trotsky, written by an author who understands that his life was nothing more than his political ideas and political activities, is of necessity a political document. The fact that this biography* is written by Isaac Deutscher gives it more than ordinary importance. He brings to his work the extensive knowledge of his subject acquired through active participation in the revolutionary movements with which Trotsky was so prominently associated and through earnest research into materials not easily available to others. The bourgeois caricature of Trotsky as an incorrigible and irresponsible firebrand maddened with the lust for personal power does not even concern him; and he allows the clearly marshalled facts to dispose of the legends and calumnies disseminated by Trotsky's Menshevik adversaries, on the one side, and on the other by those he calls the Stalinist tomb robbers and ghouls. He knows he is writing about a man of heroic gifts and attainments, of such stature that it seems society must rest up for generations before being able to produce his like again.

Deutscher is no uncritical adulator. Far from it, indeed. The deep respect

*The Prophet Armed—Trotsky: 1879-1921. By Isaac Deutscher. 522 pp. Oxford University Press. New York, London. \$6.00.

he has for Trotsky, and the recognition that he is one of the very greatest men of our time, is evident throughout his study and is overwhelmingly justified by it. Simply by sticking to the facts, Deutscher shows that whatever Trotsky's shortcomings may have been in one respect or another, there cannot be found another man in his time, and very few before him, who combined such an extraordinary range of extraordinary talents developed to an extraordinary degree. In one human shell was found the most audacious and sweeping revolutionary theoretician of the century; the greatest strategist and tactician of the revolutionary uprising ever known, as well as the greatest field commander of insurrection; one of the most outstanding military thinkers, organizers and leaders of his time, all the more remarkable because of the complete amateurishness in practise with which he entered the field of armies and warfare; by far the most scintillating, the most elegant and the most eloquent orator-writer and certainly the most shattering polemicist of the age; as well as political and party leader, statesman, diplomatist, agitator, administrator, industrial director, historian, literary critic, journalist—and all of these of the very first water. If Deutscher had less than admiration

for such a man, his biography would be suspect from the start. Yet he does not allow this feeling to cancel his objectivity and sense of criticalness. In fact, he seems to feel the need of qualifying the proportions of his admiration by what is often an exaggerated correction of Trotsky's portrait in a double sense: in one, by chiding Trotsky for generously attributing to Lenin an undeserved superior role "in some crucial points," and in the other by a severity of judgment against Trotsky which is not particularly opposite. But these are after all trivia by the side of the dimensions of authenticity, for in drawing this kind of portrait a man is entitled, presumably, to a modest freedom in the use of highlight and shadow—cavil, reservation and predilection.

DEUTSCHER HAS PERFORMED a precious service, in general to all those who are interested in historical truth and accuracy and in particular to those who are interested in the revolutionary movement. Although this book is actually only the first part of the biography he planned to write—it covers the period from Trotsky's birth in 1879 to about the mid-period of his life, in 1921, leaving the remainder of his life to be dealt with in a second volume called *The Prophet Unarmed*—it already supersedes, in respect to documentation on the life of Trotsky, everything else that has been published, not so much in particular as on the whole. For example, Max Eastman's biography, written thirty years ago, gives a warmer and truer picture of Trotsky as a youth, before he became a Marxist and in the course of his becoming one. But the social and political background which Deutscher gives of that period in Trotsky's life lends his work a greater solidity in spite of some arbitrary conclusions

about Trotsky's personal and political character that he has a foible for drawing irrelevantly from casual remarks or occurrences or other bagatelles. Elsewhere in the work, Deutscher provides us with information and insights that have either been partly or totally neglected by other biographers, and are given only the scantiest mention, if mentioned at all, even in Trotsky's autobiography. Where Victor Serge, in his posthumous biography, rushes through Trotsky's life up to the year 1917 in a couple of dozen skinny pages, Deutscher's biography devotes more than a couple of hundred to the same period. In a sense, they are the most valuable pages, in that they deal with the material which is hardest to find or to get at. They give us our first substantial portrait of Trotsky as a beginning journalist and feuilletonist during his first Siberian exile, with examples from his writings that help us follow his intellectual formation. In the same pages we learn about Trotsky's generally unknown writings, in the same period, on the literary giants of his day: Zola, Hauptmann, Ibsen, D'Annunzio, Maupassant, Gogol, Gorky and others, and the shaping of his views on literature and art in general. Our first extensive glimpse of Trotsky's political and military writings as correspondent during the Balkan War of 1912 is provided by Deutscher's book. It gives us also our first intimate knowledge of Trotsky's remarkable articles during the First World War on the military-technical aspects of the conflict.

If the fate of Trotsky's writings, we repeat, and the extent to which they are read or ignored had not been so inseparably bound up with his political fortunes and with the sympathies and antipathies that his mere name evokes, he would have had his niche in literature on the strength of these writings alone.

To disinter and assemble all this

material would be to any writer's credit, especially when the material relates to a man about whom more falsehoods and calumnies were consciously and consistently spread than about almost any other public figure in the past thousand years. Yet that is not the purpose—not the main purpose—of Deutscher's work. After all, that purpose was served, and not badly, by Trotsky's autobiography, a work as unique in political literature as was the campaign of falsification which it refuted. Deutscher acknowledges that "after a close and critical examination I still find Trotsky's *My Life* as scrupulously truthful as any work of this kind can be." Nevertheless, adds Deutscher, Trotsky

did not and could not satisfactorily explain the change in the climate of the revolution which made his defeat both possible and inevitable; and his account of the intrigues by which a narrow-minded, "usurpatory," and malignant bureaucracy ousted him from power is obviously inadequate. The question which is of absorbing interest to the biographer is: to what extent did Trotsky himself contribute to his own defeat? To what extent was he himself compelled by critical circumstances and by his own character to pave the way for Stalin?

That is the question Deutscher sets out to answer. A more meritorious enterprise may exist, but we do not know what it is. For the answer to the question directly concerns the most vital and burning problems of world politics today. And there is nothing wrong with the idea of making a biography of Trotsky into a vehicle for the answer, even if it does not quite make up in convenience what it lacks in forthrightness. The important thing is that the answer be as close to correct as the most scrupulous scientific examination of the problem in its present state of development will permit. In this labor, the bourgeois investiga-

tor—be he politician or sociologist, journalist or scholar—is hopelessly handicapped. The very pre-condition for success is a social self-renunciation, because we consider it established beyond serious controversy that an analysis, that is, a critique, of the Stalinist denouement of the Bolshevik Revolution demands a revolutionary critique, and therewith a rejection, of bourgeois society. The bourgeois critic, and that includes the one who is not only personally but politically honest (he is rare, but he exists), can fully understand Stalinism only as he ceases to be bourgeois. The socialist critic has an immeasurable advantage over the bourgeois precisely in that he has discarded the standpoint and criteria of bourgeois society. But he can utilize his advantage only to the extent that he equips himself with the scientific instruments of Marxian theory. Otherwise, it will end by our having to say even of the socialist criticism of Stalinism what Engels used to say about the primitive socialist criticism of capitalism and its outcome—"it could not explain them, and so also could not get the mastery over them; it could only simply reject them as evil."

A POLITICAL WRITER does not have to speak in the first person to reveal his views; they appear even when he speaks in the second and third. Deutscher does not announce his conceptions in his own name, as it were, but they are announced nevertheless. It would appear from his writings, then, that he still regards himself as an opponent of capitalism, a supporter of socialism and not of the more conservative school but of the more radical, and, on the whole, a Marxist. But it is precisely in this last respect that the results are nothing less than a disaster. After you rub your eyes with

your knuckles to make sure you have read what you have read, you ask the question: what was this man doing all those years in the communist and Trotskyist movements, above all in the Polish movement which always had so high and serious a regard for Marxism, that allows him to end up with theories that are at once superficial, preposterous and downright reactionary, even though they are put forward in the name of socialism? To try to answer would lead us too close to aspects of life which are not our field. It will have to do if we say that by the side of exceptional talent in the exhaustive work of bringing together the facts and documents, of honorable contempt for the small-minded carper and the forger, the picayune adversary and the "tomb-robbler," of writing skill which is most unusual in a second language, Deutscher discloses a paucity and shallowness in the theoretical domain which is startling by comparison. And it has invariably been a grave weakness in this domain that has proved to be the obstacle to reaching an understanding of Stalinism—and worse than an obstacle.

Take, as one example, the disagreement between Lenin and Trotsky during the First World War on the question of "revolutionary defeatism." Deutscher disposes of the matter in a paragraph. It is not a matter of terseness that is involved, although the writer devotes far more space to matters of far smaller importance and greater transparency. It is, however, a matter of the very great theoretical importance of Lenin's position during the war and of its political implications and consequences, at the very least from the standpoint of the historian, not to say the enlightener of readers. To Deutscher, "actually, the difference [between Lenin and Trot-

sky] was one of propagandist emphasis, not of policy. . . . Each attitude had, from the viewpoint of those who held it, its advantages and disadvantages." This is pious enough, especially from one who proclaims himself "free from loyalties to any cult," but it does not even mar the surface below which lie rich ores for the theoretical or historical assayer. One does not have to agree, any more than we do, with every judgment made of Lenin's "revolutionary defeatism" by Hal Draper, but it is enough for anyone to read the extensive material which he so carefully assembled and analyzed in these pages recently to see that the question is one of great complexity. It cannot begin to be explained or disposed of in the casual manner displayed by Deutscher. What makes matters worse, is that he does not anywhere pursue the subject to its obvious conclusion, namely: what relation did Lenin's conception or slogan of "revolutionary defeatism" and Trotsky's conception that "the revolution is not interested in any further accumulation of defeats," have to the actual defeats at the end of the war, if not in general then at least in Russia? What relation did they have to the actual revolutions at the end of the war, at least to the Russian revolutions in March and November? Worthwhile if limited generalizations can be drawn from such an examination. To conclude the subject, as Deutscher does, by saying that "In 1917 these two shades of opposition to war merged without controversy or friction in the policy of the Bolshevik party," is simply to state a truth that has no great relevance to the controversy in question. After all, Deutscher might have used the same phrase with regard to the pre-1917 dispute over the "permanent revolution," but nobody has yet argued that the dispute

on this question between Lenin and Trotsky represented "two shades" of opinion.

THE OTHER EXAMPLE is precisely the dispute over Trotsky's theory of the "permanent revolution" and Lenin's formula of the "revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." The theory which is Trotsky's distinctive contribution to Marxism and to the course of the Bolshevik revolution itself, which is, so to speak, the head and heart of his entire political life, is given surprisingly cursory treatment here. The reader gets a fifth-carbon copy of Trotsky himself, uninspiringly presented, which is a matter of taste, but also uncritically presented, which is something else again. Why did Lenin combat Trotsky's theory so persistently, not to say violently? Why did he cling so long and so doggedly to his own formula? Were the differences serious, or primarily the product of a misunderstanding on Lenin's part, or of his failure to read Trotsky's elaborated version of the theory—a possibility suggested by Trotsky at one time and repeated by Deutscher? Deutscher gives his view of Lenin's position and summarizes the dispute in these words: "Lenin's formula of a 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' seemed broader and more cautious than Trotsky's 'proletarian dictatorship,' and better suited for an association of socialists and agrarian revolutionists. In 1917 events in Russia were to confirm Trotsky's prognostication." To reduce the dispute to these terms is an all but incredible feat. We are here altogether uninterested in the monstrous inventions and falsifications concocted by the Stalinists. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the dispute hinged on two radically and irreconcilably dif-

ferent views about the character of the Russian revolution and the nature and prospects of socialism in Russia—least of all on whether Trotsky would "prejudge [the] potentialities" of the peasantry and Lenin "would not," and not at all on whether one view was "broader and more cautious" and the other narrower and more reckless. It is hard to believe that an ex-socialist like Bertram Wolfe (in his *Three Men Who Made a Revolution*) presents a far more comprehensive and well-documented picture of the conflict as seen by the two protagonists (regardless of Wolfe's own arbitrary conclusions from the conflict) and even grasps it better than Deutscher does.

As for the second statement—about the confirmation of Trotsky's views in 1917—that is good enough for an article or a popular pamphlet, or it is good enough "on the whole." As an unqualified assertion in a critical biography of Trotsky it is inadequate. A critical evaluation or reevaluation of Trotsky's conception of the permanent revolution, without detracting an inch from its remarkable theoretical power and insight into the actuality of future developments, would nevertheless add some observations as to exactly where the "1917 events in Russia" did *not* confirm Trotsky's prognostications. It would become clear exactly how important, indeed, vitally important from the standpoint of the concrete political struggle during a decisive period in the development of the revolution, this error in the theory would have turned out to be, if Trotsky had not been so completely free from dogmatism and, refusing to "go by the book," acted in accordance with the exigencies of the struggle itself, not with the theoretical error. Trotsky himself has provided the clue to the error and it

would not require too great an effort to make it plain, specific and instructive for the political problems of today.

Here again, Deutscher is either indifferent to theoretical questions or incapable of finding his way among them, even when the political consequences that clearly follow from them are of immense and active importance. It may as well be added that, on the basis of the theories he propounds about Stalinism, the latter is more likely the case. It is a pity. Where he should have his greatest strength, there lies his most glaring weakness. The weakness, we shall see, is not less than fatal. At the least, it is fatal to the entire conception of socialism as a revolutionary movement and as a social objective that was set down in the name of science by Marx and Engels and supported for a hundred years thereafter by all those who professed their views to any substantial degree.

Deutscher does not set forth his own conception about the development of the Russian revolution and its relationship to the socialist goal in any forthright way or as any sort of systematic theory. One might say that he is under no obligation to the reader to do so, that he is satisfied to let the reader draw his own conclusions from objectively presented facts of history. Whatever may be said about such an assertion—and we regard it as absurd—the fact nevertheless remains that in one way or another, Deutscher does draw conclusions of his own along the lines of his own theoretical and political views. If one is to express an opinion about these conclusions and views, it is necessary first of all to do what Deutscher fails to do, that is, to bring them together from the various parts of his work in which they are loosely scattered and give

them the maximum cohesiveness that they allow for, to make them succinct and explicit to the greatest extent that this is made possible by the diffuse, ambiguous, innuendoish and even irresponsible way in which they are often stated.

TO DEUTSCHER, the Russia of Lenin and Trotsky, the Russia of the Bolshevik revolution, is organically continued in the Russia of Stalin (and his recent successors). Although generally sympathetic to Trotsky's point of view and full of praise for his theory of the permanent revolution in particular, he points out that there was indeed one aspect of the theory that was a "miscalculation."

Not for a moment did Trotsky imagine, however, that the Russian Revolution could survive in isolation for decades. It may therefore be said as Stalin was to say twenty years later, that he "under-rated" the internal resources and vitality of revolutionary Russia. This miscalculation, obvious in retrospect, is less surprising when one considers that the view expressed by Trotsky in 1906 was to become the common property of all Bolshevik leaders, including Stalin, in the years between 1917 and 1924. Hindsight, naturally, dwells on this particular error so much that the error overshadows the forecast as a whole. True enough, Trotsky did not foresee that Soviet Russia would survive in isolation for decades. But who, apart from him, foresaw, in 1906, the existence of Soviet Russia? (P. 160.)

The important thing in this passage is not that the author is more severe toward the critics of Trotsky's "miscalculation" than toward Trotsky himself, but that he holds that "Soviet" Russia is still in existence despite its long isolation and the triumph of the Stalinist régime in the country. What there is about the régime that warrants calling it a "Soviet" régime today, when there is not a microscopic trace left of Soviet pow-

er or even of a Soviet institution, is nowhere discussed or even so much as mentioned by Deutscher. That is evidently the least of his preoccupations.* That Stalinism represents the organic continuation and maintenance of the Bolshevik revolution as it inherited it, or took it over, from the régime of Lenin and Trotsky, is indicated by Deutscher in a dozen different ways as a fact which he considers established. That is not because he is oblivious to the differences or denies them. The Bolshevik Revolution was the great revolution of democracy and socialism in Russia, and so also was the régime it established in 1917. Since that time, great changes have taken place. The world revolution did not come, yet "Soviet" Russia survived in isolation for decades. A man like Trotsky could not imagine that "the revolution would seek to escape from its isolation and weakness into totalitarianism." It is this totalitarianism that Stalinism represents. The masses of the people are held in cruel and ruthless subjection by tyrannical rule. That is true, and Deutscher will not blink at the fact. But it is likewise true, in his eyes, that this rule represents the continuation and even the extension of the same revolution.

The whole theme of his book, as was the whole theme of his earlier biography of Stalin, is, first, that the change from the Lenin-Trotsky régime to the Stalin régime was an inescapable necessity for this revolution in particular; second, that the change was inevitable not only for this revolution but so it always has been and

*One of the outstanding curiosities of political terminology today is the persisting but anachronistic reference to "Soviet Russia" in journals of every political hue. Where the press speaks of "socialist Russia" that too is wrong, but it is understandable. But there is plainly less Sovietism in Stalinist Russia than in Germany, France, England or the United States.

presumably always will be for every popular revolution in general; and third, that the outstanding and apparently distinctive characteristics of the régime established by the change are not only to be found in the régime that preceded it, and are not only the products of an organic outgrowth from it, but were originally directly but inconsistently prompted by Lenin and Trotsky whose program is being simply if brutally carried out by their successors. Indeed, this theme is more blatantly asserted in the present friendly biography of Trotsky than in the previous unfriendly biography of Stalin. It is not a new one. Up to now, it has been almost exclusively the property of all the opponents of Stalinism who are opponents of the Bolshevik revolution as well, on the one hand; and on the other hand of all the upholders of Stalinism who profess their support of the Bolshevik revolution. It is worthy of special attention again because it is now presented by a supporter of the Bolshevik revolution, in fact by a not entirely reformed former Trotskyist, who is not a Stalinist, and worthier yet because of the arguments Deutscher musters.

WHY WAS THE EVOLUTION to Stalinist totalitarianism necessary for the revolution?

Because, in the first place, the working class itself could not be relied upon to maintain and develop the socialist revolution. Proletarian democracy may be established in the early days of a socialist revolution, when the fumes of naive illusions befuddle the thoughts of the idealistic utopians who lead it. But if the revolution is to survive, proletarian democracy must be dispensed with along with the Utopians who believe in it, and their place taken by the realistic despot

who will rule against the will of the proletarians but for their own good. Deutscher refuses to entertain any vulgar socialist illusions about the working class, the Russian working class in particular, and most particularly in the period of 1917 onward. He calls attention extensively and with a special sort of relish to the fact that the "grotesque sequel to the October insurrection, a sequel to which historians rarely give attention, was a prodigious, truly elemental orgy of mass drunkenness with which the freed underdog celebrated his victory." The reader is left to "draw his own conclusions," as it were, from the highly detailed picture of the saturnalia drawn by Deutscher. The reader who, out of obtuseness or out of a knowledge of what the "freed underdog" of the Russian revolution was in his all-sided reality, does not draw the right conclusions, is given them directly by Deutscher in his picture of the same underdog three years later. The country, in 1920, was in a severe crisis; and so was the Bolshevik party that led it. In describing its inner debates on the crisis, Deutscher describes the then Workers' Opposition, whose views on workers' democracy he says, and rightly, were later taken up substantially by the Trotskyist Opposition, as follows:

They were the first Bolshevik dissenters to protest against the method of government designed "to make the people believe by force" [the quoted words are from a passage in Machiavelli which is the motto of Deutscher's book—S.] They implored the party to "trust its fate" to the working class which had raised it to power. They spoke the language which the whole party had spoken in 1917. They were the real Levellers of this revolution, its high-minded, Utopian dreamers. The party could not listen to them if it was not prepared to commit noble yet unpardonable suicide. It could not trust its own and the republic's fate to a working class whittled down, exhausted, and demoral-

ized by civil war, famine, and the black market. (P. 508.)

Because, in the second place, there was only one working-class party that could be relied upon to maintain the revolution, and only one, the Bolsheviks. The working class had to be deprived of its right to political existence because it could not be trusted to defend socialism. All other parties, past or future, therefore also had to be deprived of their right to political existence because they could not be trusted to take power in the interests of socialism.

If the Bolsheviks had now [in 1920] permitted free elections to the Soviets, they would almost certainly have been swept from power. The Bolsheviks were firmly resolved not to let things come to that pass. It would be wrong to maintain that they clung to power for its own sake. The party as a whole was still animated by that revolutionary idealism of which it had given such abundant proof in its underground struggle and in the civil war. It clung to power because it identified the fate of the republic with its own fate and saw in itself the only force capable of safeguarding the revolution. It was lucky for the revolution—and it was also its misfortune—that in this belief the Bolsheviks were profoundly justified. The revolution would hardly have survived without a party as fanatically devoted to it as the Bolsheviks were. (P. 504.)

Rather than grant the right to legal existence only to parties that promise solemnly not to try to win a majority, or if despite their best efforts they win such a majority, promise even more solemnly not to exercise it, it was better to make it a principle of the socialist revolution in Russia that only the Bolshevik party had the right to exist. As a matter of fact, it is in the nature of revolutions to wipe out all parties but one—the one that wipes out all the others in the name and interests of the revolution.

The revolution cannot deal a blow at

the party most hostile and dangerous to it without forcing not only that party but its immediate neighbor to answer with a counterblow. The revolution therefore treats its enemy's immediate neighbor as its enemy. When it hits this secondary enemy, the latter's neighbor, too, is aroused and drawn into the struggle. The process goes on like a chain reaction until the party of the revolution arouses against itself and suppresses all the parties which until recently crowded the political scene. (P. 339.)

Which is why the advance to socialism required the suppression not only of the working class but also of all parties, including all past and future working-class parties, except one. And even this one had to be, in the nature of things, also suppressed in the end.

And because, in the third place, inside of that one and only party that could be relied upon to save socialism, there was only one point of view that could *really* be relied upon. For once you have two views, you have a contest; and once you have a contest, you may have a split and there are your two or more parties again. And Deutscher knows where that would lead:

Almost at once it became necessary to suppress opposition in Bolshevik ranks as well [as outside these ranks]. The Workers' Opposition (and up to a point the Democratic Centralists too) expressed much of the frustration and discontent which had led to the Kronstadt rising. The cleavages tended to become fixed; and the contending groups were inclined to behave like so many parties within the party. It would have been preposterous to establish the rule of a single party and then to allow that party to split into fragments. If Bolshevism were to break up into two or more hostile movements, as the old Social Democratic party had done, would not one of them—it was asked—become the vehicle of counter-revolution? . . . (P. 519.)

Barely two years were to elapse before Trotsky was to take up and give a powerful resonance to many of the criticisms and demands made by the less articulate leaders of the Workers' Opposition and

of the Democratic Centralists, whom he now helped to defeat, and before he, too, was to cry out for a return to proletarian democracy. (P. 520.)

The one that could *really* be relied upon was, then, certainly not the point of view or the group represented by Trotsky. For, with all his high-minded idealism and selflessness, what else could he represent when he took up the struggle against the bureaucracy in 1923 except the criticisms and demands of the old Workers' Opposition and the D.C.ists to which he gave a powerful resonance? And what else could they represent except "the Levellers of this revolution," its "Utopian dreamers"? What else could the party do, speaking through Stalin this time, but refuse to "listen to them if it was not prepared to commit noble yet unpardonable suicide"? Being Utopians, the Workers' Opposition and the Democratic Centralists, like the Trotskyists after them, wanted the party to "trust its own and the republic's fate to a working class whittled down, exhausted and demoralized by civil war, famine, and the black market." Under the circumstances, then, it follows with brass-stitched logic that the attempt of these inner-party oppositions to restore proletarian democracy in the country, accompanied inevitably by the risk of creating another party, could only promote the ends of counterrevolution and kill (by suicide if not homicide) the prospects of socialism in Russia; whereas the work of the Stalinists to establish and consolidate a régime which ruled "regardless of the will of the working class," of the will of all other political parties and the will of all other factions of their own party—in fact by crushing and suppressing all of them—was necessary to prevent the counterrevolution and to produce socialism in Russia and elsewhere.

That is how it happened that the revolution which began with the naively Utopian idea of Bolshevism that the road to socialism lies through the fullest achievement of democracy, found it necessary to learn the hard lesson that the road to practical and successful socialism lies through the fullest achievement of totalitarian tyranny.

Thus Deutscher. And he is not at the finish line, he has only just started.

Anyone who imagines that Deutscher is concerned here only with explaining the transformations necessary for a revolution that occurred in a backward country under exceptional circumstances from which a socialist revolution in more favored countries would be exempted, is luring himself to disappointment. To Deutscher, the evolution to Stalinist totalitarianism was the inevitable outcome of the Bolshevik revolution, in the same way that an equivalent tyranny has always been and must presumably always be the inevitable outcome of any popular revolution. The idea that the masses of the people can ever directly manage and control their destiny is as erroneous as the assumption that such control is essential for human progress in general or socialism especially. How does he reach this not entirely novel conclusion?

READERS OF DEUTSCHER'S BIOGRAPHY of Stalin will recall the theory—"the broad scheme"—by which he explains not only "the metamorphosis of triumphant Bolshevism" into Stalinism but, much more generally, the basic processes which have "been common to all great revolution so far." In the first phase of all these revolutions, "the party that gives the fullest expression to the popular moods outdoes its rivals, gains the confidence of the masses, and rises to power." Civil war follows.

The revolutionary party is still marching in step with the majority of the nation. It is acutely conscious of its unity with the people and of a profound harmony between its own objectives and the people's wishes and desires. It can call upon the mass of the nation for ever-growing efforts and sacrifices; and it is sure of the response. In this, the heroic phase, the revolutionary party is in a very real sense democratic. . . .

This phase lasts little longer than the civil war. By then the revolutionary party, though victorious, faces a country and a people that are exhausted. A reaction sets in among the people.

The anti-climax of the revolution is there. The leaders are unable to keep their early promises. They have destroyed the old order; but they are unable to satisfy the daily needs of the people. To be sure, the revolution has created the basis for a higher organization of society and for progress in a not very remote future. This will justify it in the eyes of posterity. But the fruits of revolution ripen slowly; and of immediate moment are the miseries of the first post-revolutionary year. It is in their shadow that the new state takes on its shape, a shape that reveals the chasm between the revolutionary party and the people. This is the real tragedy which overtakes the party of the revolution.

If it obeys the mass of the petulant and unreasoning people, it must relinquish power. But, "abdication would be suicide." In order to safeguard the achievements of the revolution, it must disregard the voice of the people in whose interests the revolution was made.

The party of the revolution knows no retreat. It has been driven to its present pass largely through obeying the will of that same people by which it is now deserted. It will go on doing what it considers to be its duty, without paying much heed to the voice of the people. In the end it will muzzle and stifle that voice. (Deutscher, *Stalin*, pp. 174f.)

That was in his Stalin book, and that it was not a momentary aberration

is shown in his Trotsky biography, where this theory is not only expanded upon and underscored, but becomes the heart and soul of his work. *The Prophet Armed*—the title of the book—comes from a famous passage in Machiavelli's *The Prince*, where he is discussing the difficulties facing "the innovators" who seek to replace an old order with a new. Can they rely on themselves or trust to others—

. . . that is to say, whether, to consummate their enterprise, have they to use prayers or can they use force? In the first instance they always succeed badly, and never compass anything; but when they can rely on themselves and use force, then they are rarely endangered. Hence it is that all armed prophets have conquered, and the unarmed ones have been destroyed. Besides the reasons mentioned, the nature of the people is variable, and whilst it is easy to persuade them, it is difficult to fix them in that persuasion. And thus it is necessary to take such measures that, when they believe no longer, it may be possible to make them believed by force.

BY 1920, SAYS DEUTSCHER, the Bolsheviks were faced with the choice which every revolutionary party in power faces, in its essence, at one time or another: Let the masses speak, and they will remove you from power and destroy the revolution; stifle the masses, and "it would deprive itself of historic legitimacy, even in its own eyes."

The revolution had now reached that cross-roads, wellknown to Machiavelli, at which it found it difficult or impossible to fix the people in their revolutionary persuasion and was driven "to take such measures that, when they believed no longer, it might be possible to make them believe by force." (*The Prophet Armed*, p. 506.)

To vouchsafe democracy to the masses may have meant the removal of the Bolsheviks from power, and as

we have seen above, Deutscher does not believe they had the right to give up power. That would have encouraged the White Guards to resort to arms again; and the Bolsheviks "could not accept it as a requirement of democracy that they should, by retreating, plunge the country into a new series of civil wars just after one series had been concluded" (p. 505).

But there is a deeper reason, in Deutscher's mind, why the crushing of the proletariat was inevitable—and by that, it should now be clear, Deutscher means *desirable* from the standpoint of preserving the revolution. That reason, too, lies in the very nature of the revolution—not the Russian alone, but all revolutions. Every "great revolution" has its Utopian extremists who do not understand that the revolution cannot really satisfy the unreasonable demands of the masses it inspired, of the masses who assured its triumph, of the very masses who were told that the revolution will satisfy their demands. With the best intentions in the world, these Utopians—Levellers in Cromwell's England, Hébertists in Robespierre's France, and in Bolshevik Russia the Workers' Opposition, the Democratic Centralists and then the Trotskyist Opposition—can only imperil the revolution, its conquests and its future. They are among those who

. . . cry in alarm that the revolution has been betrayed, for in their eyes government by the people is the very essence of the revolution—without it there can be no government for the people. The rulers find justification for themselves in the conviction that whatever they do will ultimately serve the interests of the broad mass of the nation; and indeed they do, on the whole, use their power to consolidate most of the economic and social conquests of the revolution. Amid charges and counter-charges, the heads of the revolutionary leaders begin to roll and the power of the post-revolutionary

state towers over the society it governs. (*Stalin*, p. 176.)

It is not necessary for us to emphasize that Deutscher applies this conception—the new tyranny against the people nevertheless does, “on the whole,” use its power to strengthen the conquests of the revolution—to the revolution that established capitalism and to the revolution that is to establish (and according to him, has already established in Russia) socialism. The analogies between the industrial revolutions that consolidated the social revolutions in both cases, he finds “are as numerous as they are striking.” He summarizes the “primitive accumulation of capital” that marked the bourgeois revolution in England as “the first violent processes by which one social class accumulated in its hands the means of production, while other classes were being deprived of their land and means of livelihood and reduced to the status of wage earners.” A similar process took place under Stalin in the Thirties.

Marx sums up his picture of the English industrial revolution by saying that “capital comes [into the world] dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt.” Thus also comes into the world—socialism in one country.

In spite of its “blood and dirt,” the English industrial revolution—Marx did not dispute this—marked a tremendous progress in the history of mankind. It opened a new and not unhopeful epoch of civilization. Stalin’s industrial revolution can claim the same merit. (*Stalin*, pp. 342f.)

That a new despotism is the inevitable product of every revolution, after its first stage, should not generate unperforated gloom. For if the masses cannot be trusted to continue the revolution they began or, in any case, made possible, they may console themselves with the thought that the despots are tyrannizing over them for

their own good. Even if against their will, and by cruelties which drip blood and dirt from every pore, the achievements of their revolution are being protected in the only way that is practical—by suppressing them. A new and not unhopeful epoch lies ahead. It is a relief to know it.

The final proof of this not wholly discouraging theory lies, in Deutscher’s revelation, in the concrete circumstances from which it is contemporaneously deduced. They show the organic link between Lenin and Trotsky and their régime, and Stalin and his régime. There is no rupture between the two but a relentless continuity.

Deutscher claims to have

... traced the thread of unconscious historic continuity which led from Lenin’s hesitant and shamefaced essays in revolution by conquest to the revolutions contrived by Stalin the conquerer. A similar subtle thread connects Trotsky’s domestic policy of these years with the later practises of his antagonist. Both Trotsky and Lenin appear, each in a different field, as Stalin’s unwitting inspirers and prompters. Both were driven by circumstances beyond their control and by their own illusions to assume certain attitudes in which circumstances and their own scruples did not allow them to persevere—attitudes which were ahead of their time, out of tune with the current Bolshevik mentality, and discordant with the main theme of their own lives. (*The Prophet Armed*, p. 515.)

The world revolution—the extension of the revolution westward which was to save Russia from the disintegration to which its isolated position, according to the Bolsheviks, surely doomed it—was it one of their illusions?

Precisely, says the now disintoxicated Trotskyist. If Lenin and Trotsky “had taken a soberer view of the international revolution” they might have “foreseen that in the course of decades their example would not be

imitated in any other country. . . . History produced [sic] the great illusion and planted and cultivated it in the brains of the most soberly realistic leaders. . . .” (*Ibid.*, p. 293.) “What was wrong in their expectations was not merely the calendar of revolutionary events but the fundamental assumption that European capitalism was at the end of its tether. They grossly underrated its staying power, its adaptability, and the hold it had on the loyalty of the working classes.” (P. 449.) As for the organization of the Communist International, which was to organize, stimulate and lead the world revolution, it was an illusion and a mistake—“fathered by wish, mothered by confusion, and assisted by accident.”

Yet, a veritable horror of isolation reigned among the Bolsheviks, Trotsky more than any of them. Since world revolution proved to be an illusion, year after year, the Bolsheviks were driven—“true . . . in the heat of war, under abundant provocation, without grasping all the implications of its own decision”—to break out of isolation by embarking for the first time, in violation of their hallowed principles, upon the course of revolution by conquest. The first time was in the 1920 war with Poland. “If the Red Army had seized Warsaw, it would have proceeded to act as the chief agent of social upheaval, as a substitute, as it were, for the Polish working class.” It is true that Trotsky and Stalin were against making the attempt to pursue the defeated forces of Pilsudski that were retreating back to Poland. But Lenin was for it. The attempt failed.

Lenin [then] grew aware of the incongruity of his rôle. He admitted his error. He spoke out against carrying the revolution abroad on the point of bayonets. He joined hands with Trotsky in striving for peace. The great revolution-

ary prevailed in him over the revolutionary gambler.

However, the “error” was neither fortuitous nor inconsequential. (P. 471.)

Because it was not fortuitous, it reasserted itself. If Lenin did not persevere in the course of revolution by conquest (the “revolution from above” in contrast to the revolution of the masses which was an illusion), it was, among other reasons, because of his “scruples,” that is, his revolutionary socialist principles, ideals and traditions. The difference in Stalin’s case is simply that he was not burdened with such scruples and inhibitions. With the failure of this first attempt, Lenin’s, at revolution by conquest,

The revolutionary cycle, which the First World War had set in motion, was coming to a close. At the beginning of that cycle Bolshevism had risen on the crest of a genuine revolution; toward its end Bolshevism began to spread revolution by conquest. A long interval, lasting nearly a quarter of a century, separates this cycle of revolution from the next, which the Second World War set in motion. During the interval Bolshevism did not expand. When the next cycle opened, it started where the first had ended, with revolution by conquest. . . . In 1945-6 and partly even in 1939-40 Stalin began where he, and in a sense he and Lenin had left off in 1920-1. (P. 376.)

The victory of socialism in Poland as the product of the proletarian revolution—“a genuine revolution”—was an illusion. The victory of socialism in Poland as the product of invasion, occupation and subjugation by the armed forces of a totalitarian despotism, that is not an illusion. It is simply Stalin’s uninhibited continuation of Lenin’s course. It is a comfort to hear this.

As in foreign policy metamorphosed socialism, so in its domestic policy. In 1920, with the revolution at that crossroads, so familiar to Machiavelli and now even better understood

by Deutscher, "Trotsky . . . stumbled . . . he initiated courses of action which he and the Bolshevik party could carry through only against the resistance of the social classes which had made or supported the revolution." His proposals for loosening the bonds of War Communism, an anticipation of the New Economic Policy soon to be advocated by Lenin, having been rejected by the party leadership, Trotsky proposed in its stead to carry the policies of War Communism to the bitter end, as it were. He "advanced the idea of complete state control over the working class." The reference is to Trotsky's proposals during the so-called trade-union dispute in 1920 for the "militarization of labor" and the "incorporation" of the unions into the state machine. The divorce between dictatorship and proletarian democracy, which Stalin carried to its inevitable conclusion, was clearly obvious. But Lenin refused to proclaim the divorce. For although he, too, "was aware that government and party were in conflict with the people . . . he was afraid that Trotsky's policy would perpetuate the conflict." And even Trotsky was his own antidote to the program he proposed.

Accustomed to sway people by force of argument and appeal to reason he went on appealing to reason in a most unreasonable cause. He publicly advocated government by coercion. . . . He hoped to *persuade* people that they needed no government by persuasion. He told them that the workers' state had the right to use forced labor. . . . He submitted his policies to public control. He himself did everything in his power to provoke the resistance that frustrated him. To keep politically alive he needed broad daylight. (Pp. 516f.)

Trotsky did not direct the transformation of the revolution into a despotism not only because circumstances then prevented it but because it was

not in his character to do it. But a different one was available, luckily for socialism. "It took Stalin's bat-like character to carry his [Trotsky's] ideas into execution." Neither Trotsky nor Stalin, each for his own reasons, would admit this. But it was true.

There was hardly a single plank in Trotsky's program of 1920-1 which Stalin did not use during the industrial revolution of the Thirties. He introduced conscription and direction of labor, he insisted that the trade unions should adopt a "productionist" policy instead of defending the consumer interests of the workers; he deprived the trade unions of their last vestige of autonomy and transformed them into tools of the state. He set himself up as the protector of the managerial groups, on whom he bestowed privileges of which Trotsky had not even dreamed. He ordered "socialist emulation" in the factories and mines; and he did so in words unceremoniously and literally taken from Trotsky. He put into effect his own ruthless version of that "Soviet Taylorism" which Trotsky had advocated. And finally, he passed from Trotsky's intellectual and historical arguments ambiguously justifying forced labor to its mass application. P. 515.)

Therein lay and still lies Trotsky's victory in spite of all, the victory of which he himself was one of the outstanding victims. That is what Deutscher means by titling the last chapter in the present work "Defeat in Victory." "All armed prophets have conquered, and the unarmed ones have been destroyed." Trotsky could not, in the crucial hour, arm himself against the people so as to "make them believe by force" after persuasion had failed to sustain their beliefs. Stalin could. He became the true prophet armed.

The revolution itself had made that necessary, for such is its nature; it made it inevitable; it prepared for it willy-nilly. Fortunately, the new prophet armed proved, again, to be one of those rulers who, "on the

whole, use their power to consolidate most of the economic and social conquests of the revolution." The result has been the victory of socialism in Russia, and not only in Russia but wherever else—and that reaches far across two continents by now—the armed prophet has extended the revolution by conquest. In the crude environment in which the revolution was obliged to entrench itself for so long, it could only produce a "brand of socialism," as Deutscher puts it.

The brand of socialism which it then produced could not but show the mark of its historic heritage. That socialism, too, was to rise rough and crude, without the vaulting arches and spires and lacework of which socialists had dreamed. Hemmed in by superior hostile forces it soon delivered itself up to the new Leviathan state—rising as if from the ashes of the old. P. 521.)

As every good American knows, you can't get something for nothing. For the blessings of Stalin's "brand of socialism," which lacks such gewgaws as arches, spires and lacework, hundreds of millions are paying with the Leviathan-state. If, to realize these blessings, the totalitarian regime was indispensable, it is not entirely to Stalin's discredit that he knew or felt which was the right way and took it resolutely. And Trotsky, the gifted revolutionary Utopian? "It was another of history's ironies that Trotsky, the hater of the Leviathan, should become the first harbinger of its resurrection."

This is as good as an epitaph, even if it is written before the second volume of the biography has appeared. But only in a manner of speaking. It is not merely a matter of Deutscher having written a libel of Trotsky, and not of Trotsky alone. In his biography of Stalin he already showed how far he has traveled from Marxism. His biography of Trotsky shows he has

not retraced a step but gone farther away and to ever stranger fields. Deutscher has put a cross over himself. It is his own epitaph as a revolutionist and a socialist that he has written.

If justice were half as prevalent as prejudice, Deutscher's book would be acclaimed far more widely than it is likely to be. Even those who did not cheer its main theories would find quiet solace in it, from one standpoint or the other. The revolutionary socialists—the Utopians!—are presently in such a small minority that they do not count; besides he abandoned them to their own devices years ago. But the others, those who make up the big majorities and the big minorities, for them the book should be a box of bonbons.

The Stalinist—if not the official Stalinist then the sophisticated Stalinist, the openly cynical Stalinist, the Stalinoid by design and the Stalinoid by gullibility—might ask for better, but not expect it. What else has he been saying in justification of his whole régime, his whole course, his whole political philosophy—not of course on the platform before the vulgar mob but in the less exposed intimacy of the enlightened. There it is safer to explain the simple truth that the donkey is a donkey, and should be grateful that the driver is determined to lash him toward the new and not unhopeful pasture where he may some day roam unsaddled, unlashd and with an abundance to nibble on. The professional Mensheviks of both schools have equal delights in store for them, equal parts of confirmation for each bias. The one school, all the way down to and including Shub, who feed their detestation of the Bolshevik revolution on its Stalinist outcome, can feel vindicated by this avowal from a hostile camp that there

could be no other outcome, they never said otherwise. The other school, represented by the late Th. Dan, who justified their late-in-life capitulation to Stalinism, can feel, at least secretly, vindicated by the thought that the Bolshevik revolution which they opposed was indeed led by irresponsible utopians. Leftist Laborite demagogues and ignoramuses, to whom Marxian theory was always a redundant nuisance we can well do without in Britain, and social-democratic or radical "neutralists" in France, should feel easier about their conciliatory inclinations toward the slave state when it is brought home to them so clearly that, unlike the capitalist states where the workers are oppressed and exploited in the name of capitalism, they are oppressed and exploited in Russia in the name of a brand of socialism which has opened a not unhopeful epoch of civilization. The classical bourgeois opponents of socialism, ranging all the way from the academicians of the von Mises and Hayek type to plain blatherskites like Kerensky, owe lavish thanks to Deutscher for such a rich replenishment of their thinning arsenal of arguments, dating back to Spencer, that all efforts at freedom based on collectivism cannot but lead to the Servile State, the new tyranny, and that the highminded socialist idealist is at best a Utopian—moreover one who, it turns out, is more dangerous to socialism than to capitalism itself. The new snobocracy, the neo-pseudo-protomachiavellians, has a rich morsel here over which to quiver with delight ever so fastidiously, for ever since they had the theory of élites explained to them third hand by second rate dabblers in Machiavelli, and Mosca, Michels and Pareto, they have understood how preposterous is the Marx-

ian myth that the working class and it alone has the historic mission of emancipating itself and therewith all of humanity. The tired and retired radical of yesterday, and his name is indeed legion, can find here some justification for the clod-of-earth existence to which he has degraded himself, as can his blood-kin, the ex-radical cynic and skeptic now turned pusher and climber up the ladder of bourgeois respectability—financial, social, literary, academic or all together. For what else have they been saying for a long time except that the struggle for socialism can lead only to totalitarianism and that the working class, as the socialist self-emancipator, has failed atrociously to live up to the confidence which they vested in it for so many months and in some cases even years.

Whether this motley public does justice to Deutscher's book or not, we have our own responsibility to discharge. It obliges us to say:

IF DEUTCHER'S THEORY IS VALID, it is not as an explanation for a "brand of socialism," as he calls it. It is the end of socialism. And so, in one sense, it is. It is the end of socialism for an entire generation. That generation is finished and done for so far as the fight for human dignity is concerned. It started well, even magnificently. It has ended, except for a handful of individuals, in a state of utter demoralization, helpless and hopeless victim of Stalinism and all other forms of reaction associated with it in one way or the other. Deutscher is an example of that generation, and one of the sorrier ones. His conscious, rational life he devoted to the fight for proletarian socialism, the only socialism there is or ever will be. In the accursed years of worldwide reaction and despair we

are living through, he has abandoned that fight to become the vehicle of a theory which is a mockery of Marxism, a grotesque libel against socialism, unscientific through and through and reactionary from top to bottom. It is an unabashed apology for Stalinism in the name of socialism. It could take shape only in a mind that has come apart under the steady blows of reaction instead of understanding and resisting it. If I did not know from my disheartening discussions with Deutscher, here and in England, that he has lost all belief in the socialist capacities of the working class, and that he refuses to follow the logic of his view by becoming an out-and-out Stalinist only because he considers himself a "civilized" person, his writings would anyhow make it plain enough. His writings are a capitula-

tion to the Stalinist reaction; at best, if the best is insisted on, they represent his resignation to Stalinism, and in the round the difference is not worth quibbling over.

If the generation of yesterday is finished, we are as confident that a new generation is entering the scene to pick up the socialist banner again as one did after the dark and critical years opened up by the first world war. Its mind must be as clear as can be of all the accumulated rubbish in which the old generation has been choked and blinded and worn to death. Deutscher's theory is part of that rubbish. If for no other reason than that, we shall try to clear it away.

Max SHACHTMAN

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Crisis in French Stalinism

The Meaning of Recent Purges in French CP

The recent demotion of Auguste Lecoœur, Organization Secretary of the French Communist Party, member of its Executive Committee, Secretariat and Central Committee, has shed new light on the crisis that has shaken French Stalinism since September 1952.

The origins of the crisis must be sought in the change of tactics imposed by the international situation on Russia's foreign policy. The failures in the West and the deadlock in Korea caused a reversal of the original policy of "militant" conquest. In the Stalinist parties of Western Europe the new approach meant collaboration with certain sections of the bourgeoisie in broad anti-American "National Fronts." In France, the policy of the National Front was officially adopted by September 1952.

The new orientation was summed up in the phrase "No struggle for bread without struggle for peace." (Jeanette Vermeersch, writing in *France Nouvelle*, the CP's weekly, in May 1952, shortly after her return from Moscow). More concretely, it means defeating EDC at any cost. This policy implies alliance with those sections of the bourgeoisie which are, for their own reasons, opposed to EDC, and which include violently reactionary French isolationists: Radicals, like Daladier, of Munich fame; most of the Gaullists; many of Pinay's Independents; General Juin, who so brilliantly "liberated" the Moroccans from their own Sultan last August. The sources of these people's patriotism are easy to define. Their concerns are to defend stagnating French capitalism against

German competition, to protect the independence of the French military caste and to strengthen French domination in the colonies by shutting out possible European interference. The voting record of the bourgeois opponents of EDC in Parliament shows them to be opposed to all progressive social measures (like a general wage raise) and in favor of all colonialist and imperialist policies (like the prosecution of the Indo-Chinese war.) If these groups are to collaborate with the CP in an anti-American National Front, they must be given solid guarantees on the social scene, that is, the government and the patriotic bourgeoisie must not be embarrassed by undue militancy on social issues. Accordingly, last August, the strike wave was side-tracked by the CGT (Confederation Générale des Travailleurs). In December, the representative of the CGT metal workers at Malakoff, writing in *Mouvement Syndical Mondial* (No. 20) says that "it is necessary that in the formulation of the agenda the defense of peace should be given more importance than the struggle for the improvement of living conditions." In December also, the cement workers and masons were called upon to write to their deputies in Parliament to express . . . their opposition to the Bonn treaty. In March the CGT calls for the "formation of Peace Committees in the factories" four days after Duclos says that they would be a good thing to have. This is also why the CP failed to organize any serious protest actions against the deposition of the Sultan of Morocco and against the wave of terror that followed it.

It is true that the National Front also could imply collaboration with the left wing of the Socialist Party, which is opposed to EDC. This is undoubtedly the kind of combination the Stalinoid elements had in mind when they were propagandizing for a Popular Front after the August strikes. However, such an alliance would exclude collaboration with the bourgeoisie, since the left wingers in the SP who oppose EDC are precisely those who are least ready to sacrifice the interests of the French workers to considerations of bourgeois or Stalinist foreign policy. With a few exceptions, the SP's opportunists are for EDC, not against it. The choice before the CP, then, was either to seek some sort of Popular Front with the SP and the CFTC (Catholic trade-union federation) or a National Front with the bourgeoisie. It chose the latter, because Russia needs the bourgeois alliance.

This does not mean that the CP will cease making overtures to the SP. It simply means that it will propose collaboration on the same terms as with the bourgeoisie: instead of a Popular Front policy based on the slogan of working-class unity, it will propose a policy based on class-collaboration, chauvinism and anti-American "Union Sacrée."

THE PROCLAMATION and the application of the new policy immediately threw the CP into a serious political crisis. Those of its cadres who were accustomed to think in terms of revolutionary action against the government became obstacles to the National Front policy and had to be silenced. In September, 1952, the "militant" faction was beheaded by the expulsion of Marty and the demotion of Tillon. After this, two tendencies were left in the Central Committee:

One was headed by Duclos, Fajon, Servin, which may be considered to represent the apparatus mentality in its pure state, ready to enforce obedience to any line at any time. The other faction was Lecoœur's, the party boss in the Nord and in the Pas de Calais, representative of the "hard" line in the CGT, the "sectarian" who kept embarrassing the Popular Front Stalinoids by his rigid hostility to everything that was not 100 per cent Stalinist.¹ Ordinarily a conflict would probably not have developed between these two factions, which only represent different shadings of the CP's bureaucracy. But this was no ordinary situation.

The effects of the Marty-Tillon purge on the party organization were immediate and serious. Soon after, Georges Guingouin, the CP's hero of the Resistance, was also expelled from the party for having supported Tillon. In December, 1952, the Central Committee was asked to discuss the orientation and the tactics of the party and the Marty-Tillon crisis. The low degree of participation in the discussion shows the uneasiness of the party's secondary leaders in the face of these issues. Out of 90 members, only 9 spoke on the first point and only 11 on the second. Shortly afterwards, *L'Humanité* published the number of cells who had approved the sanctions against Marty and Tillon: only 2,200 out of approximately 21,000 cells nationally. In Paris and in the Northern departments "Comités de Redressement Communiste" were formed, in support of Marty. In March, 1953, Guyot, a member of the

(1) It is, incidentally, significant for the political brainlessness of the Stalinoids that they do not hesitate to applaud today Lecoœur's purge, which they take to mean that Duclos and Thorez have at last adopted a "reasonable" line—probably faltering under the irresistible strength of Claude Bourdet's, Gilles Martinet's and Sartre's arguments.

Central Committee, had to admit in *France Nouvelle*:

Marty-Tillon have done much harm in the Paris region. They have thrown doubt on the party's policy, they have spread skepticism and slandered the party leadership; they have broken cadres by the dozens. They violated systematically the rules of democracy and have attempted to create a second center of direction in the Seine. . . . In several factories and localities, expelled party members and Trotskyite elements lead a campaign in support of Marty-Tillon, maintain anti-party centers, attempt to bring confusion into the minds of the workers and even into the ranks of the party's organizations. The increase of police-inspired sheets is intended to help them in their work. . . . On the other hand, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that precisely in this moment difficulties are created by certain comrades . . . etc.

Also in March 1953, the Central Committee met in a conference in Aubervilliers, which became the scene of faction fighting between Duclos and Lecoeur. Here is a picture of the organization crisis that emerged from the "criticisms and self-criticisms": in the department of the Somme: suspensions, disappearance of 75 per cent of the factory cells in 6 years; Calvados: resignations; Seine: suspensions, denunciations; Var, Vosges, Bas-Rhin: resignations, expulsions, suspensions, demotions. In the Seine Inférieure, the federation secretary is accused of "opportunism" and "deviationism" for having suggested that the party should "speak less of the USSR." In the Pas de Calais, "social-democratic" tendencies are rampant, and the Nord Maritime is infected with "economism," which means that the rank and file of these regions demanded more concern with concrete issues rather than peace campaigns.

These demotions, expulsions, suspensions and other disciplinary sanctions were published because they af-

fect locally well-known functionaries in the secondary and tertiary leadership of the party. But each of these stands for several ordinary militants, against whom similar sanctions were taken which were not mentioned in the CC.

In April, further crisis in the Seine Inférieure: in the local elections the Stalinists were confronted with several "independent" and "progressive" lists headed by ex-party functionaries who had resigned a few months earlier. In May, in the local elections in the Tarn, the departmental CGT put up a list against the Stalinist candidates and obtained more votes than the CP.

Probably not all of this opposition comes from followers of Marty, but the Marty conflict contributed decisively toward strengthening it.

In July, spectacular change in policy: the Central Committee was informed that the Political Bureau had decided to ask Marty to re-enter the party. This after a tremendous slander campaign of several months, culminating in Lecoeur's "old police agent." But nothing came of this move, Marty having refused to re-enter the party.

THE AUGUST STRIKES marked a decisive stage in the evolution of the crisis. Far from improving the CP's position, they sharpened the factional struggle in the leadership and increased the disaffection of the ranks. Far from being able to lead the strike movement and to attract the most active elements into its ranks, as after June 1936, the CP found itself paralyzed: the full implications of the National Front policy became clear in the light of the strike. To provoke a serious social crisis would have been contradictory with the appeasement policy followed by Russia, so the bu-

reaucrats of the CGT had to limit the struggle wherever they could. Their sabotage of the strike in the Renault works is a clear example of this. The CGT declaration on August 14, proclaiming its readiness to "discuss with the government in the interests of the workers" is another. Moreover, the CGT's policy on unity of action among the different trade union federations, was designed to make it impossible for any of the other organizations to accept unity of action. The importance of this attitude can be best appreciated if one remembers reformist leaderships of FO (the Force Ouvrier) and CFTC, always ready to compromise and to run for cover in deals with the government.

Concerning the effects of this policy, Comrade D. Mothé gives the following analysis of the situation in *Socialisme ou Barbarie*:

So the workers who defended one or two years ago the policy of the CGT with the utmost energy when it organized political strikes against German rearmament, against Ridgway or for the liberation of Duclos, happened to be in general among the first to criticize the passive attitude of their union. Their support of CGT policy was rooted in the opposition of the CGT to the government. In the last conflict, this opposition showed its limitations, its lack of consistency; it was lost completely in some sort of petty-bourgeois legalism. It seemed to the workers that the reasons which made them support their union's policy were collapsing.

It is no wonder, then, that the party organization continued to decline after the August strikes. On October 6, the CGT called a "day of struggle." Most of the slogans were political: against the Indo-Chinese war, against German rearmament, against EDC. The FO does not participate, CFTC in only two industries. The movement was a complete flop: the work stoppages were short and the strikers were

few. The economic life of the country was in no way affected.

On October 22 the Central Committee met again, in Drancy. This is the famous meeting where Duclos called for the "assembly of all good Frenchmen, whoever they may be" against EDC, and proclaimed the CP's readiness to support a government of "working-class, republican and patriotic forces" on a program which is "neither our final program, nor our immediate program." Much of the discussion in that meeting had to do with the state of the party organization after the August strikes. Here are a few significant admissions:

Vandel: "The life of the factory cells still shows an unquestionable underestimation of their role. The lack of life of the party in the factories is also a cause of the lack of consistency of the strikes in the private sector, particularly in the metal industry."

Servin, complaining about the October flop: "Where is the spirit of responsibility, where is the devotion to the cause of the working class, where is the party spirit of the comrades who do not boil with impatience when the time for struggle has finally come?"

Lecoeur, still Organization Secretary, proceeds to "self-criticism":

Yet an important number of our members are not active. Recruitment is still not organized systematically in the factories, many of which are without cells. For example: at the S. E. V. works (Issy-les-Moulineaux), 1500 workers, no cell. At Geoffroy-Delore (Clichy) 780 workers, no cells. In the Pas de Calais, at H. G. D. (Isbergues) more than 1000 workers, no cell. This carelessness, still too widespread, explains the persistent variation [sic—A. G.] in the membership of certain federations . . . federations such as the Seine, Ardennes, Oise, Aisne, Nord must admit to themselves that the variations in their membership originate in the factories. . . . The Cherbourg section does not organize a cell in the Ar-

senal, where 4000 workers are employed, even though Communists work there. The Asnières section also fails to organize a cell in the Citroen works, which employs 1500 workers.

The great farmers strikes of September 1953, also failed to strengthen the party in any way. Waldeck-Rochet, the editor of *La Terre*, the party's paper for the farmers, complains that the rural cells do not function properly because their social composition is wrong: it seems they do not contain enough wage workers. Servin also complains:

The struggle in the countryside, just as the August strikes, brought about a selection in our cadres. The investigation made in Lot et Garonne shows that the responsible comrades were very far from leading the masses, even in the counties where our party dominates. The same is true for the Landes. In all, only 23 farmers attended the party's schools. No farmer or other student attended in the departments of Aube, Côte d'Or, Nièvre, Puy du Dôme, Vienne, Yonne, etc.

The Central Committee meeting of October also decided to organize a "Month of the Press" for November: "Even after the Month of the Press, which calls for the nation-wide mobilization of our forces, the defense and the diffusion of the press remain a permanent and particularly important task for the party as a whole." At the beginning of the "Month of the Press" *L'Humanité* was selling 172,091 copies daily. At the end of the month it was selling 169,955 copies daily.²

IN DECEMBER THERE WAS a major shake-up in the CP federation of the Nord, which played an important part in the fall of Lecoeur. After its meeting of December 12, the CC of the Nord demoted Lambin, the federal secretary very long. His rise was

(2) The circulation figure for March 3, 1954, is 167,199 copies daily.

sons: "personal direction methods," "personal attacks against members of the CC" (the national CC is meant—A. G.) and "refusal to submit to self-criticism." Lambin had not been federal secretary very long. His rise was the outcome of two purges, the first five years ago against Ramette, then federal secretary, the second against Lallemand, Ramette's successor. Both purges were conducted by Lecoeur, who finally put Lambin into office. Thus Lambin's fall announced the fall of Lecoeur, and Ramette was one of Lecoeur's most articulate accusers when he fell.

What were the circumstances of Lambin's elimination? The department of the Nord is a key region of France from the point of view of working-class politics. It is one of the densest areas in population and it contains important coal mining and textile industries. The industrialists have a powerful organization, and so do the workers, who are traditionally combative and class-conscious. It is an area where the CP cannot afford to lose its positions. It is also one of the few areas where the SP has a working-class basis and where it has a fairly solid organization, even outnumbering the CP.

In November 1952, elections took place in the Nord, and the CP lost 28,000 votes by comparison with 1951, 28 per cent of the working-class voters abstaining. This December, the federal secretary was accused of "not having drawn the consequences of this failure." However, at the time, Lambin drew the following conclusions (at the national CC meeting of December 6, 1952): "The workers are tired of hearing the same old speeches—this is why they refused to come to the polls." It seems that Lambin did worse than "not to draw the consequences": he drew the correct ones.

We know from the CC conference of March 1953, that "economist" and "social-democratic" tendencies were rife in the northern departments. We also know that in CP language this means neglect of general political slogans and emphasis on concrete issues, mostly local issues. Opposition to manipulation from the Cominform was particularly strong in the Lille and Valenciennes regions. Lambin himself had to admit, in the *Liberté du Nord*. "the comrades feel that it would be preferable not to talk of the USSR, that what happens in the country of Socialism is of no interest to the textile workers, and some militants even question the principle itself of loyalty to the USSR." The resolution *against* Lambin admits the same trend in an underhanded way when it insists: "it is the permanent task of the party to develop solidarity without reservations towards the USSR in the working-class . . . not to do so is to admit the slanders of the worst enemies of the working-class."

It would seem, then, that in the Nord the CP ranks were among the least inclined to sacrifice their demands as workers to National Fronts, Peace Campaigns and similar projects. Also, it is probable that the party leadership in these departments had shown too much leniency toward these particularly vicious forms of deviationism, and that it refused to reject "without discussion" protests against the party's policy in the Marty case.

Opposition in the party against the National Front policy is not limited to the Nord; the bureaucrats, themselves, admit it, as diplomatically as they can, in the CC meeting of March 5, in Arcueil, the same that heard Duclos' excommunication of Lecoeur. Duclos, himself, asks a rhetorical question:

Has the will towards working-class unity and towards the unity of all good Frenchmen been properly understood, and has it been translated into action by the militants and the organizations of the party? . . . The facts force us to think more of what could have been done in this field [struggle against EDC—A. G.] . . .

Llante: "Even though the militants express their agreement with the CC decisions concerning the extension of the assembly of Frenchmen against EDC, in practice residues of sectarianism produce a lack of boldness in this respect."

Vandel, speaking of the recent elections in Seine et Oise, thinks that "the party organizations do not sufficiently insist on the struggle against EDC as a central issue."

Voguet says that "in Paris, reservations remain in the party toward the policy defined at the last CC meeting concerning the necessary union of all Frenchmen, whoever they may be."

More evidence on the crisis affecting the party's organization came with the yearly renewal of membership cards for 1954. This renewal is an occasion for comparison with the previous year and for taking stock. This time it appears that the recruitment campaign has been far from successful, particularly among the workers. Here is what we read about it in *France Nouvelle*:

On Dec. 19, Bardol, of the Nord Maritime, complains: "Our recruitment was directed too much toward the city districts rather than toward the factories. We had no connection with the peasant masses except on election time, and even then, only relatively so."

On January 2, we read concerning the Nord: "Out of 613 cells in our federation only 151 are factory cells."

On January 9, an editorial: "Where do we stand on the renewal of mem-

bership cards for 1954? The working program of the federations of Allier, Rhone, Cher, Saône et Loire, Haute Garonne, Nièvre, etc., is not oriented toward the factories. In the departments where the farmers' struggles became important, such as the Creuse, Haute Vienne, Corrèze, Lot et Garonne, Charente, Loir et Cher, etc., it does not seem that sufficient efforts were made to attract to the party the farmers who were the leaders in these struggles."

On January 23, Dupuy, of the Seine Inférieure, writes: "It must be noted that the principal difficulties come from the factory cells. For instance at Choisy-le-Roy, the cell of the waterworks managed to bring together only a third of the members . . . we must pay the utmost attention to the fact that even the most successful meetings did not bring together all the members of 1953. These are not isolated facts; no section has been able to indicate the number of 1953 members absent from the meetings."

On January 30, *France Nouvelle* writes about "the weakness of the party in the Pas de Calais, where today there are only 70 factory cells even though there are 110 mines and more than 60 factories in our department. A few instances: in a large mine like the No. 6 in Fouquières there are no cells even though three section secretaries are employed in it. The No. 2 in Oignies employs 2,000 workers but has no cell. On the other hand, the important factories of Isbergues, Behin at Corbehem, Finolers at Douvin also lack party organization. At Arras, Carvin, etc., not enough is done to keep the party organizations going in the factories."

On February 13, concerning the party federation in the Bouches du Rhône: "The St. Marcel section [Marseilles] contains 5 large factories

in its area with over 4,000 workers. The local cells have 437 members while the factory cells have only 54. On the other hand, a very small number of the new members that joined us in 1953 and of the 280 members for 1954 come from the factories. Since the end of November the 1954 membership cards have been sent to the sections. Numerous cells begin the distribution of cards in the beginning of December. However, by February 2 only 7,000 stubs out of a membership of 18,000 have been returned to the federation."

In *France Nouvelle* of February 20, Plissonnier of the national CC proceeds to a summary of the recruitment campaign. After expressing his disappointment with the "timidity" of the party organizations which are "content with little," he says that "there are thousands of factories employing over 50 workers which have no party organization and which remain completely outside the reach of the party. Among the new members . . . the workers are in a minority, and those that have been recruited by the factory cells are an even smaller number. In sections such as Clermont-Ferrand, where there are 16,000 workers in the chemical industry alone, one has to admit that the life of the party is very weak."

WE ARE NOW IN POSSESSION of most of the facts providing the necessary context for an explanation of Lecoeur's purge. As a product of the CP's crisis, it served two important political purposes: to eliminate from the leadership the last elements who might have been in a position to oppose the National Front line as handed down by Duclos; to mask the reasons for the organizational crisis by putting the blame on Lecoeur.

The accusations brought against Lecoeur tell only part of the story.

Some are clearly artificial, and only serve to put the blame on Lecoeur for unpopular positions of the party leadership. This seems to be the case for the accusation that Lecoeur had a "sectarian policy" concerning trade-union matters, thus preventing unity of action with FO and CFTC. This may be true, but it also goes for Duclos. It can be compared to the charge of "sectarianism against the SP" brought against Lambin in December, which amounted to making Lambin responsible for the refusal of the SP Federation of the Nord to have anything to do with a Popular Front maneuver. Other charges against Lecoeur, those concerning his condoning of "social-democratic habits" in organizational matters ("10 dues-payers to one militant") and his neglect of factory cells as against local cells are a transparent attempt at making Lecoeur responsible for the loss of influence of the CP on the workers and for the drop in membership.

Some of the charges are more significant. Lecoeur was criticized for his move of sending "political instructors" into the factory cells. Here is Duclos' conclusion: this move, it seems, represented

a definite tendency of the Organization Section [i.e., Lecoeur—A. G.] to interpose itself like a screen between the party leadership and the Federations, a tendency to attempt to by-pass the party leadership in the promotion of the cadres of the Federations. In the last analysis, this amounted to substituting the Organization Section to the leadership of the party. . . . one can imagine that under these conditions the placing of certain cadres was considered by the Organization Secretary more from the angle of personal loyalties than from the angle of loyalty to the party.

Billoux also charges: "He had a political instructor elected . . . with the perspective that this instructor would become Federal Secretary."

This, indeed, is serious. Duclos doesn't mind Lecoeur's "placing" of cadres, or the fact that Lecoeur "elects" people into responsible party posts—that is common practice. What bothers him is that Lecoeur did so *behind Duclos' back*. Today Duclos can rest assured: he has replaced Lecoeur with Servin. Who is Servin? None other than the organizer of the "Central Commission of the Cadres," the internal police organization of the French CP—none other than the liquidator of Marty. No better person can be imagined to strengthen the police rule in the party.

There are also some political charges. André Stil, editor of *L'Humanité*, denounces Lecoeur's "laborist and populist demagoguery." Billoux charges "laborist adventurism." Together with the charges of "sectarianism" they clearly point to the issue: Lecoeur was a potential obstacle to collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

The fact that Lecoeur had to be removed is in itself an indication of the enormous problem the CP's leadership is facing. Unlike Marty, who is a died-in-the-wool bureaucrat but who is also a political leader with considerable prestige in the party ranks, Lecoeur is a hack with little prestige and political authority. He is known for being narrow, despotic and brutal. What made him dangerous for the party leadership was the fact that he has some roots in the working-class, his belief that a policy of anti-capitalist struggle is the only appropriate one for a Stalinist party (even though he can only conceive a regimented working class with himself as the colonel) and his capacity to build his own apparatus beside the local GPU. In a time of demoralization of the working class, the conflict between Duclos and Lecoeur need not have broken out. Nothing fundamental

separates the two factions: the greater servility of Duclos is only a matter of degree. But in a time of mass upsurge, in a time when the French working class has just demonstrated to itself how strong it can be, and how strong it can be *independently*—this is a time when even types like Lecoeur can threaten to become a focus for opposition inside the party.

Lecoeur's removal is intended as a warning and an example to the party ranks. In purging Lecoeur, Duclos hopes to stifle any organized opposi-

tion that may rise within the party. But what Duclos cannot hope to achieve by it, is to arrest the growing decomposition of the party's organizations. Duclos cannot resolve the CP's crisis, because it cannot be resolved by purges: its real reason is that the French working class is not in a mood to swallow the National Front, and that it will rather leave the CP than to submit to class-collaboration in the interests of Russian foreign policy.

A. GIACOMETTI

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Record of a Consistent Attack on Civil Liberties

CIVIL LIBERTIES AND THE VINSON COURT, by C. Herman Pritchett, University of Chicago, \$5.00.

Obiter dicta almost completely dominates popular understanding of the Supreme Court. Mr. Dooley, who remarked that the court follows the election returns, is perhaps the chief lay theoretician of the judicial process in the United States. Yet brilliant as the aphoristic approach is—for instance, "The Supreme Court is a permanent Constitutional Convention"—it fails even to approach the more complex truth.

Viewed from a distance of decades and longer, judicial personality and theory merge into a larger movement which is not only sensitive to election returns and social change but even to the vogue of specific philosophers like Herbert Spencer. But decisive events may well take place in the short run. And here, the character of individual justices and legalistic formalities are of great importance. A catch phrase like "separate but equal" can retard civil rights for years. The longevity of appointed judges, like that of the Four Horsemen of the Thirties, cannot create new social movements but it can act as a brake upon them, with very real consequences.

This is made clear in a new book, *Civil Liberties and the Vinson Court*, by C. Herman Pritchett. The period under consideration is very short—Vinson was sworn in on June 24, 1946 and died last year—but in less than a

decade civil liberties were set back in epochal fashion.

Eleven justices, in all, sat on the Vinson Court between the 1946 and 1952 terms. Murphy and Rutledge died in 1949, and were replaced by Minton and Clark. Pritchett breaks these eleven into broad blocs, pro and anti civil liberties, on the basis of a statistical analysis of non-unanimous decisions.

The libertarian group was composed by Murphy (who voted for civil liberties in *every* case), Rutledge, Black, Douglas and Frankfurter. The anti-libertarians included Jackson, Clark, Burton, Minton, Vinson and Reed. With the deaths of Murphy and Rutledge, the reactionary bloc gained unquestioned control of the court and they retain it to this day.

The Vinson Court began with the inheritance of a fairly strong theory of civil liberties from the "Roosevelt" Court. It was stated by Rutledge in the 1945 case of *Thomas v. Collins*:

Any attempt to restrict those liberties must be justified by clear public interest, threatened not doubtfully or remotely, but by clear and present danger. . . . Only the gravest abuses, endangering paramount interests, give occasion for permissible limitation.

Yet as soon as the new alignment emerged—the Vinson Court—this position was subjected to attack, modification and eventual destruction. In less than ten years, a constitutional revolution took place in the field of civil liberties, and democratic freedoms had been given an incredibly reactionary interpretation in the highest judicial forum of the land.

Here are some examples: *Prior Censorship*: in 1931, in *Near*

v. Minnesota it was in effect held that all prior censorship was unconstitutional. By 1953, in the case of *Poulos v. New Hampshire*, it was held: "Regulation and suppression are not the same, either in purpose or result, and courts of justice can tell the difference," i.e., prior refusal of the right to speak on the basis of licensing ordinances was upheld.

Picketing: in 1940, Justice Murphy stated, in the case of *Thornhill v. Alabama*, that peaceful picketing was an exercise of free speech and therefore under all protections of the First Amendment. In *International Brotherhood of Teamsters v. Hanke*, the Vinson Court, speaking through Frankfurter, upheld an injunction against picketing for a legal objective on the grounds that "if Wisconsin could permit such picketing as a matter of policy it must have been equally free as a matter of policy to choose not to permit it. . . ."

Free Speech: in one of the worst decisions of this court, Vinson held that a Wallaceite whose speech had started a riot, could be arrested for "incitement." As Pritchett points out, "The *Feiner* case, does, indeed, approve a formula which can make police suppression of speech ridiculously simple. Any group which wishes to silence a speaker can create a disturbance in the audience, and that will justify police in requesting the speaker to stop."

Taft-Hartley: the chief civil liberties aspect of this anti-labor law was Section 9 (h) which denied the protection of the act for any labor organization unless its officers not only swore that they were not Communist Party members but also that they "did not believe in . . . the overthrow of the United States Government. . . ." This swearing as to belief is unprecedented. Vinson upheld its constitutionality in a decision which permits fantastic

limitation and investigation of individual freedom.

Smith Act: in upholding the infamous provisions of this statute, the court continued the trend begun in the Taft-Hartley Section 9 (h) decision. The trial judge (Medina) had held that the case turned on the *intent* of the defendants in their discussion, teaching and advocacy. In destroying the clear and present rule of the *Gitlow* case, the court upheld the intent test. Douglas remarked, "The crime then depends not on what is taught but on who the teacher is. That is to make freedom of speech turn not on *what is said* but on the *intent* with which it is said."

Fifth Amendment: in the *Rogers'* case Vinson ruled that the defendant had "waived" her rights by answering an initial question on party membership. Black, Frankfurter and Douglas dissenting, noted that persons pleading the Fifth Amendment "risk imprisonment for contempt by asserting the privilege prematurely; on the other (hand), they might lose the privilege if they answer a single question."

Attorney General's List: by confining itself to narrow legalisms in the *Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee* case, the Vinson Court managed to side step all constitutional issues. The result has been the continued existence and use of a totally arbitrary invasion of constitutional freedoms.

Immigration: Ignatz Mezei, an alien, has been held for several years now on Ellis Island. He has never had a trial. He does not know the full charges against him. The Supreme Court upheld this. Jackson, dissenting, held that executive imprisonment "considered oppressive and lawless since John at Runnymede, pledged that no free man should be imprisoned, dispossessed, outlawed, or exiled save by the judgment of his peers

or by the law of the land" has come to the United States.

THIS IS JUST PART OF THE RECORD. Unfortunately, it is impressive. It documents a broad pattern of new restrictions on American liberty. It is fair to say that the Constitution in 1954 is far less of a meaningful document than it was in 1946 before the Vinson Court took over. In his book, Pritchett gives an excellent presentation of *how* this was done, but he does not discuss *why* it was done. Yet these are the opposite sides of a coin.

First, as to the question which Pritchett does not treat: why did this ominous trend appear in the decisions of the United States Supreme Court?

Part of the reason obviously lies in the development of the cold war, in the social changes which took place within the period of the Vinson Court. Confronted by the ideological and military threat of Stalinism, American capitalism demonstrated its political bankruptcy by replying in terms of military force and political reaction. This was true with regard to the very real threat of international Stalinism; it was also true with regard to the diminishing threat of domestic Stalinism.

The court was obviously affected by this political shift within the United States. In some cases, this is terribly obvious—for example, the tragic and fantastic haste with which the execution of the Rosenbergs was expedited.

Yet, I think it would be a great error to make a theoretical construct in which this factor of shifting politics is the key to the analysis of the Vinson Court. The United States Supreme Court is an unrepresentative, appointive and life-time body. Of all the branches of government it is the least directly susceptible to *short-run* political change. If anything, it usually exhibits a cultural lag rather than

contemporaneity. Within this context, the period of the Vinson Court was too short to allow for the working of long range factors, or to admit the hypothesis that its decisions are a one-to-one corollary of the domestic and international reaction which the United States represents in the post-war world.

Yet having said this, having admitted that political factors were at work but denied that they were decisively so, why did this court act *as if* it were an elective body, i.e., in complete keeping with the reaction of the cold war? The answer, I am afraid, is undramatic. It lies in the psychology of Harry Truman who used the court as a place to reward friends and cronies.

But the *how* of the Vinson Court also relates to the problem of the relation of the court to social change. The only coherent debate that has taken place has been among three justices: Frankfurter and, on the other side, Black and Douglas. The anti-libertarians simply have an empirical gift for the reactionary, more or less devoid of consistent rationalization, but these three justices have argued the social policy of the court's functions in regard to change.

Frankfurter belongs, by the skin of his teeth, to the libertarian bloc. But this has not prevented him from making a number of striking anti-libertarian decisions. What was the metamorphosis of this "liberal" nominee to the Court?

Frankfurter's change is bound up in his own personal brand of pedantry. But more than that, it is bound up in *his persistence in precisely those attitudes which endeared him to the New Deal*. Frankfurter's philosophy is one of "judicial restraint." He is conscious of the non-representative character of the court and he feels that he should bend over backwards to allow

"legislative experiment." His is the very antithesis of the conception of the Four Horsemen who struck down so much Roosevelt legislation.

But when the "legislative experiment" shifted from social programs to anti-libertarian legislation, Frankfurter did not budge. He "restrained" himself to allow the Smith Act.

Black and Douglas, on the other hand, are moving in the direction of a judicial theory which includes Frankfurters' very sound worry over the unrepresentative nature of the court, but which avoids the pitfalls of his civil liberties position. Theirs is the "preferred" theory which calls for judicial restraint on *all but* matters of civil liberties. These they would argue, are "preferred" by the court since they are the preconditions of democracy. Therefore, in attacks on free speech, the Fifth Amendment, etc., they would argue that the weight is in favor of striking down questionable statutes and not of allowing experiment.

This is far from solving the general problem of the judiciary in a democ-

racy, yet it is a theory which allows for social experimentation, counseling only that it may not be experimentation with basic freedoms.

As far as it goes, Pritchett's book is brilliant, readable, and will do much to destroy the aphoristic approach to the Supreme Court. Yet one would wish that it had gone into the *why* of the Vinson Court and explored the problems which can only be raised in a short review such as this.

In the Vinson Court we face, to a limited extent, the close workings of judiciary and politics. But to a more decisive extent, we are in the presence of a tragedy which is not accounted for by structural analysis, but far more by intangible qualities of personality and historical accident. And above all, in the Vinson Court, we face a coherent, consistent attack on the very basis of our liberties, we live in a time which has, in the field of civil liberties, a new Constitution, and one which is probably more reactionary than any in the history of the United States.

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