

# political affairs

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*A Theoretical and Political Magazine of Scientific Socialism*

Editor: V. J. Jerome

## For a Mass Party of Socialism

By Eugene Dennis

*In presenting this final section of the report\* by Eugene Dennis to the National Committee of the Communist Party, Political Affairs brings to its readers the views of the General Secretary of that Party on one of the most challenging problems facing the supporters of Socialism in our country: Can a path be found for political unity of all such forces on a generally agreed upon approach to Socialism? Political Affairs invites comment from its readers on this question.*

NOT THE LEAST important of the new and serious problems we should concern ourselves with as we probe and re-assess the present status and future of our Party—is the question that keeps coming to the forefront in respect to the possibility of organizing a new and broader mass party of Socialism.

One of the unique aspects of political and social trends in the U.S. in recent years is the revitalization and growth of a number of socialist-oriented and pro-Marxist currents and groupings. What explains such a development during a period marked by the sharpest repression against our Party and severe attacks on democratic rights generally?

\* Published in full, under the title *The Communists Take a New Look*, by New Century Publishers, New York, 25c.

It is explained, first of all, by the inspirational influence exerted by the historic victories of Socialism and national liberation, especially by the emergence of Socialism as a world system.

Second: these currents have been stimulated by the growing political maturity of a considerable number of Left-progressives who, since the end of World War II, have become sharply disillusioned with the two-party system and with the capitalist economic system and structure that underlies it.

Third: precisely because of the vicious onslaught against our Party, some socialist-minded people have sought other channels, perhaps safer or less vulnerable, for Marxist expression.

Finally: there is no doubt that some socialist-oriented individuals looked elsewhere than to our Party because of honest differences, and not a few have been repelled because of certain dogmatic and sectarian concepts and methods in our Party, as well as our not so infrequent rigid intolerance of "outside" criticism.

Whatever may have been our attitude in the past, we American Communists, on the basis of our own experience, have come to realize that certain developments in our own country require a "new look." And this prompts us to state unequivocally that we can have only the most positive approach to all honest socialist and Marxist-oriented groupings and individuals, whatever our differences may be on certain tactical and programmatic questions. We share the aspirations of many of these forces for a mass party of Socialism in our country. We, too, want to create the conditions for such a necessary and historic development.

We must admit that, in the main, this has not been our approach in the past. We Communists underestimated the scope and character of this many-sided pro-socialist development and its possibilities for the American working class. Some tended to see only the various Rightist social-democratic opportunists and the unreconstructed Trotskyists who were and are out to pervert Marxism and to exploit the difficulties of our Party, in the manner of vultures.

There has also been a sectarian, dogmatic approach that since ours is the vanguard party of the working class, all those who really want Socialism will eventually have to come to us. Moreover, we have for some time neglected the deep roots of American socialist traditions, strikingly evidenced in the recent significant Debs Centennial observations where certain influential labor spokesmen participated in a major way.

Be that as it may, an entirely new approach is demanded of us.

This of course does not call for any move to try to form a new party of Socialism prematurely. True, socialist currents are growing and will continue to do so, and the activity of diverse Marxist-oriented groups is on the upgrade. Yet the task of organizing a broad, mass party of Socialism, based in substance on genuine Marxist principles, cannot be easy nor quick. We American Communists will do our utmost to help create the pre-requisite for such a development.

Considerable headway can surely be made in this direction in the next year or two. But this will be a process. It will necessitate sharp political and ideological struggles, as well as our collective participation with the bulk of all the socialist-minded elements in united front activity in concert with other progressive forces. In the course of this a stronger Marxist core will undoubtedly crystallize among these diverse pro-socialist groupings and currents.

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In the interim, and as one of the essential pre-conditions for establishing a broader mass party of Socialism, it will surely be necessary to strengthen our Communist Party politically, ideologically, and organizationally—and, above all, to extend its mass influence and United Front relationships.

#### FOR AN END TO DOGMATISM

One of the biggest lessons we American Marxists need to learn if we are to move ahead boldly, rapidly, and successfully, and extend our base and mass influence—is the urgent necessity of putting an end to all dogmatism. As never before, we American Communists have to master the art of applying and developing the universal science of Marxism creatively, on the basis of the experience, circumstances and traditions of our own country.

In this connection, we have to understand the difference between that which is universally valid in Marxism and that which is peculiarly applicable only to one or another country. This means that we have to learn to distinguish between the principles of Marxism which are valid generally, including the imperative necessity of strengthening the bonds of solidarity between the working people of all countries and the different ways, forms, and methods Marxists elucidate and develop their tactics and concretely apply the principles of scientific socialism in a variety of different situations. Cer-

tainly our job is not to study Marxism in the abstract or as a catechism, but to study the problems and developments *in our own country* by means of the living, dialectical method of Marxism.

It is with this precept in mind that we should begin to dig deeper into a host of questions ranging from economic perspectives, the sinister significance of the growth of state monopoly capitalism, the development of a rounded-out anti-monopoly program, to the national question and to the American road to Socialism, as well as various organizational forms and methods of Party work and structure.

We need to develop a method of theoretical-political work where we examine continuously and more concretely the actual facts in each given situation, the exact relationship of class forces, and the specific level of the mass movement and trends, not only nationally, but in each state or city, in each industry or rural area, in each given union, lodge, or chapter of this or that mass organization. Without this, it is not possible to formulate sound policies, to apply or develop correct tactics, to exhibit concrete political and organizational initiative, or to win the support and confidence of wide masses.

In this connection it is incumbent on us to re-appraise our whole position on self-determination in the Black Belt. For instance, a very important section of the Party's Program, adopted in 1954, is that dealing with the oppression of the Negro

people and the struggle for equality.

Yet note should be taken of the fact that in the 1954 Program the previous position of the Party on self-determination in the Black Belt has been modified—in fact, dropped. I happen to agree with this, just as I concur with a similar handling of this question in the New Program for the South and in Foster's recent article in *Political Affairs*.\*

It seems to me, however, that it is necessary to do more than reverse our position by shelving it. I believe we should state frankly to the Party the reasons and developments which prompt us to alter our position on the slogan of self-determination. In my opinion we should frankly acknowledge that while the Negro question in the Deep South remains a national and an agrarian question, for some time developments in the South have *not* moved in the direction of the establishment of a Negro nation.

The basic demands of the Negro people in the South, which they themselves put forward and are struggling for, are for the right to vote and representative government, for full equality in employment, education and in all other spheres of life, and for achieving serious reforms in agriculture.

In re-appraising our position on self-determination in the Black Belt, our Party should emphasize, as never before, that the struggle for

Negro rights and freedom, north and south of the Mason-Dixon line, has emerged as a general, national democratic task, upon the solution of which depends the democratic and social advance of the whole nation, particularly of the workers and farmers.

#### THE AMERICAN ROAD TO SOCIALISM

The final question I wish to touch on is certain aspects of the American road to Socialism.

During the past years, the most convenient frame-up weapon against our Party has been the slander that Communists are "foreign agents" and everywhere stand for the overthrow of all capitalist government by force and violence. But the thin ice of lies upon which the Smith Act and other such thought-control measures rest their claims is cracking.

That explains some of the startled press comments evoked by Khrushchev's discussion on paths to Socialism at the XXth Congress. Marguerite Higgins, of the *New York Herald Tribune*, recently put the problem this way:

In the United States, for instance, laws for the prosecution of Communist leaders have been based on presentation of evidence in United States courts that Communists advocate the forcible overthrow of the government. But here Mr. Khrushchev and the entire Soviet Communist Party congress say that it is no longer so. In some cases commu-

\* W. Z. Foster, "Notes on the Struggle for Negro Rights," in *Political Affairs*, May, 1955.—ed.

nism can be achieved by using existing legal machinery.

American Communist leaders will undoubtedly insist that they are, and intend to act, peacefully within the law. Now they have Mr. Khrushchev to back them up publicly with a speech that will be a Communist bible. What happens now to our government's case? . . .

While Miss Higgins looked to the "bible" for the revelations on "forcible overthrow," the truth has been asserted with growing clarity over a considerable period by Communists in various countries, including our own.

Already in 1947-48, our Party took note of the new world situation arising after World War II, and recognized that civil war is not inevitable in all capitalist countries. And in that period, in our answers to the *N. Y. Times* and the *N. Y. Herald Tribune*, Comrade Foster and I categorically stated that our Party advocated a democratic solution of all problems confronting the American people, including the eventual transition to Socialism. Subsequently, especially in 1949, Comrade Foster developed our Party's position further and demonstrated how and why we American Communists seek and advocate peaceful and democratic processes in effecting the transition to Socialism by the people of our country.

As world experience has shown, and as the XXth Congress analyzed, there are many paths to Socialism,

and each country will find its own path depending on its own traditions, the conditions of its struggle for progress, and the desires of the vast majority of its people.

There are also many forms of transition to Socialism, and these are becoming *more*, not less, diversified—including the possibility of transforming certain parliaments into people's assemblies by constitutional majorities and mass movements.

Whether the realization of this or that path and form of social transformation turns out to be more or less peaceful depends on a host of circumstances. It is dependent on the concrete relationship of class forces, the unity and class consciousness of the working class and its allies, as well as on the strength of big capital at such a point in history, on the extent of its repressive powers, and on its ability under the given conditions to offer the fiercest resistance to social progress.

#### FOR A PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM

As for the USA, we American Communists re-affirm that we do *not* advocate force and violence. We do *not* consider civil war inevitable nor in any way desirable. We desire and seek constitutional and democratic solutions to current and fundamental problems. We favor and advocate a peaceful and democratic transition to Socialism.

We Communists and other advanced workers strive for a con-

stitutional and democratic solution to all the problems of today and tomorrow in full recognition of the fact that U.S. monopoly capital is the strongest in the world and one of the most ruthless in furthering its objectives at home and abroad. The U.S. trusts and their political representatives have used and will continue to try to use demagogy, division and force and violence to one degree or another to halt all social progress and democratic advance here or anywhere else.

Therefore one main conclusion that the working class and all popular forces must draw is that it is necessary at every juncture to prevent and defeat the stubborn efforts of the economic royalists to thwart the popular will. This is so now, especially in the Deep South and also in respect to the struggle for progressive labor legislation and the enforcement of the Bill of Rights for Communists and non-Communists alike.

The decisive labor and democratic forces will have to establish the most sweeping unity of action to cope with the ever-fiercer resistance that the corporate interests will resort to in order to avert the curbing and eventual breaking of their powers.

Nonetheless, it is our conviction that the course of world and national trends will increasingly enhance the possibility for peaceful and constitutional advance to Socialism. Such a possibility will not arise automatically—it will have to be fought for

and won. The crucial question will be the ability of a united working class to exert decisive political influence on all democratic forces to check and defeat the reactionary offensive of monopoly and to keep open and extend all constitutional, democratic processes. This is what we should emphasize and work for today and on the morrow.

In addition to this, we Communists should develop a much more graphic picture of what American Socialism would look like, what miracles of achievements it would introduce. Would not a socialist America in a peaceful world, sharing the benefits of atomic and thermo-nuclear energy, make the most rapid advances in production and living standards in the history of nations? Would not the advance of the USA to Socialism mean an end almost overnight to misery and backwardness in every part of our country? Would not a socialist society effect wonders in the spheres of education, culture, sports, and national health? Would not Socialism transform the South and convert it into a flourishing and prosperous area in which the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity would hold sway? Under Socialism would not Congress and the state legislatures become truly representative of the working people? In a socialist society would not civil rights and civil liberties for all the people—Negro and white—the equality and dignity and creative ability of man, at long last be fully realized and flower?

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At all times, we Communists should project the specific American road to Socialism without diverting from the central electoral and other political tasks of the immediate period ahead, upon the solution of which the way forward depends. We should avoid oversimplifying and presenting the road to Socialism as a series of schematic stages. At this juncture we should particularly stress the *next immediate stage* of progress for the people of our country—which is inseparably bound up with, and requires the crystallization of a broad democratic front coalition, under progressive labor influence.

By presenting the possibility of peaceful and democratic transition to Socialism in the USA in such a manner, we American Communists will enhance the prospects for its realization. We will likewise focus attention on the main tasks of the moment and the period ahead, especially the forging of a labor-democratic coalition whose potential for

effectively curbing the power of the trusts will grow ever more mighty.

The central objective in the '56 elections is to help create the conditions for the emergence of such an anti-monopoly coalition capable of influencing the next Administration and Congress, and of subsequently bringing into power an Administration and Congress resting on and responsive to such a popular movement and alliance—a *government committed to peaceful negotiation and reducing international tensions, to promoting the economic security of the working people at the expense of the monopolies, to upholding the Constitution and enforcing the Bill of Rights. The struggle for and the achievement of such a democratic anti-monopoly coalition and such a government will safeguard the welfare, interests and rights of the American people and will pave the way for new democratic and social advances, as well as strengthen the cause of world peace.*

# Deeds and Words on Capitol Hill

By Erik Bert

AS THE 84TH Congress enters its concluding weeks, an assessment of its accomplishments and failures may still help to extract some beneficial legislation from this cynical and cold-hearted body.

With the national conventions somewhat over two months away the demand that the major parties supply deeds not words, in respect to social welfare legislation, can exert pressure to which both the White House and the Democratic leadership in Congress will respond in some measure.

Reference to several arenas of conflict can give us an insight into some of the key problems and possibilities in prosecuting the legislative fight. A serious accomplishment of this session was the setback to the attempt to free natural gas from federal price control. Here the cards—and the money—were all stacked in support of the oil and gas companies: overwhelming support from the Republicans in Congress; aggressive action by the Democratic leadership, Senator Lyndon Johnson, majority leader, and House Speaker Sam Rayburn; and the most intense pressure in years by the richest lobbying organization.

While the resistance of the labor movement, of city officials, and of a

multiplicity of civic organizations, could not prevail in Congress over the money bags of the gas barons, the campaign did convince the President that if he signed the bill the smell of gas would pursue the GOP through the election. So he vetoed it.

This again confirms the fact—as was shown when the Dixon-Yates steal was stopped dead in its tracks—that there is a tremendous potential of popular resentment to give-aways.

## DIXIECRATISM AND LABOR LEGISLATION

The House Labor and Education Committee, an essential channel for labor legislation in the House, did not meet for the first months of the session—by decision of its chairman, Graham Barden, North Carolina Democrat. In this he had the hearty agreement of the Republicans, and the passivity of liberal Democrats. Even now, as the session nears its windup, the committee is functioning at a level far below what is required to get legislation enacted.

The disgraceful performance of Barden sank to a new low in February when he hired as committee counsel James Brewbaker, for nine years a lawyer for the National As-

sociation of Manufacturers, and then for a few months an unsuccessful peddler of a high-priced, labor-baiting, "information" service.

Brewbaker was hired without the knowledge of the committee, but under blanket authority given Barden by its members a year earlier.

In justice to the liberal members of the committee, who should have exercised a good deal more vigor, it ought to be said that the labor movement did not give them the backing-up they needed. This would have required not only insistent pressure on Barden and on the GOPers on the committee but, more important, continuous pressure on the Democratic and Republican House leadership.

#### BIPARTISAN BETRAYAL

The statistical facts on the course of civil rights legislation during the 84th Congress are illuminating. The major civil rights bill, the Celler bill, was introduced during the opening week of the 84th Congress, in January 1955. No Administration bill was introduced during 1955, and perfunctory hearings on the Celler bill were held only during the last days of the first session. No further action was taken by Rep. Emanuel Celler, Brooklyn Democrat, as chairman of the judiciary committee, until April of this year, after the Administration finally introduced a skeleton program. Then for weeks, bowing to the arrogant demands of their Dixiecrat colleagues, the bi-

partisan leadership of the committee let the situation drag.

In the Senate, as the result of the death of Senator Kilgore and the sanctity of seniority system, the rights of millions of Americans were placed in the tender care of Senator Eastland, a leader in the group of rabid racists in Congress. It is almost amazing to hear even liberal Democrats declare with a straight face that the seniority system—which sustains the power of the political descendants of the slaveholders in Congress—is the best system known to man for allocating committee posts in the Senate and House.

#### FIGHTING OFF FARM DISASTER

The grass roots mobilization that turned a Congressional defeat on farm legislation into victory, but was not sufficient to prevent a presidential veto, or to override it, was one of the major struggles this session. The veto by the President, despite its admitted political dangers for the GOP, was clear evidence of the determination by the Cadillac Administration to resolve the farm situation by permitting hundreds of thousands more farmers to be cleaned out.

The latest farm legislation which, at this writing, seems assured of passage, will contribute very little toward halting the downward trend in agriculture income, let alone restoring any part of the losses that have been inflicted on millions of farmers during the past several years.

Two occurrences in the session

have disclosed that some of the basic issues confronting our farmers—as distinct from the struggle around parity—are slowly coming to the fore.

The first, the introduction of an important bill by Rep. Lee Metcalf (D., Mont.), created no more than the tiniest ripple. Metcalf's bill reflects the fact that many farmers are confronted now not only by loss of income but by loss of farm and home. They "face bankruptcy," Metcalf said, "because of the Farmers Home Administration collection policy." His bill would give them a one-year moratorium on their next payment on four types of federal loans: emergency, soil and water conservation, farm ownership, and production and subsistence. The issue here is no longer firm or sliding parity, but survival or bankruptcy.

The other occurrence involved a controversy in the Senate over the denunciation of the Farmers Union program by Sen. Holland (D., Fla.) as "socialistic" and communist-tainted. Holland condemned the Farmers Union because it and the Communist Party both favored 100 percent of parity. On three days in March the controversy raged. The basic issue was the "family farm" to which most everyone pays obeisance, and about which hardly anyone does anything. Some Farmers Union leaders had done something. During the Senate agricultural committee hearings in the fall of 1955 several North Dakota FU leaders had raised the issue of saving the

family farm by preventing the big operators from gobbling up the small and middle sized farmers. This aroused Holland's ire, much more than the parallel thinking of the Farmers Union and the Communist Party on the issue of 100 percent of parity. This he stormed at as "socialistic." The issue has not been, and will not be, resolved by this Congress. The fact that moratorium vs. bankruptcy, and the destruction of the family farm by the big farms have been raised in this session, means, however, that a far more serious situation is in the making on the countryside than many persons think.

#### ON FOREIGN POLICY

During this session, as during the last, the gap between popular desire for peace and congressional action, or inaction, has been glaring. In the last week of April, for example, Sen. Morse (D., Ore.), told the Senate that "irrespective of what the politicians do by way of debating or not debating all phases of American foreign policy, there is rising among our citizenry a tidal wave of discussion and debate on the pros and cons of American foreign policy."

Even Dr. Walter Judd, Congressman from Minnesota's fifth district, who is to the Right of the Administration in foreign policy, referred to a change of feeling among the people. At a meeting early in May of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, of which he is a member, Judd

said that after eight years of the mutual security program "exhaustion is developing in the people at home." He said it was evident in his own district, one of the most conservative in the state.

Regrettably, there has been no serious attempt in the House or Senate either to answer the question which Sen. Morse asked, or to deal with the fact of "exhaustion," as Dr. Judd put it.

At a meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senator Humphrey (D., Minn.), who avowed himself a firm supporter of the military assistance program, noted that although the "new Russian line" had been under way for three years we are "just beginning, during the past year, to talk about it." Even now, the mutual security program reflects no response on our part to the new situation, he said.

Humphrey indicated one of the internal diseases that hampers reappraisal. To his mind the purpose of reappraisal was to "counter-check and get ahead of" the Russians, not primarily to establish a secure peace.

Even the more sober type of foreign policy discussion in Congress comes a cropper when anti-Russianism or anti-Chinaism is set up as an article of faith excluding peaceful coexistence, let alone friendship.

Despite agreement by members on both sides of the aisle that reappraisal is necessary, there has been none. From the far Right, the McCarthys and Jenners intermittently fire a shot at the Administration to

counteract the pressures for peace.

From the Right-wing of the Democrats the missile-minded men, like Sens. Symington (Mo.) and Jackson (Wash.), whoop up forays against the Administration for not spending enough money with the plane manufacturers. Their demands for more contracts are so extreme as to embarrass a multi-billion operator like Defense Secretary Charles E. Wilson, and that takes a lot of embarrassing. In the meanwhile the subcommittee on disarmament leads a sporadic existence, under the chairmanship of Sen. Humphrey, clearly not evoking the dynamic review of disarmament that Humphrey has frequently urged.

#### REUTHER'S PROPOSALS

In fact, nothing has been proposed in Congress half so cogent as the program which Walter Reuther, president of the United Auto Workers, presented to Dulles several weeks ago, and which was endorsed in the main by the Textile Workers convention here in May.

Reuther's proposals left several major issues untouched, but they dealt with some in a way that lays a basis for realistic discussion. Reuther made two main points:

1. The United States should contribute two percent of its gross product each year (about \$8 billion this year) for the next 25 years into a World Fund to provide economic and technical aid to less developed countries, whether aligned with the U.S. or not. The program would be

administered through the United Nations and multi-lateral agencies. U.S. aid would be made available at once through existing multi-lateral agencies, pending UN action on the creation of the World Fund.

2. The U.S. would request that the Soviet Union make a similar commitment of two percent of its gross national product for the same purpose.

Reuther's proposals to Dulles, included also:

The sharing of America's food abundance under arrangements that would not dislocate the economy of any country that exports grains or food-stuffs.

Creation of a federal scholarship program to train a technical task force to carry out the program.

Long-range economic commitments to deal with long-range economic problems.

The United States to "speak out clearly and act courageously against all forms of colonialism."

"Immediate and effective action to meet the challenge of providing equal opportunity of political and economic citizenship to all Americans, regardless of race, creed or color."

In submitting this program for "Peace, Prosperity and Progress," Reuther argued that the "hungry and desperate peoples of the world will respond to a positive program of massive retaliation against poverty, hunger and injustice" with more readiness than to the H-bomb which has, "in the minds of millions of

peoples throughout the world, become the symbol most commonly associated with American foreign policy."

Reuther's two major points, taken together, provide for participation by the United States and the Soviet Union in a common effort to bring to the poverty-ridden peoples of the world the wherewithal for upgrading their economies.

It is a world removed from the prospects for mutual annihilation that the guided-missile maniacs offer.

That Reuther's proposals have not been more seriously considered in Congress is due in good part, to the fact that they have not been given an adequate hearing within the ranks of labor itself. And that is due in turn, to the fact that labor's official foreign policy is still written by Jay Lovestone, inveterate Soviet hater, though proclaimed by George Meany, AFL-CIO president. Anti-Sovietism, though a way of life for some political racketeers, eats at labor's interests like a cancer.

Despite all obstacles, however, since the Reuther proposals are intended to meet the issues of peace, prosperity and progress, they will undoubtedly tend to gather support in labor's ranks and thus influence the course of development in Congress.

#### SOME WASHINGTON "MESSES"

There are several big messes in Washington that demand the most

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1. The mess in the National Labor Relations Board. Senator Morse has called for a probe of the NLRB, and has buttressed his demand by an impressive analysis of how the NLRB has been subverted by its GOP officials into an instrument for management. The recent appointment of Henry W. Becker, ex-FBI lawyer, as regional NLRB head in Los Angeles, adds detail to Morse's charge. Becker's career includes a job as industrial security officer for aircraft manufacturing firms; four years as assistant director of industrial relations for Republic Steel Co., at Cleveland; and director of industrial relations in the Printing Industries Association, Inc., in Los Angeles.

2. The mess in the natural gas lobby. Ever since the revelation of Senator Case, South Dakota Republican, early in the session that an attempt had been made to bribe him to vote for the gas steal, the leadership of both parties in Congress has employed every device of legislative chicanery and deceit to stifle the probe.

3. The mess in war hysteria and "defense" profits. The revelation that Harold Talbott, Air Force Secretary, was profiting on the side from his post in the Pentagon blew him right out of his seat. We now have the case of Murray Chotiner, friend of Vice-President Nixon, on the one hand, and Marco Reginelli, Philadelphia hoodlum, on the other, and an unsavory collection of charac-

ters in between. It must be said in all fairness, however, that Chotiner, and Talbott, as well as Edward Mansure, head of General Services Administration, and Peter Strobel, erstwhile Public Buildings commissioner, and Hugh Cross, former Interstate Commerce Commissioner — even if they are all guilty of everything of which they have been accused—were caught in only chicken feed operations, compared to the billions plundered from the public treasury and the people's taxes, in the name of security and defense, for the benefit of the biggest corporations in the nation. Outstanding among these are the airplane companies whose stake in war hysteria is 100 percent of parity. An honest and thorough investigation of the ties of the plane companies to politicians would probably put the natural gas scandal in the shade.

#### MAIN PRESENT ISSUES

Concentration on a few key points will be necessary during the last weeks of the session. This has already been stressed by William Schnitzler, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, who has urged main attention to:

Extension of minimum wage coverage.

Amendment of the social security laws to lower the retirement age for working women from 65 to 62, and to grant social security benefits to totally and permanently disabled workers at age 50, instead of

65. On the civil rights front the main points of concentration are:

Passage of HR 627, the Administration's civil rights proposals, as a minimum.

Adoption of the Powell amendment to the school construction bill, to prevent federal funds from being channelled to any school districts which defy the Supreme Court ruling on desegregation.

A smoldering reactionary offensive on the civil liberties front bears close attention. Several bills have already been moved along, with Administration support, whose purpose is to overthrow the Supreme Court ruling in the Steve Nelson case by restoring to the states the right to adopt state sedition laws or, in some measures, to buttress "states' rights" not only on the "sedition" front but along the front of labor, civil rights and welfare legislation. Legislation to this effect has already been advanced by Senators John McClellan (D., Ark.), Style Bridges (R., N.H.), Joe McCarthy (R., Wis.) and about a dozen more.

In several other areas of legislative activity the situation is unclear at this writing. These include the 135,000-units a year housing program; depressed areas legislation; tax revision. Concentrated effort during the last weeks of the session might be the force required to put over the low-cost housing program. A similar situation exists with regard to the Davis-Bacon, "prevailing wage," provision in the highway bill, which was

approved by the House, thrown out by the Senate, and whose fate at this time is uncertain.

#### PEOPLE'S LOBBYING

The session can chalk up one important advance over last session. That is in popular participation in lobbying activities, especially on the part of labor.

Some of the delegations were numbered in the thousands, like those of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, with 2,500, and the United Auto Workers Educational conference, with 3,000. Over one thousand rank and file unionists from the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Workers, half of them from New York City, went up on Capitol Hill to press for extension of minimum wage coverage; while 200 members of the International Longshoremen's Association (independent) lobbied for an amendment of the Longshoremen's and Harbor Workers Compensation Act that would increase the amount of benefits.

On a different level, the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department's legislative conference brought together some 200 union officials to build up steam behind the main points of labor's legislative program.

These large-scale mobilizations of labor lobbyists were far in excess of anything that has occurred for many years past.

The most inspiring of the massed demands on Congress was that



voiced by the 2,000 participants in the Civil Rights Mobilization in March, inspiring because it included persons from the Montgomery bus boycott, and persons who had fought for the right to vote in the South.

The fight on that front was followed by a gathering of Negro leaders in Washington, at the call of A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, who met to plan a longer range mobilization around the issues of civil rights.

On the civil liberties front the main popular action was the annual Civil Liberties Clearing House, in which representatives of over 100 organizations participated this year, compared with 85 last year. The gathering is a forum for exchange of opinion rather than for formulation of policy. The defense of civil rights has a high priority on its agenda this year.

Fred R. Field, president of the N. Y. District Council of the ILA, who headed the union's delegation to the Capitol, in estimating the results of the trip, made a point that is worth mulling over. The significance of the lobbying trip, he indicated, lay not only in its immediate effect on the Congressmen who were visited but, perhaps even more important, in the effect on the union and

its members themselves.

"We educated ourselves in the use of a technique that we have neglected for too long," he said.

These heightened mass activities are an important, though still small, step forward this year as compared with previous years. If they are continued during the concluding weeks of the session the odds for squeezing something out of this Congress will go up. There is this to be said for such activities: they can't lose. Even if the Congressmen learn very little, the people can learn a lot by participation in such activities, whether at Capitol Hill or, at home, backing up the demands they have already made. Such experience is, so to speak, money in the bank that, like compound interest, will grow and grow.

Labor and the Negro people and the farmers will have need to draw on their resources of experience not only for these concluding weeks of the session, but in putting their demands to the two party conventions in August, and to every candidate for every office prior to the election. It is certainly time to make it plain to both parties and to all candidates that the question is: deeds not words or, as it is sometimes stated, put up or shut up!

# The Defeat of Shivers

A REPORT FROM TEXAS

By Edward E. Strong

TEXAS HAS BEEN in the news for the past quarter century for doing big things in a very big way. It is, of course, the largest American state, with a land area of 263,513 square miles; it has a population of nearly 9,000,000, sixth among the forty-eight states, being exceeded only by New York, California, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Since 1935 Texas has been the leading mineral producing state, consisting primarily of oil and gas, with a mineral production valued at \$3,817,000,000 during 1955.

## RECENT CHANGES

The process of industrialization in the state has been among the most rapid in the South. It is estimated that "the actual physical production of the Texas manufacturing industries increased as much between the census of 1947 and the year 1955 as during all preceding history. Its industrial production has grown several hundred per cent in the last decade and a half" (*Texas Almanac*, 1956-1957 Edition). In 1939 the total value of manufactured products was \$1,531,000,000 as compared with an estimated total value in 1953 of \$10,602,000,000.

Side by side with increased industrialization, the growth of monopo-

lies, and the rapid development of such urban centers as Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and San Antonio, far reaching changes are taking place in Texas agriculture. Among the most important of these are: the sharp decline in the total number of farms with a simultaneous increase in farm size; the decline in the total numbers of tenants and sharecroppers (301,660 tenants in 1930 as compared with 77,169 in 1954; 105,122 sharecroppers in 1930 but only 9,562 in 1954); the pronounced trends towards mechanization and diversification.

As a direct result of the radical changes and development in the Texas economy, along the lines indicated above, there has emerged a powerful working class, a large, articulate middle class, and an important grouping of capital whose program of class rule conflicts in certain respects with that of the Dixiecrats. At the same time a Negro liberation movement, based upon a population of over 900,000, and the struggle of a million and a half Mexican-Americans are daily becoming more powerful social forces. Thus, Texas social and political life are in great ferment, with millions being drawn into political and economic struggles, presaging sharper conflicts be-

tween social classes. Basic are insoluble contradictions between semi-feudal forms of class rule and the compelling needs of labor, the Negro people and other social forces. These struggles signify impending alterations in the forms of political rule, and the spread of democracy in the state.

#### SHARPENING POLITICAL STRUGGLES

This is the setting in which there has arisen in Texas over the past several years an historic conflict between the Dixiecrats and other reactionary forces, on the one hand, and labor, the Negro and Mexican-American peoples' movement, liberals, poor farmers and other progressive elements, on the other. A direct result of this struggle was the smashing victory won by the popular forces over Dixiecratism in the precinct and county conventions held during the month of May in various parts of the state. The single most important outcome of these conventions to date is the fact that the tight-fisted control of the Dixiecrats over the state machinery of the Democratic Party was broken, and one of the nation's most rabid Dixiecrats, Governor Allan Shivers, received a crushing rebuff. What were the events leading up to, the factors involved in, and the meaning of this overwhelming rout of the Dixiecrat, Shivers?

Allan Shivers comes from east Texas, that part of the state which historically was an integral part of

the old plantation South. As a leading political figure and governor for years, he has been a relatively successful and faithful servant of the oil and gas trusts, a tireless lackey of the public utilities, an inveterate foe of labor, the Negro people, and all social progress. In 1952, Shivers gained national notoriety by bolting the Democratic Party and helping to deliver Texas to Eisenhower in the presidential elections. When the Supreme Court handed down its momentous desegregation decision on May 17, 1954, the Shivers administration was among the first to oppose it.

#### THE SHIVERS PROGRAM

True to his reactionary past, and pretending to be confident that the white majority would support him, Shivers announced on April 10th, at the same time as a similar announcement from Senator Lyndon Johnson, that he was a candidate for leader of the Texas delegation to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago next August. In making his announcement Shivers indicated clearly that key issues were involved, and that Lyndon Johnson would have to declare himself on these issues.

The Shivers announcement set forth as the paramount issues the following: 1) Interposition and strengthening of state's rights; 2) Opposition to federal aid, and control, of education; 3) Restoration of the two-thirds nominating rule in the Democratic National Convention;

4) An unpledged Texas delegation to Chicago; 5) Unalterable opposition to federal control over oil, gas, water and other resources; 6) Unyielding opposition to the "Leftwing elements of the Northern Democratic Party" (meaning the ADA, PAC, NAACP, etc.).

Subsequent to the Shivers announcement, the Texas Citizens Council demanded that Lyndon Johnson answer three questions on desegregation. The questions were: "1) Is he in favor of continued segregation? 2) Will he support the interposition movement? 3) Would he be a candidate for either president or vice-president if the Democratic platform supports the U.S. Supreme Court ruling outlawing segregation?" The Shivers statement and the three questions from the Texas Citizens Council set forth only a partial listing of the full program of Texas Dixiecrats. To even begin to complete the program, one would have to add support by Shivers of the monstrous state sedition act (he had originally urged death for all "Communists") "right to work" legislation, and a "free enterprise" system of state government which resulted in scandals and corruption on a scale unique, perhaps, in Texas history.

Thus Governor Shivers entered the 1956 political and electoral scene on a rather fully developed Dixiecrat program, with the support of plantation and semi-feudal elements, the white supremacist demagogues, and the most rabid, labor-hating,

extreme Right-wing sections of big capital. He had set out to win Texas for this program, and through such a victory to consolidate the position of Dixiecratism in the South and on the national scene as well.

#### THE SUPPORT OF JOHNSON

The background and role of Lyndon Johnson is too well known to require any extended examination here. Suffice it to say that Johnson has been second to none in advancing the special interests of big oil and gas. He has played a harmful role as the leader of the Senate with respect to civil rights, labor and other progressive legislation. Notwithstanding these facts, Johnson received the support of the vast majority of all democratic forces in Texas, and as a result was able to defeat Shivers.

But why would labor and liberal democratic elements support Lyndon Johnson in preference to Allan Shivers? To answer this question it is necessary to examine the particular role played by Johnson and Speaker of the House Rayburn within the more limited context of the local Texas scene. What was this role? Like Shivers, Senator Johnson announced his candidacy for leader of the Texas delegation to the National Democratic Convention with a declaration of principles. This declaration, and the general line of Johnson and Rayburn in the campaign, differed considerably from that of Shivers and the Dixiecrats. Thus, Johnson called for a Democratic Par-

ty which would include all factions. He stated that "In the Senate, Democrats of such widely divergent views—Sen. George and Sen. Lehman, Sen. Russell and Sen. Humphrey—were able to vote together on principle. Even when they differed they did not attempt to divide or destroy the party's record for responsibility and patriotic performance. What has been done in the Senate can be done in Texas." Whereas Shivers was calling for a purge of the Democratic Party, of Senators Lehman, Humphrey and other leading ADA figures, Johnson was insisting that the Party could only exist if provisions were made for the participation of this grouping.

Johnson argued that the National Democratic Convention should nominate "the very best person available in America to lead the Democrats of the nation," and that the Texas delegation "should abide by the decision of the majority of the convention and return to Texas to work for the election of the nominee." On this important point Johnson is publicly committed to the support of any candidate nominated by the National Democratic Convention although this candidate may be running on a liberal platform. Shivers, on the other hand, insisted that if such a platform were adopted the Texas delegation should leave the Convention.

Johnson and Rayburn did not sign the Southern Manifesto against desegregation. They were supported in this by a majority of the Texas Con-

gressional delegation that refused to sign also. This became one of the main charges leveled against Johnson. Notwithstanding the fact that Shivers made the question of desegregation the first issue in the campaign, Johnson refused to endorse the position of the Dixiecrats on this matter.

Thus, it is clear that although Senator Johnson ran on a Right-of-center conservative program, it fundamentally differed from that of Shivers and the Dixiecrats in a number of issues. In the final analysis the Shivers program of interposition can only mean violent and open rebellion against the May 17th decision of the Supreme Court and the authority of the Federal Government. The Johnson-Rayburn groupings reject the path of violent opposition to the Supreme Court decision notwithstanding the fact that they are against it. This may prove to be the most crucial distinction between the Dixiecrat opponents of the Supreme Court decision and other conservative and even reactionary forces of the South.

Who were the primary supporters of Senator Johnson? In the first place he was supported by leading political, industrial and financial figures throughout the state. He was supported by that section of capital which, for a variety of reasons, found it impossible within Texas to continue to support Shivers. The "new oil" millionaires who had supported McCarthy, like Henry Hunt and Clint Murchison, were behind Shivers.

This sharp split within the Texas business and financial groupings symbolizes a development which has begun to take place, to one degree or another, in all Southern states as a result of the new situation confronting the ruling class in the country and in the South following the Supreme Court decision on desegregation. This decision signaled the fact that American ruling circles had sharp differences among themselves over the tactics to be pursued in response to the mounting strength of the Negro freedom movement. In the South this difference is shaping up over the use or non-use of force and violence against the Negro people and the Supreme Court decision. In Texas, where the Negro, labor, Mexican-American, and popular democratic forces have developed to a considerable extent, important sections of capital find the lunatic program of Shivers and the Dixiecrats an impossible one to support. As a consequence, many of these groupings shifted their support from Shivers to Johnson. Their class interests dictate the adoption of a more "enlightened" tactic.

#### WHY THE SPLIT?

For two fundamental but inter-related reasons Shivers and Johnson split over electoral and political tactics which would best serve their class in the crucial 1956 presidential contest. The first of these reasons, as already indicated, arose from certain contradictions among the ruling

circles. The second, and most important of these reasons, was due to the new and ever ascending role played in Texas and national political life by labor, the Negro, and other liberal forces.

In this setting and against this background, a conjunction of events had brought Johnson and the financial circles for whom he spoke into a transitional, and possibly temporary, alliance with the popular democratic forces in the state. This alliance arose primarily from the parallel but urgent immediate objectives of each group, namely, the defeat of Shivers. This alliance included a number of other groupings. Among these were: 1) "Loyalist" Democrats, whose primary concern was loyalty to the Democratic Party; 2) "Moderate" Democrats, with diverse social and class backgrounds, who are convinced that Texas and the nation will be torn asunder over desegregation unless there is adopted a Johnson-type program of moderation, directed against both the "Right" and the "Left"; 3) Professional and machine politicians who switched to Johnson simply because they saw him as the winner.

Now that the Johnson-Rayburn precinct and county convention victories have been confirmed by the Texas Democratic State Convention, the question arises: what now with the temporary alliance which produced the defeat of Shivers? The Convention itself demonstrated the highly unstable character of the alliance and the inevitable sharpening of

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differences within it over tactical and programmatic questions. Many liberal forces at the Convention challenged the continuation in office of the Shivers-controlled Democratic State Committee (whose term of office expires in September). But the motion to oust this Dixiecrat-run Committee was defeated on a roll call vote by 1,306 to 524.

There was strong sentiment at the Convention for restricting the conditions and obligations of support to Johnson's favorite-son candidacy. It is significant that the 270 delegates attending the Harris County Democratic Convention (convened in Houston on May 8th, two weeks before the State Convention, one of the principle areas of the anti-Shivers movement) failed to endorse Johnson. In fact, the chairman of the Harris County Convention Resolution Committee issued a statement to the effect that although the county organization was supporting Johnson, it would oppose any compromise with the Shivers forces.

Many liberal elements in the State were convinced that Shivers could have been defeated without Johnson, that Johnson did not enter the fight until two years of successful anti-Shivers spadework had been done, and that therefore restricted terms should be the basis for his endorsement by the State Convention. However, the labor movement seemed to have had some doubt about this judgment. Notwithstanding broad sentiment for restricting the pledge to Johnson, the Conven-

tion endorsed him as the leader of the State delegation and as its favorite-son candidate without qualification. It instituted the unit rule for the delegation, thereby giving Johnson additional levers of control.

#### ESTIMATE OF THE JOHNSON VICTORY

Johnson's election over Shivers as the leader of the Texas delegation was a positive development within the context of the present situation in Texas. But from the point of view of the national scene it poses certain new problems. Whereas in Texas, Johnson's role leading up to the State Convention was to help register a major defeat to Shivers and the Dixiecrats, from this point on he will seek to have the Democratic National Convention nominate a candidate who is pledged to a platform of "moderation." Such a platform could only be a denial of the program of labor and the Negro people. Such a platform would come into conflict, in the first place, with the program of important sections of Texas popular democratic forces.

There can be no doubt but that the popular democratic forces in Texas, while continuing to direct their main struggle against the cohorts of Shivers and the Dixiecrats, will exert tremendous pressure upon the new leadership of the Democratic Party in the state. The extent of this pressure, the scope of the developing movements in the state on key issues, and the actual composition of the Texas delegation are important

factors in helping to determine the role which will be played by Senator Johnson between now and the Democratic National Convention.

#### WHITE SUPPORT FOR DE-SEGREGATION

With respect to the position to be taken by the National Democratic Convention on desegregation, the Shivers defeat already indicates that a majority of white Texans, while possibly in disagreement with the Supreme Court decision, want no part of the Eastland, Byrnes, Tammadge, Shivers line of open rebellion. Moreover, the emerging trend is in the direction of accepting the inevitability of integration. Impetus to this trend was given by a resolution adopted at the 19th Annual Convention of the Texas CIO, which met in Galveston last fall, and stated:

We recommend that the Texas State CIO Council and all of its affiliates carry on an active campaign and cooperate with other community groups to bring about desegregation in the public schools without further delay. We call upon the Governor, the Attorney General, the State Board of Education and local school boards to refrain from delaying actions and efforts to evade the law; and recommend that all locals bring this resolution to the attention of their local school boards as forcefully as possible.

The Dixiecrat theory of interposition was given a firm rebuff by Brian Spinks, leading analyst for the *Houston Post*, in a series of articles ap-

pearing in the paper on desegregation. Writing in the *Post* on March 7, 1956, Mr. Spinks defined interposition as follows: "Essentially, 'interposition' is a theory which, when applied fully, means either armed rebellion, secession and civil war or destruction of the nation's governmental system as it has developed during the past 168 years." Mr. Spinks further argued that the Supreme Court cannot accept the views of the Dixiecrats on interposition "without turning the clock back to the 18th century."

From the above data it becomes clear that Senator Johnson will have no easy task in writing a resolution on desegregation at the Democratic National Convention acceptable to the Dixiecrats, a majority of his constituency in Texas, labor and the Negro people.

There are also problems on other issues about which Texans are stating their views. Most articulate are the Young Democrats in Texas, who had a good deal to say on many questions at their annual State Convention held a few weeks ago in Austin. The Young Democrats called for speedy compliance with the Supreme Court decisions on desegregation and public facilities; went on record supporting federal aid to education; supported repeal of the "right-to-work" laws; the elimination of the poll tax; an investigation of state scandals; and for a program of slum clearance and public housing. The Mexican-American population



in Texas is another very strong and well organized anti-Dixiecratic force.

#### NEGROES AND THE STATE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Among the key factors that will help determine the final position that will be taken by Senator Johnson and the Texas "moderates" at the Democratic National Convention is the Negro people's movement. The election of a Negro to the city council in Port Arthur and to the Board of Education in San Antonio are portents of this new period. Important changes are taking place with respect to registration and poll-tax payment by Negroes in a number of the Black Belt counties of east Texas. A large measure of integration into the structure of the Bexar County (San Antonio) Democratic Party organization has already taken place. There are eight Negroes on the County Executive Committee and a Negro vice-president of the Committee. Negroes are on the board of the Bexar County Democratic Club, with two serving as area (a group of precincts) leaders. It is estimated that some 9,000 Negroes (35,000 total population) are registered in the County. Negro membership in Democratic County Committees are found to a lesser degree in other parts of the state. Negro leaders of precincts are to be found in Dallas, Houston and other large cities throughout Texas. Almost without exception these leaders were lined up solidly against Shivers, and

are closely allied with labor and the liberal wing of the Democratic Party in the State.

#### CONCLUSION

A most important aspect of the Shivers-Johnson campaign is that it serves, once again, to undermine the widely-held, but false, view that there exists a monolithic white South, insanely anti-Negro, and prepared to subordinate all considerations to this insanity. Also undermined is the idea that any Southern politician becomes a sure winner by conducting a scurrilous racist campaign. A third lesson is that growing numbers of Southern masses are learning to locate their main immediate political enemy, the Dixiecrats, and have already taken great strides in developing a movement capable of extirpating this cancer from Southern life.

Finally, the campaign takes its place with the Louisville & Nashville Railroad strike, the Bell Telephone strike, and the Montgomery Bus boycott as additional evidence that historic changes are under way in the South. Southern men and women, Negro and white alike, with a militant youth in the forefront, are beginning to take their destiny in their own hands. The historic outcome of this great development will be to free the South and the nation from the abomination of Jim Crow. American democratic public opinion can only look with favor upon this historic development, and give it united, enthusiastic support.

# Automation in the Cleveland Ford Plants

By Hyman Lumer

MUCH IS BEING written these days about automation, and particularly about its effects on working conditions, job skills and employment. Most of what is written deals with these questions in general, over-all terms. However, if we are really to understand them, we must tackle them much more concretely.

This we have undertaken to do, at least in a preliminary fashion, for one of the most widely heralded examples of automation—the Ford Motor Company plants in Cleveland. What is presented here is only a partial study, which leaves many questions unanswered. It is believed, however, that this does provide a fairly accurate picture and permits the possibility of drawing some important conclusions.

Ford operations in the Cleveland area consist of a stamping plant, a foundry and two engine plants. As of November, 1955, the stamping plant, located in Walton Hills, employed about 3,800 workers. The foundry and engine plants, all located in Brook Park Village, employed a total of about 12,000. Since then, these numbers have been substantially reduced by layoffs.

In each of these plants, there is a considerable degree of automation.

## THE STAMPING PLANT

In the stamping plant, which is automated perhaps to the greatest extent, a series of huge punch presses is integrated with a number of labor-eliminating devices. These include: 1) sheet feeders, 2) extractors, turnovers, stackers and loaders for blanks, 3) unloaders, turnovers and loaders for drawn stampings, 4) applicators for drawing compound, 5) scrap removers, and 6) counting and packing devices for finished parts.

Three thousand tons of sheet steel go through the plant in a single day. Two hundred freight cars loaded with tops, hoods, cowls, side panels and other stampings leave the plant daily. Yet none of this metal is lifted or carried around by hand. Even the scrap is handled automatically. Instead of accumulating on the floor, it drops into a chute and is carried to a baling machine.

## THE FOUNDRY

The Ford foundry is probably the most modern and highly automated one in existence. "Ours is the only foundry," says its manager, "where the molding sand used to make castings is never touched by human

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The plant boasts, among other things, a new molding machine for V-8 engine blocks which handles sixty tons of sand an hour. This machine eliminates workers who formerly 1) moved flasks into position, 2) filled them with sand, 3) operated the jolt and squeeze machine, 4) drew the pattern, and 5) moved the finished mold onto the conveyor.

A flask is placed under the sand outlet and the pattern is brought up against the flask. When the pattern is in place, a measured amount of sand is discharged into the flask, which is then jolted at the rate of 180 times a minute and squeezed with a pressure of 80,000 pounds per square foot. Next a pneumatic device strips the pattern from the mold and places the mold on a conveyor.

Other operations, including core making, are also largely automated. Castings are moved in and out of the cleaning house by means of automatic transfer units. However, there is still much manual handling involved, and the sand which seeps out in the process must still be swept up by hand.

### THE ENGINE PLANTS

Most widely publicized of all the Ford units are the engine plants, where production of engine blocks and heads, intake and exhaust manifolds, crankshafts, pistons and piston pins has been almost completely automated. The engine block lines

in particular have been widely described and discussed. The CIO pamphlet *Automation* states:

In this plant . . . engine blocks are machined by a linked battery of machines on a line some 1500 feet long. Automatic machine tools perform more than 500 boring, broaching, drilling, honing, milling and tapping operations, with little human assistance. The timing of each operation is synchronized so that the line moves forward uniformly.

A *March of Labor* supplement on automation (Spring, 1955) adds:

The Ford plant manufactures six-cylinder engine blocks, using an electronic brain, 27 miles of wire and 42 automatic machine units. A block that once took *nine hours* to complete now requires *fifteen minutes*. An estimated 154 engine blocks run through the production line in an hour, *requiring 41 workers on the line which runs them*.

The same production pace, by now "outmoded" methods, *required 117 workers*.

Automated production does not yet extend to assembly, which is still handled in more or less the conventional way. However, automated engine assembly equipment has been developed, and is now in operation in the new Plymouth plant in Detroit. Similar machines are being built for Ford, and it is undoubtedly only a matter of time until assembly in the Cleveland plants is also automated.

Such, in brief, is the nature and

extent of automation in these plants. We turn now to its effects on jobs and working conditions.

### AUTOMATION AND JOBS

The most obvious result of automation is the reduction in the total number of workers required. Equally important, however, are its far-reaching effects on job content and composition of the work force. The most evident of these are the following:

1. It eliminates manual handling of materials and hence greatly reduces the number of workers needed for this purpose.

2. It substitutes automatic for manual operation of machines, and therefore replaces machine operators with watchers.

3. It creates added demands for maintenance of equipment, and thus gives rise to a relative increase in the number of maintenance workers.

These changes are clearly illustrated in Engine Plant No. 1. Here the six-cylinder block line employs roughly sixty workers for one shift, divided into twelve job classifications. Of these workers, about half are automation equipment operators and machine setters (operators who also do job setting). There are also about half a dozen each of block handlers and laborers, the latter doing chiefly janitorial work. The remaining classifications are mainly concerned with some minor assembly work which is done while the blocks are still on this line. Finally, in addition to the above, there are

about five maintenance men and fifteen inspectors assigned to this particular line from the plantwide pool.

The situation on the V-8 block line is similar.

The most striking features of this setup are: 1) the sharp reduction in the number of block handlers as compared with a non-automated line, and 2) the emergence of the automation equipment operators (including machine setters) as the main category of workers on the line.

The changed proportion of maintenance workers is not reflected in the figures for the one department. However, in the plant as a whole, maintenance workers make up nearly 21% of the work force—a far higher proportion than in non-automated plants. Of these maintenance workers, 80% are skilled journeymen. Thus, the skilled workers in maintenance alone make up 16% of the total work force, as against a plantwide average of only 5% for industry as a whole.

Such changes as these have been used as the basis for painting glowing pictures of a future in which all manual labor is reduced to mere button-pushing, and in which all workers become highly-paid skilled laborers. But this is far from reality, as a further examination of the picture shows.

### A NEW FORM OF SPEEDUP

Not only has automation placed much greater weight on the role of the operators and machine setters; it has also radically changed the

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character of their work. It has taken most of the manual labor out of their jobs, and has substituted button-pushing and the watching of dials and lights on elaborate instrument panels. Thus, a machine setter watches a dial which shows how many cycles the machine has gone through, and after a certain number he replaces a worn tool with a sharp one. Then he resumes his watching.

At first glance, this appears to be a veritable Utopia, in which the workers have at last been rescued from the exhausting drudgery and speedup of the past. But this is by no means the case. Like all other technical improvements, automation is introduced not to lighten the worker's burden but to reduce the wage bill and fatten the company's profits. Hence the company still strives to squeeze the greatest possible amount of production out of each worker and automation leads only to the substitution of new forms of pressure and speedup for the old.

Thus, while the operator may be relieved of certain physical work, the task of keeping an eye on a multitude of instrument panel lights and watching for faulty performance of tools is one which can be stepped up to the point where it becomes as exhausting and nerve-wracking as the hardest day's physical toil. That this is happening generally is indicated by a recent study made at Yale University. As reported in the *New York Times* (December 29, 1955), the study shows:

Mental tension is supplanting muscular fatigue as the chief complaint of workers in newly-automated factories. . . .

The new machines have eliminated drudgery but the strain of watching and controlling them makes workers "jumpy." . . .

Jobs are physically easier, but the worker takes home worries instead of an aching back. . . .

The situation is no different on the Cleveland block lines, where the company strives no less than others to utilize the energy of the operator to the utmost. Thus, operators are held fully responsible for bad work even though there are inspectors on hand. In fact, they are expected to examine the work just as carefully as the inspectors. As a result of this, together with the heightened monotony of the job, reports indicate, there has been a steady rise in the number of workers disciplined for carelessness on the block line. And correspondingly, the most frequent type of grievance has been on unfair penalties for turning out scrap.

In addition, there has been a progressive reduction in the number of block handlers, whose work has been increasingly turned over to the operators and machine setters. Hence, as they manage to become somewhat accustomed to the nervous strain, these workers are confronted with more speedup in the form of added burdens of other work.

Nor has the greatly increased productivity resulting from automation

found more than the barest reflection as yet in higher wages. Some time ago, union pressure won five-cent automation increases for machine operators in several departments. At that time, a supplement to the local wage agreement established the new classification of automation equipment operator for cylinder block machining, cylinder head machining, manifold machining and flywheel housing machining. A five-cent raise for this small group is clearly no more than a bare beginning.

In this connection, a significant feature of the plant is the complete absence of incentive pay systems. To be sure, automation greatly increases the proportion of indirect labor (materials handling, janitorial work, transport, maintenance, etc.), which has always been day-rated. But incentives have been eliminated also for the direct labor on the production lines. This is a reflection of the fact that the speed of production no longer depends primarily on the speed with which individual workers operate individual machines.

#### BREAKDOWNS AND SAFETY STANDARDS

Another result of automation is that the effect of breakdowns is much more widespread. If twenty drill-presses are operated separately, and each one has 5% down time, that is considered normal. But if they are integrated into one automated unit and each component machine has 5% down-time, the whole

works can be down up to 100% of the time.

A simple breakdown may thus hold up not just a few workers but entire departments. Consequently, when a breakdown occurs, nothing is spared to get it fixed in the shortest possible time. Maintenance men are almost literally thrown at the job. Operators and job setters, laborers, and even foremen are set to work moving and stacking blocks or doing similar work. The most frantic haste prevails.

In such circumstances, safety standards go out the window. Unsafe practices are condoned. And the injury ratio rises. In the engine plant, though adequate data on accidents are not available, there are indications that it has gone up for at least the last two years.

#### THE SKILLED TRADES

Automation, as we have seen, brings with it a rise in the proportion of skilled workers. In part, this is due to a growth in the number of maintenance workers, necessitated by the greater complexity of the machinery and the more burning need for reducing down time. And in part, it is due to the simultaneous drop in the number of semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

But at the same time, automation speeds up the degradation of the skilled crafts, a process which has been going on for a long time. This process takes two forms, often combined in varying degrees.

The first is the breaking down of a craft into specialized subdivisions, each requiring less skill than the craft as a whole. Thus, tool and die making is broken down into such specialties as cutter grinding, die repair, or tool sharpening. In this way, a skilled craft may be progressively degraded into a series of semi-skilled operations, with an accompanying drive to lower wage scales.

The second is the crossing of craft lines and the combining of parts of several crafts into a single job. In the installation and maintenance of complex machinery, the employer finds it cheaper, instead of having a millwright do one part of a job, a machine repairman a second, and an electrician a third, to employ one worker who knows just enough of each to be able to handle that particular machinery. Such workers do not need to be skilled journeymen, but can be trained by the company itself to do what is needed.

Automation greatly steps up this process. In the foundry, there have already appeared such hybrid job classifications as welder-machine repairman, and in the stamping plant there is the classification of automation equipment repairman. The latter combines such diverse crafts as millwright, electrician, machine repairman, hydraulic equipment repairman, and jig and fixture repairman.

These are only initial steps and the company can, of course, be kept from carrying the process further by the

strength of the union. But they are enough to show that here, as elsewhere, the tendency is not at all to elevate everyone to the level of a skilled worker, but rather to degrade skilled labor to the level of semi-skilled, and this at a faster pace than ever before.

#### ELIMINATION OF WORKERS

What becomes of the semi-skilled and unskilled workers? Their numbers are greatly reduced not only on the automated lines but in other jobs as well. For automation is generally accompanied by replacement of much of the labor involved in feeding the lines, with systems of conveyors. Hence many jobs in materials handling and transport are eliminated.

What remains, aside from the non-automated departments, are chiefly unskilled jobs, in shipping and elsewhere, which have not yet been eliminated. Thus there is a degradation of job levels all down the line. Indeed, the gap between skilled and unskilled, because of the elimination of semi-skilled jobs, is increased even while both are reduced in stature.

At the end of the chain are the many workers who are eliminated altogether and are forced to seek lower-paying jobs elsewhere—if they can find them. Especially hard-hit are Puerto Rican and Negro workers, who generally have both the least seniority and the least training. Negro workers have been affected particularly by automation of foundry

dries, where they have customarily been hired in large numbers to handle the hardest, dirtiest jobs. To the extent that automation eliminates such jobs, Negro workers are thrown out of work much more than white workers, especially since it is the white workers who are most apt to get the more desirable jobs available in the automated departments.\*

For the time being, the elimination of jobs is covered up by the fact that automation takes place largely in new factories, situated in new localities. Ford points to the large and growing numbers of workers in these new plants as "proof" that automation increases employment. But the fact remains that behind the new jobs on the automated lines in Cleveland and elsewhere lies a proportionately greater loss of jobs through the closing down of non-automated operations in Dearborn.

The cut in jobs has also been offset by the considerable expansion of auto production, especially during 1955. But it is already painfully evident that this level will not be maintained in 1956. As of April, 1956, auto production was down an average of 20 per cent from the year before, and layoffs in the industry had hit the 200,000 mark. And when the present wave of expansion and decentralization dies down, the ad-

\* In the Cleveland Ford plants, particularly in the foundry, a number of Negro and Puerto Rican workers were hired when the plants first opened, and these now have top seniority. This, however, does not alter the general picture. In fact, the hiring of Negro and Puerto Rican job seekers has for some time been reduced to practically zero.

verse effects of automation on employment will undoubtedly make themselves much more sharply felt.

#### AUTOMATION NO EXCEPTION

In discussing the effect of mechanization on conditions of labor under capitalism, Marx wrote that "modern industry always tends to the substitution of the simpler and more subordinate employments for the higher and more complex ones." (*Wage Labor and Capital*.) He said also that

... in the degree in which the division of labor decreases, labor is simplified. The special skill of the laborer becomes worthless. He becomes transformed into a simple monotonous force of production, with neither physical nor mental elasticity. His work becomes accessible to all; therefore competitors press him from all sides.

And the competition becomes all the fiercer because "the industrial war of the capitalists among themselves . . . has the peculiarity that the battles in it are won less by recruiting than by discharging the army of workers. The generals (the capitalists) vie with one another as to who can discharge the greatest number of industrial workers."

To this historical trend, automation is no exception. The situation in the Ford plants, in so far as the facts are available, clearly substantiates this. Automation both substitutes "the simpler and more subordinate employments for the higher and

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p. 52



more complex ones" and leads to the discharging of armies of workers, and it does so at a greater pace than was true of previous forms of mechanization.

### GROWING CONTRADICTIONS

Automation does not basically change any of this. On the contrary, it brings the contradictions of capitalist production into ever sharper focus. One point in particular stands out, and demonstrates in its own way the growing obstacle which capitalism presents to the further development of the productive forces.

Complex machinery requires for its most efficient utilization operators who have both an interest in getting the most out of it with least labor and the skill and knowledge to do so. This is true above all of automated equipment. Here the task of minimizing breakdowns and keeping the machinery running without letup demands operators with a thorough knowledge of the machines and a variety of skills.

This is widely recognized by those who deal with automation from the technical point of view. "Automatic controls," says one writer,\* "have not and never will substitute for intelligence. Indeed, they have raised the quality of personnel requirements to new high levels. . . . The maintenance and operation of automatic systems calls for clarity of mind and

technical intuition."

However, while automation presents the need for workers who increasingly approach the level of skilled technicians, capitalism, moved only by the driving need to reduce the wage bill, unceasingly strives to reduce them to mere appendages of the machinery, to be done away with altogether as speedily as possible. Meanwhile, it seeks to meet the need for skill, which cannot be abolished, through the employment of engineers whose task it is to devise machinery which, more and more, "operates itself."

In the Soviet Union, the demand for alert, skilled workers long ago gave rise to the Stakhanovite movement. Today, the workers in automated plants are especially encouraged to develop all-around skills. And for the transition to Communism, it is recognized that an important requirement is the universal availability of poly-technical training. Capitalism, on the contrary, strives to fill the need for all-around skills by combining pieces of crafts and degrading skilled workers to semi-skilled.

In this, as well as in other ways, automation serves to bring home to workers ever more clearly the growing irrationality of capitalist production—the widening contrast between what should be and what exists, as well as between the situation here and that in a socialist country. It raises the question of Socialism with greater urgency.

\* Eugene Ayres, "An Automatic Chemical Plant," in *Automatic Control*, New York, 1955, p. 52.

## IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS

It is clear that automation in no whit lessens the need for fighting speedup and the deterioration of working conditions. On the contrary, the struggle on these issues is sharpened by it, as is the fight for maintaining jobs and wage levels. Automation also intensifies the fight for jobs for Negro workers and for their upgrading, especially into the skilled trades.

The dangers of automation to labor have given rise to a variety of programs for combatting them. These include demands for higher wages, guaranteed annual wage, shorter work week, revision of job classifications, higher pay for automated jobs, broadened seniority groupings, retraining of workers at company expense, relocation allowances for displaced workers, and a number of others.

Particular impetus has been given to the fight for the thirty-hour week. Typical of the reaction is the following resolution passed by the executive board of Cleveland Ford Local 1250 in September, 1955:

Whereas, giant strides and technological advances have been made in industry to the point where tremendous social and economic ramifications have been felt, and

Whereas, the First Industrial Revolution created jobs and conditions for new job opportunities as opposed to the elimination of those at present, and

Whereas, those last hired are now in jeopardy because of automation and those not hired have their job opportunities even more diminished, and

Whereas, automation when improperly used can create an economic and social nightmare in which men walk idle and hungry,

Therefore, be it resolved that since the most concrete advance made by workers is a reduction in hours worked we thus advocate thirty hours work with forty hours pay, and while we make no claim that this in itself is a panacea, it is our basic belief that it is a long stride forward toward social and economic justice.

Such, in brief, are some of the main problems posed by automation, problems which will give rise to growing struggles as automation continues to spread. In these struggles the Left and progressives forces will undoubtedly play a very important part.

# The Westinghouse Strike

By Joseph Hamlin and Julian Lowitt

IN THE WESTINGHOUSE STRIKE, 55,000 workers of the IUE (CIO-AFL) and the UE (Independent) from approximately forty plants were lined up against an industrial giant whose controlling interest is held by the Mellon trust. In the face of heavy attacks and real privation, the workers maintained solid ranks for 156 days, and partially beat back the company's offensive.

Even Big Business newspapers publicly pondered the lessons of this struggle. "What is it," asked the *N. Y. Herald Tribune*, "that will make men give up a third of a year's pay and an indefinite amount in the future, in protest against their employer?" This may be a big secret for the *Herald Tribune*, but actually the matter is not very mysterious. What we had here were American workers defending themselves against a ruthless attack by a big monopoly.

The Westinghouse workers were faced with a most determined effort on the part of the corporation to worsen long established working conditions. Further, the company was demanding that the union accept a serious cut in wage levels, work standards, etc., and then commit suicide by accepting contractually the theory that the union had no say whatever in regard to work standards, methods of wage payment, etc. This theory was incorpo-

rated in a clause on "productivity," which stated, in effect, that management was to have the sole prerogative ("divine right," is the way union leaders characterized it) on these questions.

\* \* \*

In August, 1955, the workers at the large generator plant in East Pittsburgh (Local 601, IUE) struck against the company's attempt to time study "indirect" labor operations (*i.e.* maintenance men, material handlers, sweepers, etc.).

After six weeks the workers of 29 other Westinghouse plants came out in support of the 601 workers for three days.

To end the walkout both sides agreed to certain concessions. The company agreed to postpone further time studies and to include the issue as part of national negotiations. The union's national leadership, over the strong objections of many workers, particularly those in Local 601, agreed to accept the company's right to time study indirect labor operations, with these studies to be subjected to "ground rules" (protective clauses restricting the company).

For the next month the company refused to budge and some 45,000 IUE workers went on strike on the key issue of time study and work standards. In addition the workers' demands included no five-year con-

tract, 15c wage increase and fringe benefits.

A week later approximately 10,000 UE workers went out for substantially the same demands. However, the UE leaders claimed that time study was not an issue in their strike.

There were many who felt that the GE contract, signed a few months earlier, and substantially the same as the Westinghouse offer, put the Westinghouse workers "over a barrel." Against this background how could the workers strike?

One factor was that the Westinghouse workers were traditionally more militant and were unwilling to give up conditions which generally were better than in GE.

#### THE TIME STUDY OR "AUTOMATION" ISSUE

While it may not have appeared so to all at the outset, it was the time study issue which made the difference. *Fortune* magazine (Dec. 1955) noted that "in the Westinghouse strike, the time study issue, like a splinter, has so worked its way into the dispute that it may take radical surgery to get it out."

As a consequence of the intense competition among the monopolies, there has been generated a drive for lowered labor costs through advanced mechanization of production, *i.e.*, automation. In its wake the ratio of direct labor (workers directly on or related to production) to indirect labor (maintenance men, repair men, material handlers, etc., servicing

equipment) has changed radically. In 1939 Westinghouse roughly categorized 60% of its personnel as direct labor, most of whom were paid incentive rates, and only 40% indirect labor who were paid hourly or day rates. In 1955 the proportions were almost reversed; 55% were budgeted as non-production workers and 45% as direct production workers. As indirect labor assumed greater proportions with its resultant effect on costs, Westinghouse adopted a new system. It began to make time studies and set production standards for day workers, or indirect labor. Finally it placed entire plants on measured day-work. It would pay only hourly rates for incentive production standards and thus cut labor costs almost 50% an hour on the average.

When first initiated in Buffalo, a few years ago, the full implications of the Westinghouse company plan were not realized. The departmental and even local strikes which took place were treated as isolated occurrences. In fact, in these struggles the IUE national union leadership sent the workers back. Nor were the decentralization and "runaway shops" built in Ohio, North and South Carolina, Arkansas, etc., seen as part of this process.

It now becomes apparent that the company by-passed plants where the working class was more militant or plants it considered physically obsolete. It built entirely new plants where it could set up its new system. This process resulted in serious un-

employment. For instance, 25% of the 13,000 complement of East Pittsburgh were laid off in the last four years, leaving only men with thirteen years or more seniority. In this process no worker, no matter his years of service, can be said to be secure. Automation makes obsolete many skilled jobs in general and many peculiar only to Westinghouse. The transfer of work to new locations just wipes out hundreds of jobs.

Consequently, there were accumulating throughout the Westinghouse chain a deep feeling of insecurity and fears of unemployment.

The attempt of Westinghouse to time study the day workers in East Pittsburgh was the last straw and finally the workers struck. The support of the other Westinghouse locations to 601 was not occasioned by general labor solidarity alone. It was also generated by the most intense personal experience of the workers.

The determination for a show-down was further strengthened by the exposure of the company's demand upon Essington UE Local 107. Its plan was to change the incentive system and wage payments to measured day work with the same production standards, resulting in wage cuts of 50c an hour.

The company, caught unawares by the East Pittsburgh strike in August, momentarily retreated from its obdurate position of no negotiation on the matter of time-study. It accepted President Carey's proposal that the issue be included in the pending general negotiations.

However, the Company gave ample proof that it never meant seriously to negotiate on the issue. Throughout negotiations the company refused any limitations on its right by arbitration (or otherwise) to time study, and set production standards for all workers, to discipline workers who in its opinion failed to meet standards, to change wage payment systems at will.

Adding further fuel to the fire were the company demands for a weakened grievance procedure.

Thus, the company's demand for a five -year contract which normally evokes a negative reaction from the workers, now appeared even more sinister in their eyes. What the workers foresaw was the awful prospect of an extended period in which the company, with a free hand, would automate, speed-up, wage-cut, eliminate thousands and nullify the union itself.

It became apparent even to the least union-conscious that a show-down involving the union's fate was inevitable.

The workers were very concerned with questions of wages, pension, insurance, and hospitalization. To a varying degree this concern added to the workers' general determination to fight. However, these issues were overshadowed and colored by the so-called "automation-type" grievances and those issues related more specifically to them.

Another factor which, while not responsible for the strike itself assumed proportions in the settlement,

was the matter of the workers discharged by the company for their strike activity. We will deal with this later.

What were some of the highlights of the settlement?

#### TIME STUDY AND PRODUCTION STANDARDS

Notwithstanding the serious concession made by Carey prior to the strike, the company was required to negotiate. The issue in the strike of the IUE was not the right to time-study and set standards but the limitations on that right, *i.e.*, the so-called "ground rules." In this respect the settlement does curtail the company. The "productivity clause" was thrown out in its entirety in both UE and IUE agreements. The IUE contract specifies that the company may apply individual production standards only to *direct day workers*. These are described as "those engaged directly in the making or building of a product. . . ." All other day workers in a plant are indirect workers and may be timed only for budget purposes or method analysis.

According to the IUE the total of workers upon whom standards can be set is limited to 1500 outside of Buffalo, which has been on standards for some years. The company contends the figure is nearer 3000. In any event it is a fraction of the 20,000 upon whom the company originally intended to set standards.

Though the company has been set back in its plan it has gained a foothold formally in the acceptance of

its right to time-study and in limited instances to set standards and to discipline workers for failure to meet standards. Whereas formerly, the company's right to time study day workers could be questioned, now only the extent of its right can be questioned.

Here the UE contract varies. Since the UE had not raised the issue of time-studying and setting standards for day workers in its contract demands, it was able to ward off direct reference to them in its settlement. However, it did agree to the company's right to time study in general terms.

The UE claims that this variation is an advantage because it allows broader interpretation locally and consequently more effective resistance to the company. However, it would be an error to exaggerate this factor. The current struggle in the yet unsettled Local 107 strike revolves in good part around this question.

#### ARBITRATION OF STANDARDS

While some may disagree with the worth of this demand, the IUE, supported by its membership, made it a major demand. The company in turn, violently opposed it. These factors must be considered in assessing the settlement on this score.

The contract settlement gave the union substantially what it had demanded. It won an arbitration clause under which disputed studies, standards, job classifications, etc., can be arbitrated.

The UE, in principle opposed to

compulsory arbitration, did not request the clause.

#### CHANGES IN METHODS OF WAGE PAYMENT

Most monopolies have clearly spelled out their right to make changes in wage payment unilaterally as a management prerogative. Westinghouse assumed this right. This issue developed only in the course of the strike, provoked to some extent by the plight of the UE Local 107. Taking these factors into consideration, the results of the settlement may be termed a partial advance.

The IUE contract reads, "the company agrees that it will not make any changes . . . on a plant wide basis . . . or piecemeal changes in any bargaining unit for which there is a local wage supplement in effect except by agreement between the local management and local union." So far so good. However, the following paragraph, which refers to "all other situations not related to the preceding paragraph," is ambiguous and contradictory in its further elaboration "that if a local unreasonably withholds its consent, the company may elect to put the changes into effect." The Local will have the right to strike over the issue. But the question of consent is not subject to arbitration. On this question the company has not been wholly restrained. At the same time the union has won a handle for further struggle on the issue.

The UE attempted to sidestep the issue nationally by relegating the 107

struggle to local negotiations. Therefore, contractually, no reference is made to it beyond these words: "when the established plan of payment is to be changed, it will be a matter of local negotiations." However, UE 107 which, undoubtedly, will set the precedent for the UE section of the chain, has already in effect accepted the company's right to change wage systems. What is at stake now is to prevent the change-over from costing the workers a wage slash.

#### FIVE-YEAR CONTRACT

Both the UE and IUE were not able to offset the unfortunate precedent set by the GE contract and had to accept the 5 year term of agreement. Nevertheless, as the *UE News* states, "it was possible significantly to loosen up the terms so that further improvements can be made later."

Local agreements can be reopened every twelve months with the right to strike.

In 1957, the contract can be reopened on non-economic issues without the right to strike.

In 1958 the contract can be reopened nationally on the vital issue of economic security, with the right to strike.

Already IUE has publicized GAW as its objective, UE the shorter work week for this 1958 re-opener. Incidentally this re-opener coincides with the ending of the UAW 3 year contracts.

## WAGES

The minimum wage agreement was slightly more than the company offered. The increase is added to the base rates of incentive workers. As a result their increases will total more than 5c in almost all cases.

Cost of living adjustments will raise wages one cent for each ½ point rise in the cost-of-living index adjustment. This was offered before the strike.

## PENSIONS, ETC.

Pension rates were increased in this contract from \$1.70 per month for 30 years to \$2. per year for past years and \$2.25 for future service for unlimited years.

After 1958 the company, which currently pays only partially toward hospitalization and insurance, will pay wholly.

In the event of death in the immediate family, workers will be entitled to three days leave with pay.

Vacations were improved for workers who have ten to fifteen years service.

## DISCHARGES BECAUSE OF STRIKE ACTIVITY

The company originally demanded that 93 IUE strikers be summarily discharged. Upon the mediators' recommendation it retreated to the number of 36. The IUE's refusal for a time to accept the mediator's proposals forced the company to retreat further. It changed the discharges to

indefinite suspensions subject to negotiations locally, including arbitration. In some instances some of the 36 are already rehired.

In the face of its arbitrary position, its pledges to the supervisors that "discipline will be upheld at all costs," its promises to scab, the company had to backtrack as a result of the workers' opposition.

## SOME CONCLUSIONS

It is obviously not easy to agree on an estimate of a strike when the issues are not so clearly defined as in cases where the question is straight wage increases, reduction of hours, etc. Viewed as a workers' defense, the strike result represented a substantial achievement.

The agreement did not establish absolute safeguards against job insecurity and speed-up created by automation. It did set back and limit the company in its design for wholesale rationalization of production at the expense of the workers through speed-up, wage cuts, etc.

Sidney Lens, reporter for *Labor's Daily*, in an analysis of the strike, states: "The IUE, through its strike has cut a deep wedge into this management theory [the sole right to set work standards]. Westinghouse's retreat on this point, was in effect, a notice to all employers that you can't pass the buck to the workingmen's shoulder." This, continues Mr. Lens, "is in itself, no mean victory."

The Westinghouse workers have set an important precedent, in con-



trast to other struggles of this kind in the recent past at Singer Sewing Machine, International Harvester, Studebaker, etc., where the workers were defeated.

The cold legal contractual language does not tell the full story. An important consideration is the morale of the workers upon the conclusion of this struggle.

Far from being beaten by the overwhelming financial losses, estimated by the company to be 100 million dollars, and the fact that the issues were not fully resolved, most workers felt that they had faced the worst attacks of the company and checked them. At the same time, a great many also feel that with greater unity within the chain and more dynamic leadership they could have done even better.

As an example the Sharon plant was considered by many to be a weak spot.

However, by the end of the strike the Sharon workers not only had staved off all of the company anti-union moves but stayed out for a few additional days demanding the re-instatement of all fired workers. They finally were "ordered" back by the union leadership.

The long struggle and the lessons the workers have learned, have put them in a better position to continue the fight.

However, the company is continuing its attempts to decertify the IUE in Sharon and East Pittsburgh as well as in Cilumbus, Lima and Mansfield. It should be noted that

this is the first time since the '30's that a major corporation has tried to use this tactic in building company unions. Westinghouse has always had a company-union base through the Association of Westinghouse Salaried Employees.

Only one week after the strike, the company announced that it is building a new plant in Indiana which will cut four hundred more jobs out of the East Pittsburgh plant. At this writing the strike at the Lester Plant involving over 6,000 workers is still on and the company remains adamant in its position of imposing a twenty percent wage cut on the workers. Support to this struggle remains a vital task for all labor.

One of the most important questions which will help determine the outcome of future struggles is breaking down the company's ability to take on one plant or one group of workers at a time. It has become clear now that only the most militant and united support from the workers in the whole chain, regardless of what Union they belong to, can really set back the company.

How important a lesson this was to the Westinghouse workers can be seen in an announcement from the Sharon Local. One of the first post-strike actions taken by this Local was a membership vote approving "the acceptance of applications for membership in our union from any person within our bargaining unit. This was done because of loyalty shown by non-members during the recent dispute." This, without question, re-

fers specifically to the dozens of former UE members who for years had been blacklisted from IUE membership.

With this lesson in mind it will be good if the leaders and members of the unions involved consider the need to synchronize future negotiations.

The positive results of the strike are not confined to the contract. Such achievement and the spirit necessary for it do not come from workers who have been weakened or defeated.

#### ROLE OF LABOR SUPPORT AND POLITICAL ACTION

The support this struggle received from labor helped, in great measure, to strengthen the unity of the Westinghouse workers and their determination to keep the company from "walking all over them."

The *AFL-CIO News*, in analyzing the agreement, concludes that, "No strike ever received wider support from the ranks of organized labor."

A new and higher degree of labor solidarity was demonstrated than has been seen in modern labor history. The basis for such stepped-up support resulted from the merger of the AFL-CIO, and the nature of the issue aroused tremendous concern among the workers.

In New York, Philadelphia and other cities, joint AFL-CIO support committees were formed including almost all of the labor movement.

The New York committee sought to raise a million dollars for the strik-

ers through the circulation of collection sheets in all the shops. Plant gate collection yielded thousands of dollars. All told \$2,900,00 was raised for the Westinghouse strikers.

Mass labor demonstrations of support were held at many shop gates—particularly when the company attempted to use scabs. One of the most impressive was the United Labor demonstrations of the Delaware County Joint Labor Council, AFL-CIO, supporting UE 107 in its protests against the company's midnight raid arrests of local strikers.

These and dozens of other experiences bear out the estimate of the AFL-CIO that "the strike became one of the first great tests of labor unity."

What particularly stands out is the way the rank and file of the labor movement responded to all appeals for help as the union leaders opened the doors for such support.

On the other hand, by seeing what was accomplished in terms of support, one can also get an idea of how much is yet lacking in the way the labor movement comes to the aid of its brothers and sisters.

What was lacking was certain dramatic national leadership which, for example, could have moved the larger auto union locals of Cleveland to support the beleaguered Columbus workers.

Another example was in the relations with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. For some weeks the IBEW shops in Westinghouse chain, even though not on

strike, showed some degree of solidarity by refusing to sign the 5 year contract. Finally, over the strong objections of some of the mass production shops in IBEW, the craft union leaders came to terms with Westinghouse, while the UE and IUE were still outside.

Greater initiative by the leadership could have stopped the IBEW at least from settling—if it was not yet possible to have the IBEW join the IUP and UE on the picket line. The same holds true for the I. A. of M. for that matter. Proper action could have helped create economic pressure against the company from all unions handling Westinghouse products (teamsters, craft unions, etc.)

#### IUE-UE UNITY

Some of the brightest moments during this long, hard fight were the examples of united action between the IUE and UE.

These developments are a tribute to the workers and local leaders of both unions. Thrown against a common hazard they began to cast aside old bitterness and factional strife, and pulled together for the good of all.

When the IUE strike began, UE workers at the Westinghouse elevator plant (where both unions have bargaining rights) honored the IUE picket line and stayed out. Subsequently when the IUE signed the contract it honored the UE picket line until the UE contract was settled.

When the company threatened a back to work movement at the East

Pittsburgh plant, the workers of Local 610 UE from the Westinghouse Air Brake plant offered full support to block a company scab-herding attempt.

In return, the workers at East Pittsburgh (IUE) who are now back at work sent a resolution to the 6,000 UE workers at Essington still on strike "congratulating the members of UE Local 107 for their gallant fight against wage-cutting program of Westinghouse." They further resolved, "that there be a plant gate collection in E. Pittsburgh to give financial aid to the members of Local 107."

In achieving these united actions the workers had to overcome certain obstacles arising from the hesitations of their leaders.

Only when the strike was nearing the end did some "off the record" meetings between the leaders of both unions take place. No doubt the leaders were impressed with the need for these by the arrogance of the company and by the success of the united activities that were developing in the locals. Further actions of this kind were important not only for the strike, but also insofar as they could influence organic unity between these unions.

#### POLITICAL ACTION

This strike saw a high degree of participation in political activity as well as reliance on this form of struggle. The mayors of 16 cities, the governors of 5 states (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio and

Maryland), at one time or another intervened, particularly to appeal to the company to change its arrogant stand in the negotiations.

A joint labor committee, which included the IUE and UE helped elect a Democratic Congressman (Elmer Holland) in Pennsylvania with pro-labor leanings. The workers of Sharon elected a Westinghouse worker as Mayor of the City.

Such actions helped make possible a favorable decision in the Pennsylvania Westinghouse workers' suit for unemployment insurance for time lost while on strike. Another noteworthy feature is the way labor's participation in political action *before* as well as during the strike helped offset some of the typical violent measures the company had gotten away with in the past.

There was a good deal of violence in the Westinghouse strike. In Columbus, Ohio, scab herding was accomplished with the aid of the police and one worker's death was immediately attributable to the brutal police attack. But it should also be noted that this violence did not occur in the same way at all plants.

Where the workers were stronger, the company did not get away with such moves, for even when Westinghouse attempted to break the ranks of the workers, the police and sheriff's troops were not always able to simply line up with the company. In a number of cases the company had to back down in the scab-herding efforts.

In Delaware County, where com-

pany officials attempted various forms of violence, councilmen and burgessmen from a number of townships protested and some refused to lend their police for the company's end.

William Z. Foster, in the April, 1956 issue of *Political Affairs*, calls attention to the fact that the "elementary tendency [of the workers] to restrain as well as to defeat capitalist violence has been too little noticed and theorized by Communist leaders." A specific example of this tendency is the Westinghouse strike.

#### THE PARTY AND LABOR'S STRUGGLES

During the Westinghouse strike, Communists along with other militant and progressive workers, made particular contributions. They encouraged united action between different unions and successfully discouraged factionalism and red-baiting. They helped rally support of labor and people's organizations for financial and political aid.

These were important factors in helping to check the company. It should also be noted that the company was least successful in those plants with the deepest traditions of militant struggles in which Left progressives and Communists had participated.

However, outside of the activities of the people in the shops, the struggle initially was handled in the most routine fashion. Only as events exposed the unusual character of this struggle was it belatedly given more than token attention.

Questions have been raised as to the seeming apathy and neglect in most sections of the Party. It is not the purpose of this article to make an overall analysis of the work of the Party among organized workers. However, two factors arising from this strike merit comment here.

In general there was some understanding of the issues as part of a new wave of protest of American labor reflecting insecurity and concern for "what's coming." However, there certainly was no real insight into how deeply the workers were affected by this issue, and how the "automation" problem was aggravating the situation.

Major publications of Big Business, the general press, labor publications, etc., have all been debating and discussing this issue. Not armed with the facts, and with the necessary new ideas, the same kind of

analyzing has not been characteristic of the magazines and paper of the Left.

Without a doubt, the general problem of the isolation of the Left is an important factor. However, what must also be appreciated is that the growing and matured labor movement today is very different from what it was in the late '30's and the '40's.

This leads us to believe that there was not really apathy but rather a lack of knowledge and confidence as to how to proceed most effectively given the new conditions.

What is needed, and the experiences of the Westinghouse workers emphasize this, is a fresh examination by the Left of the problem of making its most effective contribution to the present-day labor movement.

# On Method in Political Economy

## A DISCUSSION ARTICLE

By Arnold Berman

IN THE re-examination of our Party's policy that has been going on in various forms since the Draft Resolution on the 1952 Elections—and which is now stimulated with new force by the XXth Congress—one of the key fields in which our analysis needs to be questioned and revised is our estimate of the United States economy. The need for such a re-examination has been brought home sharply in the first place not by policy discussions within our Party or abroad, but by economic developments themselves.

In the first and second quarter of 1954, the course of the economy had been downward for several months. Industrial production had fallen 10 percent from the peak of the 1953 boom, and there was widespread expectation of serious crisis.

The Draft Program of the Party, first published at this time, warned:

The storm clouds of a major economic depression are nearly upon us. . . . Big Business . . . knows only one way to keep its industrial plants running and its lush profits flowing—by bigger war preparations.

An authoritative Communist eco-

nomic analysis, appearing in *Political Affairs* in February 1954, stated:

Stimulation of a new boom would require far more drastic injections than those of 1949 and early '50. It will be virtually impossible for monopoly capital to bring this about, short of another war.

The somewhat more balanced treatment of Hyman Lumer in *War Economy and Crisis*, (International Publishers, 1954) noted that, "American monopoly capital undoubtedly possesses some leeway for maneuvering." But he, too, thought it would be possible to "hold off the day of reckoning a little longer" only "through new shots in the arm and bigger handouts to the trusts."

### ERRONEOUS PREDICTIONS

What followed was vastly different from the predictions. In the course of the following year and a half to two years, industrial production has risen 17 per cent to the highest level ever, accompanied by many other marks of a major boom.

Moreover, though there have been big handouts to the trusts, the boom cannot be called a result of new

and greater "injections" or "shots in the arm." On the contrary, it has grown in the face of sharp decreases in total government spending and in government expenditures for arms.

This is not to say that all is rosy with the economy or that crises can now be permanently averted. Farm income, for example, has been declining almost steadily for more than four years, falling more than 30 per cent from its '51 peak, with a lower level at the peak of the boom in the last quarter of '55 than at the lowest point of general recession in the first quarter of 1954. Other sectors of the economy, like private housing and auto, also give grounds for something less than complacency.

Yet the fact remains that we have had a new boom without arms expansion, without "injections." And that fact must raise questions as to the validity of much of our economic analysis in the whole postwar period.

This is not the first time that events have failed to fulfill our economic predictions. But each time we have simply modified some of the details to explain how we were mistaken. In March and June 1955, two articles by Mary Norris appeared in *Political Affairs* attempting to explain the most recent unfulfilled predictions and to review the whole post-war economy in a polemic against those who propounded theories of "crisis-free" capitalism. Even there, however, although the pattern of general recovery in the face of contraction of arms expenditure was already quite clear, no fundamental

criticism of our method and assumptions was attempted and, as this article will try to show, most of our earlier errors were repeated.

#### NEED FOR A RE-EXAMINATION

The fresh look at the economy of the capitalist world taken by the XXth Congress can be of help to us, since there can be no doubt that one of the sources of our oversimplified and one-sided view of the American economy was the influence and authority of Soviet post-war analyses. Because of the prestige of Soviet theoretical workers, and most of all, of course, of Stalin, American Marxist writers on political economy apparently tended to accept their analysis somewhat uncritically. The Soviet criticism of Varga, the influential 1948 article of Kuzminov (published in *Political Affairs* in May '49) and later Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism*, while on the one hand stimulating and in many ways helping our economic thinking, nevertheless tended to channelize it too rigidly. The recognition on the part of the present leadership of the CPSU that their view of capitalist economy has suffered from doctrinaire errors can thus be most helpful.

At the same time, if there is any field in which we should eschew rigid dependence on Soviet thinking, it is that of the American economy. Our knowledge of it does not depend just on theory and statistics—we live in it; for us the live experience of

daily practice can, if we will let it, provide the necessary corrective to doctrinairism. And, as the writer will attempt to show, even the fresh approach of the XXth Congress does not go far enough, still does not take into full account the facts of American economic life.

In the opinion of the writer, the major weakness of our post-war economic writing has shown itself in our method. Partly because of our own doctrinaire tendencies, due among other things, no doubt, to a pendular over-reaction to the revisionism of Browder; partly because of excessive dependence on Soviet thinking; partly, too, because of a laudable eagerness to combat bourgeois propaganda of a "crisis-free" capitalism—we departed from Marxist method in our economic analysis.

Instead of an objective consideration of all the available facts, we tended to carry on an assiduous search for those data which would support our *a priori* expectations of imminent crisis, while ignoring or "explaining away" contrary data. Instead of an open-minded materialist seeking of *all* the sources of the economic expansion we could not ignore, we fastened on the war economy as nearly the only, as well as the ever-present, source.

The result is that our analyses have been consistently one-sided, our predictions repeatedly too pessimistic. Such errors have far wider consequences.

Tactically they contributed, for example, to our overestimation of the

radicalization of the masses before '48 and to our underestimation of the possibility of relaxation of world tensions prior to Geneva. They helped form an exaggerated estimate of imminent fascist danger before and during McCarthy's heyday.

In the ideological struggle, these errors have weakened the prestige of Marxist theory and bolstered the very theories of "crisis-free" capitalism against which we have been polemizing.

The purpose of this article is to document this criticism of our *method* in economic analysis. Without trying to give a rounded estimate of the U.S. economy or of our total analysis of it, the article will attempt to show that on a number of major questions, we took positions which were at variance with the available facts and applied Marxist principles in a doctrinaire fashion. It will attempt to show, moreover, that even though progress has been made recently (before, as well as since the XXth Congress) in correcting some of our one-sidedness, the weakness in *method* still persists.

The examples to be discussed fall roughly into two closely related categories:

I. A tendency to overstress the sharpening of the contradictions of the U.S. economy and to underestimate sustaining and expansive features, which could and did prevent these contradictions from reaching a critical stage.

II. A too nearly exclusive emphasis on the influence of war expenditures

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in determining the relative mildness and short duration of the post-World War II economic declines, with some neglect of other contributing factors.

#### UNDERESTIMATION OF THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

Again and again, both in anticipation and in retrospect, we as well as the Soviet economists have exaggerated the degree to which the contradictions of American capitalism had sharpened and come to a head, and underestimated the room left to the American bourgeoisie for maneuver, underestimated the existence of features making for continued or resumed expansion. The examples of such estimates are legion.

There is, for one, the article of I. Kuzminov, "The Crisis Character of the Economic Developments of the U.S. in the Postwar Period," printed in *Political Affairs*, May, 1949. Kuzminov fulminates against Varga who, he says, "wrote that after the end of the war, the economy of capitalist countries with undamaged or improved production apparatus would experience an upward phase."

Now that the U.S. has overtaken and surpassed its wartime production peak, and the production of the capitalist world as a whole in '55 exceeded '46 production by nearly 85 percent, it is easy to see that there has indeed been an "upward phase." It is not very impressive compared with the gigantic strides made by socialist production in the same period, but it sharply confutes the dire

predictions of Kuzminov.

Such one-sided estimates of the post-war period are not confined to early predictions. Even very recent views give estimates that simply do not correspond to the economic life Americans have known.

Shepilov in his XXth Congress report speaks of "the high level of full and partial unemployment in the major capitalist countries, the colossal rise in the cost of living. . . ." With due recognition of the underestimation of unemployment in official statistics and with full concern for the plight of the millions who are unemployed, can we characterize roughly 5 per cent unemployment in the U.S. as a "high level"? Could we fruitfully base our tactical line in the labor movement on a major struggle against *current* unemployment?

Again, with proper allowance for the systematic bias of the BLS statistics can we speak of a "colossal rise in the cost of living" in the U.S. in the past 5 years, when the consumer price index has risen only 3 per cent since September 1951?

Shepilov also states that ". . . the capitalist *home* markets are becoming narrower and narrower under the operation of the law of the relative and absolute impoverishment of the working class and ruin of the peasantry. . . ." Taking due account of the class distribution of purchasing power in the U.S. and the dangerously ballooning consumer credit on which so much of consumer sales volume is based, can we speak of a

narrowing home market in the U.S. when personal consumption expenditures in the fourth quarter of '55 were at an annual rate of \$257 billion compared to \$211, \$225, \$230, and \$241 billion in the corresponding quarters for '51, '52, '53, and '54?

Shepilov's descriptions have, it is true, greater applicability to other capitalist countries than to the U.S. But they are stated as applying to "the major capitalist countries," of which the U.S. is the greatest and most decisive.

In each case, it is also true that the *seeds* of what Shepilov describes are present in the U.S., and we would ignore them at our peril. But it is equally at our peril that we ignore what are now the facts.

A similar tendency to be so eager to expose the hidden seeds of crisis that we see only the dark side of the American economy has dominated most of our economic writing. Indeed, the views of Shepilov quoted above could well be reflections of our own estimates. If we re-read, for example, the pages of the last Mary Norris article (*Political Affairs*, June, 1955) in which she describes "Post-War Trends" and the "Present Situation," we simply do not recognize our own country and economic life. Probably every sentence is true, yet the total effect does not correspond to the live impressions of the majority of Americans who lived through the period.

In spite of the horror of the Korean War; the insecurity caused by

repeated downturns of uncertain severity and duration; rising prices in the first post-war years; and the real hardship for the many millions hardest hit by the periodic declines, chronic weak spots, and special oppression; the general estimate of the working class and masses (as well as of the upper strata) is surely that we have had "good times," economically speaking, pretty consistently since after World War II.

Indeed, it is precisely because that has been their estimate that there is such danger of illusions in the possibility that the economic cycle is now "under control." If we had not had such a period of relatively sustained economic growth, we would not so urgently need polemics against these "new" bourgeois "theories"—life itself would have refuted them before they were written. The task of our political economic analysis is not to explain *away* the "prosperity" of the past decade, but to *explain* it; not to *assume* but to *prove* that it is relative and temporary and has a rotten base. We cannot successfully deny what the masses themselves have experienced—we need to show that in spite of that experience, indeed because of it, they can have no confidence in the future of the U.S. economy.

#### ONE-SIDED ESTIMATE OF THE '46 DECLINE

This underestimation of the relatively sustained prosperity of the U.S. economy in the last decade stems, in the first place, from an

initial one-sided evaluation of the economic effects of the war itself. Comrade Norris, for example, writes:

The first post-war slump actually began during the war. Industrial production reached its wartime peak of 239 in 1943 and thereafter declined to a low of 170 in 1946, a drop of almost 30 per cent. Once the government's requirements for war material began to fall, the greatly expanded productive capacity of the country far exceeded the market. Unemployment grew reaching between 2½ to 3 million in 1946. . . . Recovery began in 1947. . . .

These facts, as far as they go, are of course correct. But can we, even in a brief sketch, restrict ourselves to these facts without essentially falsifying the picture? A fuller account of the facts is far more complex and less one-sided.

Actually, the drop of nearly 30 per cent in total production was associated with a drop of some 70 per cent in government purchases. But at the same time gross *private* domestic investment rose more than one-third and personal consumption expenditures about one-third. While overall production of the auto industry (including tanks, etc.) fell nearly 30 per cent, production of civilian autos and parts so increased that personal consumption expenditures for these items rose by nearly 400 per cent. While overall production of durable manufactures fell more than 46 per cent, production for peacetime use so increased that private investment in producers dur-

able equipment rose by more than 200 per cent and in new construction by more than 300 per cent, and personal expenditures for furniture and household equipment by well over 100 per cent.

More generally, it can be shown that economic indicators which were not restricted by war priorities and shortages advanced nearly constantly throughout the 1943-46 decline, and those which *were* so restricted rose phenomenally as soon as the war ended. In short, the recovery began, not in 1947, but *simultaneously with the decline*.

The situation in 1946 was thus not one of *general* relative over-production, but of over-capacity in *war* production lines and *under*-production in most peacetime lines, especially durables. The decline was not an example of *typical* capitalist contradiction between expanded productive capacity and a narrowing market, but a special form of this contradiction, aggravated by capitalist anarchy and greed for profits, but due in substantial part to the special conditions of the war and its end.

In other words, the decline was due in substantial part to the problem of "reconversion." This problem was faced at the end of the war by the Soviet Union as well, though of course in less aggravated form and under favorable, socialist conditions for its solution.

It may appear strange to be arguing about reconversion at this late date. Yet it seems to me most necessary. The persistent myth that, al-

ready before the war ended, the U.S. economy was pregnant with a full-blown crisis of over-production has affected our estimate of the economy for the whole subsequent period.

It seems clear, moreover, that this myth was the direct result of an unscientific, un-Marxist method. Armed with our "theoretical" expectations and fortified by the authority of Soviet economists, we searched for the "underlying" truths and ignored the obvious facts. (Perhaps the most striking example of doctrinaire "Marxism" in this connection occurs in the cited article of Kuzminov: "There is no need to spend much time on proving that the apologist 'theory' of 'deferred demand' has nothing in common with Marxism. It is in obvious contradiction to the law of absolute and relative impoverishment of the working class under capitalism. . . . The 'theory' of 'deferred demand' is in obvious contradiction to reality." No American Marxist followed Kuzminov on this point, but none explicitly challenged him, either.)

#### ON "EXPORTING DEPRESSION"

Our tendency to select facts to fit preconceived ideas also carried over to our estimates of the economies of the European capitalist countries.

In her March 1955 article, Comrade Norris referred to the situation in 1949:

. . . when the downturn in this country brought sharp repercussions in the remainder of the capitalist world. Production and exports of Britain and

Western Europe were hard hit. . . . One of the functions of U.S. economic controls was to 'export depression' by forcing acceptance of surplus commodities, and limiting European production of many products competitive to those of this country.

She repeated this judgment in a passage of her June '55 article. It is, moreover, almost a commonplace in our literature that the Marshall Plan meant "exporting depression" to Western Europe. That such statements require at least some qualification is shown by the following:

The European Recovery Program, so-called, was originated in 1948 and involved an expenditure from '48 to '51 of \$9,128 million of which \$204 million was spent in fiscal '48; \$3,217 million in fiscal '49; \$3,323 million in fiscal '50; and \$2,384 million in fiscal '51. (Source: Department of Commerce). If the Marshall Plan had the effect of depressing the economies of its "beneficiaries," one would expect to see this effect in the level of their industrial production during these years. Yet from 1948 to 1951 overall industrial production (U.N. index) increased steadily each year in almost every Marshall Plan country, with an overall 3 year advance of 79 per cent in Austria, 27 per cent in France, 114 per cent in West Germany, 71 per cent in Greece, 44 per cent in Italy, 17 per cent in Britain, etc. In the same period, U.S. production dropped about 10 per cent, then rose again for a total gain of about 15 per cent.

It would, of course, be wrong to jump to conclusions about the West

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European economies and the Marshall Plan simply on the basis of industrial production indexes. The situation is far more complex than that. There was chronic unemployment in a number of Marshall Plan countries. There is no doubt whatever that Marshall Plan "aid" enabled the U.S. to dominate the West European economies, to dump surpluses, to enrich their lackeys and increase exploitation of the masses, to sharpen exchange difficulties, to hinder and nearly cut off trade with the East, to cause unbalanced economic development, etc.

*But we did not export depression.* On the contrary, West European production, and to a lesser extent employment, expanded almost everywhere for the first 3½ years of Marshall Plan operation, and only in '52 was there a mild general economic downturn.

The economic literature of the Left has not given enough recognition to this fact. Victor Perlo, for example, in his *American Imperialism* (1951), correctly emphasizes as central the question of "Economic Domination of Western Europe" (the title of his Marshall Plan chapter), but he obscures the expansion of production by comparing European production figures for 1949 or 1950 with *pre-war*, and omits any comparison with the immediately preceding years.

It is important to correct this one-sided picture of the West European economies. For the expansion of these economies, financed in part by the Marshall Plan, has up until now

provided a market for the export of capital, as well as other commodities, which has been a key source of those extra profits for American monopoly that have enabled it to sustain itself and expand in the face of the drastic narrowing and weakening of world imperialism after the war.

At some point, however, the growing competition from these economies must begin to outweigh their diminishing effect as markets; and from a sustaining factor for the U.S. economy, European expansion must turn into its opposite. This is one of the facets of the proof that the U.S. economy cannot be sustained indefinitely.

Related to our overestimation of the development of over-production during the war is an underestimation of the longer-range effects of wartime destruction and the wartime reduction in renewal of constant capital and production of consumer durables. While the need for post-war renewal of fixed capital in Europe could hardly be overlooked, in its domestic application this point was given far too little weight in our analyses of the post-war economy. It is mentioned by Lumer. But not until the article of William Z. Foster in *Political Affairs* of last August did any authoritative Communist analysis unequivocally point to the post-war renewal of fixed capital within the U.S. as a major source of economic expansion, although it has been a commonplace in bourgeois literature.

An impetus to greater emphasis on

this point has been given by the reports of the XXth Congress. Thus, in analyzing the reason for the growth of production in the capitalist countries, Khrushchev notes four basic factors, including:

Third, a big part was played by the renewal of fixed capital. Owing to the crises and depressions of the '30's, and then to the war, the basic industrial plant in the European capitalist countries was not renewed, in effect, for 15-20 years. Modernization of the capital equipment which had seriously depreciated and been damaged during the war really began only during 1951-54. This made it possible to increase considerably the manufacture of capital equipment.

This question is worthy of analysis in some detail. It is necessary to note that the point applies not only to war-torn Europe, but to war-fattened U.S. as well. Moreover, it is a matter not only of renewal of fixed capital, but of replacement of consumer durables also. For four years a large proportion of the output of the U.S. economy was systematically destroyed by use in war. For a similar period, a large part of productive capacity was overused, inadequately maintained and not renewed. In that time only a small fraction of "normal" quantities of consumer durables was produced. The absence from use of four years' "vintages" of many types of machinery and productive facilities, of autos, refrigerators, furniture, etc., sharply increases the percentage of obsoles-

cence of those in use and provides the material base for a market for these commodities that must have its effect for years following.

To be sure, the *material base* for a market is not yet a *market*. But given the fundamental factors of American domination of the world capitalist market and the growing war economy, favorable conditions for converting this material base into a market were created by a whole series of financial measures: fast tax write-offs, manipulation of the rate of interest, easy credit terms for installment buying, FHA and VA provisions for home mortgages, etc. Without such a material base, financial measures to promote a market could hardly have been so effective.

It is impossible to understand, for example, the postwar record of new auto sales year after year, unless we remember that four years' worth of used cars have been missing. And had we been more conscious of those missing cars, we might have been more prepared to expect the record market. Moreover, precisely because these are "durables," this effect has lasted well into the postwar period.

A similar, even longer-range effect stems from the curtailment of construction and civilian public construction. Here we have not only the gap left by four years of war priorities, but also by a whole previous decade of economic stagnation. Total housing starts for the nine years from '30-'38 inclusive were 2,219,000, scarcely more than in the preceding three years (2,078,000 for '27-'29 in-

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clusive). Fewer houses were built during the four war years (1,242,000 for '42-'45 inclusive) than during the last two pre-war years (1,318,000 in '40-'41) or the first two post-war years (1,520,000 in '46-'47) or the year 1950 alone (1,396,000).

Public construction of highways, roads and streets, for example, averaged \$1,222 million per year from 1925-31; \$854 million per year from '32-'41; and \$442 million per year for '42-'45 inclusive.

Private non-residential construction averaged \$2,414 million per year for '25-'31; \$508 million per year in '32-'36; \$1,030 million per year in '37-'41; and \$404 million per year in '42-'44. Such stagnation and gaps in construction leave a material base for a construction market that persists to some degree even for decades.

This is one of the reasons that the Keynesian fiscal measures of the post-World War II decade, which failed to have a decisive effect in the pre-World War II period, have had such spectacular temporary success in the context of the post-war development of state monopoly capitalism. Their success has depended on the prior stagnation of a decade of depression and on the destruction and deprivation of world war. (The corresponding situation with regard to war-destroyed Europe and American "aid" has been frequently noted).

This point is of importance not only in correcting past exaggerated expectations of imminent collapse, but in helping to prove that such sustaining factors cannot always con-

tinue, and to estimate when, in fact, they will no longer operate appreciably. As the period since the war's end has approached the "life span" of producers' and consumers' durables, this material base for a market has been decreasing. And as repeated construction booms fill up the gap, and the fall-off in new family formations (due to the reduced birthrate of the depression years) cuts down the demand, the construction and housing stimulus can also be expected to diminish.

Again, it is necessary to note that the gigantic base for a market in producers' and consumers' durables as a result of depression and war should have been obvious to us. We underestimated or ignored it only because it did not jibe with our *a priori* expectations of imminent crisis.

#### PEACETIME FACTORS SUSTAINING THE ECONOMY

Again and again, Marxist economists have made the point that in the post-World War II period, as Mary Norris wrote: "In every case, the central element in postponing acute crisis has been war—either the aftermath of war, preparation for a new war, or war itself." As a general truth this is unassailable, and any analysis of the post-World War II U.S. economy which did not place war in the center would not be worthy of serious consideration. But it seems to me that we have permitted this general truth to divert us from sufficient consideration of

other features. These features are related to and affected by war expenditure—as everything in the U.S. economy is. But they are only indirectly related, and out of focus if we direct attention only to war economy.

This was probably the most important single factor in our failure to anticipate the 1954-'55 upturn, precisely because it occurred at a time of relaxing international tensions and relative continued curtailment of war appropriations. Thus, we have the typical passage from Comrade Norris quoted at the start of this article:

Stimulation of a new boom would require far more drastic injections than those of 1949 and early '50. It will be virtually impossible for monopoly capital to bring this about, short of another war.

Events have clearly refuted this one-sided estimate.

In helping to correct the approach which led to such an estimate, the XXth Congress performed a great service in reaffirming Lenin's thesis that the general crisis of capitalism does not preclude its rapid growth, and in pointing to three other major factors contributing to economic expansion besides militarization of the economy.

#### A DISTORTED ACCOUNT OF THE 1949-'50 RECOVERY

However, such estimates flowed not only from general considerations, but specifically from what seems to

me a distorted account of the recovery from the 1948-'49 decline. On this point, I believe, Khrushchev fails to correct the prevalent one-sidedness, possibly because he bases himself in part on the estimates of American Marxists.

He says ". . . a serious economic crisis began at the end of '48 but was subsequently stopped by an intensified arms drive in connection with the war in Korea."

With one or another qualification, this has consistently been the view of American Marxists. Mary Norris, for example, in the June, 1955 article, placed it as follows:

The growth of arms production and launching of the Marshall Plan brought about an upturn at the end of 1949. . . . But the economy began to falter again at the start of '50, and a fresh decline would probably have taken place had it not been for the Korean War.

This account consists essentially of the following three statements about the 1949-'50 recovery:

1. That it was only, or primarily, increased arms production and the Marshall Plan that caused the upturn at the end of '49.
2. That the economy began to falter at the start of '50.
3. That there probably would have been a fresh decline (presumably very soon) had it not been for the Korean War.

I believe it can be shown that these statements do not correspond fully with the facts.



On the first statement, without denying the effect of arms production and the Marshall Plan, it has to be recognized that there were substantial peacetime domestic factors in the upturn during the last months of 1949.

Spending for consumer durables, for example, rose more than 12 per cent from the first to the fourth quarter of 1949. This was stimulated by a steep rise in consumer credit outstanding, which increased more than 25 per cent from the February low to the seasonal December peak.

A housing boom began to develop in the latter part of the year. New housing starts in the last five months of 1949 were at a level more than one-third higher than in the corresponding period of 1948. General construction also expanded rapidly with an increase of more than 50 per cent in the contract award index during 1949.

As to "faltering" at the start of 1950, it is true that in many spheres activity did not increase without interruption, but the interruptions were slight and brief. Construction, industrial production and employment all showed some "hesitation" at the turn of the year. Construction in January was 5 per cent below its October peak, but that was still 45 per cent above the February low, and by April it had surpassed October. Industrial production, having risen more than 14 per cent in six months, dropped less than 2 per cent in February and then continued its upward

course. Employment fell slightly over 1 per cent for two months and then recovered.

Such a drop in various indicators of one to five per cent for a period of one to three months is not insignificant. It is an expression of the basic instability of capitalism. But it is not necessarily an indication of a change in the direction of economic development from recovery back into decline. Such reversals, and far more drastic ones, have been characteristic of the phase of expansion in every periodic cycle of our economy.

The third statement as to what *would* have occurred *if* it had not been for Korea cannot, of course, be proved or refuted. There are sound theoretical reasons for giving it some weight. But the bulk of the empirical evidence nevertheless shows that the direction of the economy was definitely upward and does not support the contention that there would have been an early downturn.

In fact, with the exception of farm income, almost every economic indicator for which official monthly figures are published had been rising steadily and at a fairly rapid rate for at least five months prior to the outbreak of the Korean War. This was true of industrial production, which rose more than 10 per cent from February through June. It was true of employment (non-agricultural) which rose about 4 per cent in the same period. Housing construction rose more than 32 per cent from January through June, total

construction more than 20 per cent in the same six months.

Similarly, the quarterly figures on national income and gross national product show that almost all their components, with one major exception outside of farming, had been rising steadily for at least two quarters prior to the start of the Korean War. Total wages and salaries rose more than 6 per cent in the first two quarters of 1950, personal consumption expenditures about 3½ per cent, private capital investment 17 per cent. The major exception is in total government expenditures (including war preparations and foreign aid) which had been declining steadily for four quarters before Korea with a 10 per cent drop in that period.

Farm income was decreasing in 1950 as well as in 1949, and there is little doubt that only the Korean War postponed the onset of serious farm difficulties. But the present boom has developed in spite of an even more serious farm decline. The statistics therefore indicate that, in the face of a 10 per cent decline for the previous year in government spending (including war expenditures and the Marshall Plan), America was in the midst of a substantial, steadily developing and broadly based economic expansion when the Korean War started.

It seems clear that if we had examined the 1949-50 recovery with less rigid preconceptions as to the utterly decisive role of war economy, we would have been far less likely

to fall into one-sided estimates about possible recovery from the 1954 downturn. We would have had, moreover, part of the basis for a more realistic estimate of the possible role of Eisenhower at Geneva.

Unfortunately, Khrushchev does not comment on this question. While the indexes he cites for growth of production in the United States include the year 1955, his explanatory remarks do not. In presenting the basic factors causing the rise in U.S. production, he says:

First, the militarization of the economy and the arms drive. By no means all industries have been affected by the upswing. The consumer goods industry is lagging seriously, while some of its branches are stagnating. Only the industries connected in some way with the manufacture of armaments are expanding. In five years, from 1950 to 1954, government expenditure on arms orders increased 300 per cent in the U.S., more than 300 per cent in Britain, and 200 per cent in France. It is clear that the unusually high level of arms manufacture influenced the general level of industrial output in the countries.

But 1954-55 did not see a substantial rise in arms manufacture. On the contrary, arms expenditure decreased, and the change in overall economic activity from the low of 1954 to the peak of the present boom cannot be attributed to the arms program. But the fact that this big factor is not operative in the same way as earlier when arms expenditure was increasing is not noted in the

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XXth Congress reports nor is any alternative explanation offered.

Similarly a very recent article by Comrade Foster (*Political Affairs*, March, 1956) apparently written just prior to the XXth Congress and anticipating its economic analysis in some respects, does not face the fact that the development of the American economy for the last one-and-a-half years challenges the adequacy of the basic lines of our postwar analyses.

### CONCLUSION

We thus have a grim picture of much of our economic analysis of the postwar period: an analysis seriously distorted by a doctrinaire, dogmatic method. In its most extreme form, it would not be a very great exaggeration to describe this method as follows: Convinced that capitalism at this late stage of general crisis could not have an "upward phase," we explained away the facts that demonstrated that it could and did. Forced by overwhelming evidence to see that the course was nevertheless upward, we focused nearly exclusive attention on critical features and said it couldn't last. When it nevertheless lasted, even though with fluctuations, we said it was primarily war expenditures that made it possible, and it would take continued massive increases in war expenditures to keep it going. And now that for almost 1½ years the economy has been rising and has reached new heights despite arms reductions, we have not

yet faced the fact that our previous explanations are inadequate.

Of the basic validity of the principles we have tried to apply, there is no doubt. This article does not call into question either the inevitability of capitalist crises, or the basic role of war production in the American economy.

Nor does the article intend to belittle the value of a large part of the writing of William Z. Foster, John Swift, Mary Norris, Victor Perlo, Hyman Lumer, L.R.A., and many others, which has represented encouraging attention to political economy in recent years. But the full value of this attention and of much of the valid detailed work cannot be realized without a thorough overhaul of our method.

Even if it should turn out that our most recent estimates are correct, they will carry little weight unless accompanied by a demonstration that they were not ground out from the same mill that produced our forebodings in 1946, 1948, 1949, 1951, 1952, and 1954.

This article was written before its writer had seen that by David Goldway in *Political Affairs*, April, 1956, which represents a substantial advance in scientific objectivity. Even with regard to this latest estimate, however, I believe that the present criticisms have some force. In particular, I feel that it is not enough to make tacit revisions of past estimates and procedures—they need to be explicitly rejected if they are really to be left behind.

# The Ohio Smith Act Trial

By A. Krchmarek

THE OHIO SMITH ACT trial made a number of important contributions to the struggle for the restoration of democratic liberties in our country. In several respects it went much beyond previous Smith Act trials—both in the victories attained, and in terms of broader public concern. It provided some experiences from which conclusions must be drawn for the struggles against reaction that lie ahead.

The trial reflected the *actual* level of the movement in Ohio to defend the rights of Communists at this time. It served to bring out and to dramatize the new opportunities for advancing the fight for democracy.

At the same time it demonstrated clearly that McCarthyism has not yet been fully defeated and that it is determined to challenge the rise of democratic movements with a counter-offensive. Far from accepting its defeats with equanimity, it lashes back furiously in an attempt to reverse the rising tide of popular democratic expression.

The acquittal of five of the eleven defendants—one by the Court and four by the Jury—was an important break-through in the pattern of virtually automatic guilty verdicts handed down heretofore. The jury deliberated seven days in arriving at its verdict, and no doubt gave far

more serious thought to the facts presented in this trial than was true in other trials. At the same time, the jury was still unable to fully meet the challenge on Constitutional issues, and brought in a compromise verdict.

Defense counsel consisted of nine attorneys and two defendants acting *pro se*. The appointment of seven attorneys, members of the leading law firms in Cleveland, was much more than a gesture by the Court. It reflected the serious concern of the majority of the legal profession and the community with the protection of some basic Constitutional rights, as they saw it, even for defendants whose cause may be unpopular at the moment.

The appointment of the attorneys was not at all to the liking of the Department of Justice. It was angered even more by the skilful and forthright way in which they defended their clients—a major factor in obtaining some acquittals. This anger found expression in the fury with which Assistant Attorney General William F. Tompkins denounced the two Cleveland Bars as “dupes” of the Communists and as “suckers.”

But the McCarthyites encountered a powerful and unexpected popular challenge to this denunciation.

The Department seriously misjudged the temper of the people.

### CHANGING CLIMATE

These post-trial developments were a dramatic expression of the actual circumstances surrounding the trial itself which began October 31, 1955 and ended with a jury verdict February 10, 1956. The hysteria which had surrounded many of the earlier Smith Act trials was not at all in evidence around the Ohio trial. There was a genuine and widespread concern that the Communists be given a "fair" trial. The local newspapers reported the trial with considerable restraint and very little effort was made to sensationalize the proceedings.

This atmosphere forced even the prosecution to bend with the wind and to minimize the vicious tactics used in other trials. In fact, some serious differences arose in the ranks of the prosecution staff on these points, with the local officials coming into conflict with the McCarthyite tendencies of the Washington lawyers sent to direct the prosecution. The result was that there were no contempt citations against defense witnesses on the matter of names. Even the stoolpigeons were evidently advised to go easy on names, and were asked simply to identify the defendants at various meetings.

The Ohio arrests took place in October, 1953, at a time when McCarthyism was riding high, the witchhunt was at its peak and the cold war hysteria threatened to stifle all democratic expression.

The trial began exactly two years later. Within these two years was encompassed a profound change in the political atmosphere at home and abroad. McCarthyism had suffered serious defeats, international tensions had eased considerably. The mass struggles of the Negro people attained new heights; the trade-union movement achieved organic unity; the peace sentiments of the people found strong expression, and curbed the drive to war.

All this tended to create conditions much more favorable for the defense of civil rights and democratic liberties. Questions of constitutional rights assumed greater significance. Broader forces took increasing interest in the status of civil liberties, and began to do something about it. A marked change also began to be felt in the public mind as to the meaning of the Smith Act trials.

### OHIO'S LIBERAL TRADITIONS

Of great importance in the Ohio trial was the presence in an unusual degree of strong liberal, democratic traditions peculiar to Cleveland and Ohio. Before the Civil War the Underground Railway had one of its main arteries in this area, and Cleveland was known as the "Freedom Port."

At the beginning of the century great popular struggles against the powerful banking interests were led by Mayor Tom L. Johnson, which have left an indelible mark on the city. His monument in the Public Square is dedicated to freedom of speech and bears the inscription:

"Beyond his Party and his class, this man foresook the few to serve the mass."

In the 1924 campaign of the Farmer-Labor Party, Cleveland gave LaFollette a majority in the presidential campaign. His campaign manager was a fiery young attorney, Martin L. McCormack—who was one of the appointed counsel in the Smith Act trial.

Cleveland had also been one of the nationally important centers of Socialist activity. The echoes of the Debs trial, held in 1917 in the Cleveland courthouse, reverberated in the corridors and the ornate courtroom where the Cleveland Smith Act case was tried. Debs was sentenced in this same courthouse to ten years in prison for his Canton, Ohio, anti-war speech. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, in a feature article during the course of the Smith Act trial, compared the Debs trial with the Smith Act trial as both being essentially free-speech cases.

Cleveland has always been the center of great labor struggles and trade-union activity, especially in the CIO organizing period. The labor and nationality groups were solid in their support of Roosevelt and his "New Deal" program. This strongly influenced the course of local politics. It made it possible for Lausche to ignore the machines and campaign as an "independent," and also was decisive in the election of Cleveland's first foreign-born mayor, Anthony J. Celebrezze (now in office) running as an independent Democrat.

In Cleveland unity of Negro and white has won many important gains in the advancement of Negro rights.

The Communist Party in its own right became a recognized factor. In 1917, Ruthenberg received 27,000 votes as candidate for Mayor. History was made by Andy Onda in his stirring campaigns for Councilman from Ward 30. Arnold Johnson and A. Krchmarek, as the Party's candidates for the Board of Education, received from 47,000 to 65,000 votes in four successive elections.

This is only a very partial list of Cleveland's progressive traditions. But without taking this special background into account, it is impossible to properly assess the developments in and around the Ohio Smith Act trial.

#### DEFENSE POLICY

The changing objective situation constituted the background and the foundation for the defense policies. The first point of the defense line was that theories and social ideas could not be put on trial and that no court and no jury had the moral or the legal right to try political doctrines and beliefs. Limited headway was made on this point.

Constitutional rights, the second element of the defense position, emerged as the central issue of the trial. This was based upon the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, which gives the right to hold differing political views and social ideas, regardless of how un-

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popular they may be at the moment. One of the attorneys stated in his summation to the jury that the basic issue was the "U.S. Constitution vs. Hysteria." To the degree that we were able to break through to the jury on this constitutional issue it was possible to make some headway and gain limited victories.

The third feature of the defense was to present as fully as possible the American Road to Socialism, as envisioned by the American Communist Party. Much more would have been done to achieve this presentation had not the prosecution succeeded in blocking much testimony along this line. Consequently the Court arbitrarily ruled out some of the most important documentary evidence on this point, even after it had been read to the jury.

Fourthly, the objective of making the trial the concern of broad circles in the community was set forth. In the pre-trial period hundreds of thousands of pieces of literature were distributed, mainly at shop gates. Many new opportunities opened up during the trial to broaden the mass scope of the defense and develop broad movements of support. Insufficient attention and effort were devoted to these new opportunities and this constitutes the main weakness of the Ohio trial.

#### DUE PROCESS

From the outset, the defense of democratic, constitutional rights took on a very concrete form. It centered around questions of due process—

the right to a fair trial by a jury of one's peers, the right to adequate counsel, etc.

In this connection, the Jury challenge undertaken in the pre-trial stage was of the utmost importance. It served to expose the open class nature of the Federal juries, and the arbitrary methods used in their selection. An eight-month study of the jury system was climaxed by an 8-day court hearing. Some fifty witnesses were called—government officials, mayors, postmasters, jury commissioners—and the defense proved its case through hostile witnesses.

An 80-page brief was prepared on the jury challenge and given wide circulation in legal circles. The Cuyahoga Bar made recommendations for a reform of the federal jury system. The need for such a challenge had long been recognized in the community. The Lorain steel local adopted a resolution calling for action by the Union to provide pay for workers by companies when called for jury duty.

All this created considerable interest, and no doubt helped considerably in improving the make-up of the panel from which the trial jury was selected. Jury panels over the previous ten years had listed the names of only four Negroes. But in the Smith Act panel four Negroes were actually seated in the jury box. Three were removed by peremptory challenge of the prosecution. In this way the jury challenge high-lighted our defense of democratic rights, not only for Communists but for all.

Another important campaign waged in the pre-trial stage centered around the Hashmall case. Frank Hashmall, one of the indicted Communists, was serving a ten-year sentence in the Ohio penitentiary. This savage sentence was imposed for a minor motor vehicle charge which normally draws not more than a fifty-dollar fine.

The campaign to secure his freedom became a national issue, and the concern of broad circles. It served to spotlight the class character of justice in relation to Communists. This was pointed up in the decision of the Ohio Supreme Court in reducing the sentence and reprimanding the judge with the declaration that "even Communists are entitled to even-handed justice." Hashmall was finally given a parole after serving two years in prison.

#### DEFENSE COUNSEL

Fullest recognition must be given to the work of the entire panel of defense counsel. The appointment of seven prominent attorneys by the Court was a significant development. Their conduct in the course of the trial fully merited the wide public approbation accorded them by the entire community, Brownell and Tompkins notwithstanding.

Lawyers had been exceedingly reluctant to undertake the defense of Communists. However, once they were appointed they faced up to the tasks with great resolution and courage. In a sense they became the conscience of the community in an

important free speech battle. They represented the main currents of thought all the way to Big Business circles. They enjoyed the confidence and support of the entire community.

The important feature of the Ohio trial was that for the first time powerful voices outside of the Left were *willing* and *able* to speak out boldly on basic Constitutional issues, on the rights of the Communist Party to a legal existence.

In the courtroom, the legal defense rested on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The attorneys argued the case with passion and deep conviction, because of their own belief in the traditional democratic liberties which all Americans cherish as part of our tradition.

The breadth of political thought represented in the combination of the defendants and their counsel—from the progressive all the way to the most conservative—necessitated unremitting attention and effort to achieve a unity of purpose, a coalition of forces. Sharp differences of opinion arose on major policy questions—the handling of theory, cross-examination of stoolies, on protecting the record, witnesses, etc. But these differences were always ironed out in joint discussions, and there emerged a powerful, hard-hitting defense team working unitedly and wholeheartedly for the common purpose of winning the case.

The thoroughness of the attorneys' preparations was reflected in their approach to the questions of theory. At first the defendants were some-

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what dismayed \* at the inordinate amount of attention and time given by the attorneys to becoming acquainted with all aspects of theoretical questions. However, actual courtroom experience confirmed how essential this difficult task of acquainting themselves with the essentials of Marxist theory was to the conduct of the trial. The attorneys were able, on the basis of their own knowledge of theory, to handle in a most competent manner the distortions attempted by the prosecution. They handled theory in a manner that was extremely effective, and made a signal contribution in this respect.

Their professional skill was demonstrated in the cross-examination of the stoolpigeons. There was no random questioning, no lost motion. Each attorney took on a particular line of questioning and prepared himself thoroughly on a specific point. This pin-pointing enabled each one to participate in the cross-examination of each witness, without repetition of what had been covered by others. This many-sided attack had the effect of a relentless triphammer barrage directed at the prosecution witnesses, and was extremely telling. It was in the course of such questioning that Lautner found himself facing threat of a contempt of court citation.

The defense was able, from the lips of the stoolies themselves, to bring out in considerable detail the day-to-day activities of the Party on such issues as peace, civil liberties, Negro rights, electoral and com-

munity activities and other forms of mass work. This, of course, had the effect of mitigating their fantasies of alleged plotting and violent seizure of power.

Pursuing this tactic further, the defense was able to establish through the testimony of the stoolpigeons the compelling reasons necessitating security measures—their defensive nature in the face of continuous harassment, loss of jobs, persecution, arrests, and ostracism of members of the Communist Party. These reluctant admissions wrung from the stoolies were very important.

These developments were possible because the attorneys took a forthright position on such questions as "security measures," the so-called "underground" activities, etc., with which the prosecution sought to frighten the jury and the public. The attorneys argued that such security measures were undertaken only because of the existence of severe repression and because of the denial of basic democratic rights to a minority. They maintained that we were thereby exercising our constitutional rights even in the teeth of severe persecution, and that this had nothing to do with any alleged conspiracy.

Each new problem was approached with a fresh look and examined separately in relation to the specific features of the Ohio trial. A collective, flexible approach was undertaken to try to find the answer without being rigidly bound to previous patterns. This applied fully to the

question of putting on defense witnesses.

In a number of recent Smith Act trials, none of the defendants took the stand, and there were good reasons for this policy in these cases. However, within the context of the conditions prevailing in the Ohio trial, it was finally agreed that seven witnesses take the stand—two librarians, two experts (Dr. John Somerville on theory, and Comrade Simon Gerson on the program of the American Communist Party) and three defendants. The defense witnesses gave a cross-section view of the work of the Party at the club, section, district and national levels, plus a non-Party expert on Marxist theory.

#### THE VERDICT

The verdict returned by the jury expresses some important contradictions in the outcome of the trial. For the first time in all the Smith Act cases, a number of defendants—four—were acquitted by the jury. Six of the defendants were convicted on the same testimony which resulted in the acquittal of the four by the jury and one by the Court. Both the convicted and the acquitted were active members and leaders of the Communist Party.

The acquittal of Robert A. Campbell, a Party functionary of long standing, was, without doubt, a reflection of the giant stirrings of the Negro people in the South and throughout the country. It emphasized the sensitivity of the jurors and

the American people generally to the struggles and the aspirations of the Negro people. The warmth and response of the Negro community in Cleveland was keenly felt during the entire trial. However, just as in the case of labor, we did not take any active steps to broaden and solidify this wide interest and support.

The verdict, on the other hand, was extremely disturbing to the McCarthyites in Washington. Bernard J. McCusky, heading the panel of Washington lawyers at the trial, told the press in an unguarded moment, "I think the verdict stinks!" His boss, Assistant Attorney-General William F. Tompkins, loosed a vitriolic blast against the two Cleveland Bars for having provided the defendants with a competent panel of defense lawyers. This attack was repeated by J. Edgar Hoover before a Congressional Committee.

However, the Cleveland Bar met the challenge unflinchingly and went into a counter-offensive, demanding a public retraction from Tompkins, and voted to seek his disbarment. This action was given unanimous and enthusiastic support by the entire legal profession in the country. The *Cleveland Press* (Scripps-Howard) in a strong editorial giving all out support to the Bar, stated: "Cleveland is proud of the jury. . . . It is proud of the bar association who arranged for the defense of those who had no lawyers. . . . It is proud of the attorneys who served so conscientiously."

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not satisfied even when Tompkins did back down and assured the Bar delegation in a six-hour meeting that he had never said those nasty things. The *Press* was biting critical of the Bar for having accepted so readily the assurances of Tompkins.

The Bar did not expect such powerful community pressure to push the fight against Brownell and Tompkins. It discovered it was far from being alone in its concern in defending the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and in fact it was being held accountable to the community on these issues.

While Tompkins and the Department of Justice were given a sharp rebuff, the attack did have its effect. This was clearly evident in the courtroom on the day of the sentencing. The atmosphere was radically transformed. Gone was the judicial decorum and restraint prevalent during the trial. The District

Attorney complained that the defendants had shown no inclination to recant their ideas (shades of Galileo!). The Judge lashed out at each defendant individually, and meted out maximum sentences to the five men and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years to the young woman.

The outcome of the Ohio Smith Act trial brings out contradictions between the Smith Act and the Constitution. It puts into question the workability of the Smith Act, and presents unusual new features in the appeal stage to defeat the Smith Act as unconstitutional and un-American. Encouraged by the partial victory, it is necessary for us to consolidate the gains, draw the lessons from the positive and the negative aspects of the trial, and unfold broad movements of labor, the Negro people and other sections of the people to advance the fight for democracy and constitutional liberties.

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