A MARXIST QUARTERLY

FALL
1955

Fourth International

YOUTH
In a Delinquent Society

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The Polio Vaccine Scandal

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Foster and Browder — *by James P. Cannon*

Belinski and Rational Reality — *by G. V. Plekhanov*

Marcus Garvey -- The "Black Moses" — *by George Lavan*

Book Reviews

Fondazione Alfred Lewin

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As a natural target for bouquets — or more often bricks — whether deserved or not, the editor found the mail in response to the last issue of **Fourth International** of unusual interest, mostly due to the article by James P. Cannon on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding convention of the IWW.

G. B. of Detroit, for instance, who claims that he is "not the fan-letter type, being more inclined by nature to indignant letters to the editor," writes that he couldn't refrain from expressing his "pleasure and delight" with the IWW article. His "only regret on finishing it was that it did not go on."

A Brooklyn reader, B. S., admired Cannon's "scrupulous regard for the historical truth." He feels that the article "goes a long way in placing those early developments in the proper historical perspective and strengthens a little more the traditions of our movement."

In Manhattan, E. P. thought it "an important contribution to the history of the American labor movement and a wonderful companion piece to the work on the CIO."

M. T. pointed to the way the article cuts "through all the defensiveness, apathy and staleness so prevalent in our time, and in a few lines brings all that good in our past back to life — fresh and vibrant. One of the young comrades here who read it emerged from the experience glowing. 'It's not like reading a history. You really get the feel of the movement — what a guy The Saint must have been!' We learned from Trotsky that those who make history are the ones who write it best."

Farrell Dobbs, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, considered it "an important contribution to the education of the young workers of today in the traditions and lessons of that 'singing movement with confidence in its mission.' I like especially the section on St. John, 'the man of decision and action,' who 'understood the class struggle as a ruthless struggle for power.' The analysis of the duality of the IWW and the whole concluding portion on the interrelationships between the revolutionary vanguard and the instinctive mass movement contained much rich food for thought."

Vincent R. Dunne voiced the sentiment of the Twin Cities vanguard in calling it "an inspiring piece of Marxist literature." In his opinion, "It's a big down payment on the debt we owe to those gifted men. Nothing at all like it has appeared. Nothing less than a triumph for our party."

From England, J. H. wrote, "Great stuff, the IWW article — really first class."

This sentiment is echoed by R. D. of Canada, who says that "the Cannon article speaks for itself." He adds: "The series of book reviews are in my opinion a real step forward in widening circulation. The only thing wrong with this issue is that there is too little of it." In a later letter he reports that "We have terribly misjudged the interest here in the last issue of the FI. Every time we look at the stand it seems we are sold out again. Please rush us another 10 copies."

H. Baker of Seattle mentions a similar experience: "Send us 20 more copies of the last issue with Cannon's article on the IWW. We haven't begun to touch our possible market for that issue."

In Philadelphia, too, George Clement reports "all the latest issues of the FI have been sold out. Please send us 15 more copies as quickly as possible."

That sampling from the mail bag should be sufficient to establish the point, we hope, that our last issue met with unusual response. And to those who have asked, we can answer, "Yes. Cannon's article on the IWW is definitely scheduled for publication in pamphlet form." Meanwhile, however, we still have extra copies of the last issue of the FI. How about ordering some for your friends?

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Youth In a Delinquent Society

by Joyce Cowley

YOUNG people today are getting an unprecedented amount of publicity—most of it bad. You may have wondered if the youngsters deserve all this—do they really behave so much worse than the "lost" generation of the 1920's or the depression who were driven by joblessness and despair to commit any number of so-called anti-social acts? What about the teen-agers of a decade ago when the country was at war—didn't they get pretty wild, too?

The statistics show, curiously enough, that juvenile delinquency is low during depressions, high in periods of prosperity and war. (This is just the reverse of adult crime which rises during depressions and is lower in prosperity and war.) Juvenile offenses were low in the depression of the thirties, rose during World War II, dropped again in the "recession" that followed the war, and started to climb when the United States entered the Korean War.

In the last five years juvenile delinquency has continued to rise. The latest figures for New York City show that the delinquency rate for young people 16 to 23 went up 52.7% in one year! Throughout the country, one million youngsters under 18 tangled with the police last year.

These figures indicate the increasing quantity of offenses. What is even more significant is the striking change in type of offense. Justice Warren Hill of the New York Domestic Relations Court points out that "our calendars used to be full of children whose offense was jumping over a subway turnstile, hopping on a bus, begging alms or shining shoes without a permit. That is no longer considered delinquency for the court."

Today teen-agers are more likely to be hauled in for murder, rape, armed robbery, use of narcotics, sex perversion and prostitution. There has been a particularly sharp increase in apparently unmotivated crimes of a violent and sadistic character. The "thrill-kill" gang is probably the most melodramatic example.

The case of the four Brooklyn boys who killed for the fun of it shocked many people into an awareness of the profound crisis in the lives of young people today. Max Lerner of the N. Y. Post sums up this reaction when he asks:

> "Are they like all our young? The four Brooklyn boys involved in the gang adventures seem like perfectly ordinary middle-class boys. And they seem to come from good homes, and to have been given parental love and solicitude. . . . Is there a disease rampant and epidemic in America today among the young generation—perhaps even beyond the bounds of America—which infects all of its members to an extent while it affects some of them catastrophically?"

About three years ago Time magazine called today's youth "The Silent Generation." Today's young people, they said, are completely conformist, conservative and invariably uphold the status quo. I asked myself what Time magazine was complaining about, since it was part of the apparatus which pushed young people into this conformist pattern. Why weren't they satisfied? Or were they uneasy? Did they feel that American youth had been just a little too quiet and wondered where they would break out next?

I did not anticipate the terrible answer to that question—the beaten and tortured body tossed off a Brooklyn pier by four ordinary boys, four good boys from good Brooklyn homes.

I could not accept the conclusion of Time magazine that youth today are essentially conformist, without initiative or courage, although they piled up a good deal of evidence in support of this thesis. "Young people today," they said, "are not cynical because they never hoped for much. They expect disappointment. They are the oldest young generation in the world." The N. Y. Times expressed a similar idea in a survey on youth which they called "The Beat Generation."

Bill Mauldin in "Teen-Agers—What Gives?" which appeared in a recent issue of Collier's, describes a couple of these "old" youngsters. "For every kid that gets into trouble," he says, "there are several of another type you don't notice and who, sadly enough, are likely *never* to be heard from."

He talked to a 16-year-old boy who told him: "I'm a staff man. You know, somebody has to sit back and do the desk jobs. I like desks. I want something steady with a pension at the end."

Mauldin seemed pretty upset about this boy who planned a pension half a century ahead. He met a similar type, a fellow of 18, who wants to be some rich man's secretary: "I'm cut out for that kind of stuff. I'm big and I look tough and I ought to be pretty good at keeping the wrong people out of the office."

As Time reported, youth's ambitions have shrunk.

In a Strait Jacket

You may feel that I've been making some contradictory statements. I can't have it both ways. Are young people today turning to violence and crime, or are they, as Time reports, spineless and unprotesting supporters of the status quo?

The answer is that these apparently contradictory tendencies are intimately linked. More than any other young generation in the past, today's young people are placed in a straight jacket of conformity and fear—fear of the witch hunt, of being branded subversive, of being blacklisted in employment or professional work. Po-

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litical protest on the campus seems at a minimum. Authorities are united in an effort to mold young people into a rigid pattern so that they will all feel and think and act the same way.

They've been fairly successful, but at a price. When there is no outlet for the natural protest and rebelliousness of youth, when they have no perspective and nothing to struggle for that demands enthusiasm and courage, they turn to a menacing destructiveness and violence—to suicidal stunt driving, teen-age gang wars that lead to stabbings, shootings and frequently to death, dope addiction, which in turn drives young people to robbery and prostitution to get the money for dope.

This is my own opinion. Popular journalists, judges, police officers, government officials and the like do not explain delinquency in terms of too much conformity. They have a list of pet causes which runs something like this—working mothers, broken homes, parental failure, TV, comic books, progressive education, lack of religious training, and so forth. Liberals suggest that living in the slums may have something to do with it.

Milton Barron, in an interesting book on the subject, *The Juvenile in Delinquent Society*, analyzes each of these popular causes, and shows what role—if any—they have in the development of delinquent behavior.

Working mothers generally head the list. For example, a well-known psychiatrist Dr. Abram Kardiner in a new book *Sex and Morality* claims that nurseries, schools and camps have taken over while mothers work and the result is an increase in divorce, juvenile delinquency and male homosexuality.

This opinion is not accepted by most people who work closely with delinquents. The nature of a child's relationship with his mother has a lot to do with his behavior, but whether she stays home or goes to work is usually not a determining factor.

Broken homes are mentioned about as frequently as working mothers. Statistics do indicate that a great many delinquents come from broken homes. Milton Barron points out that a great many non-delinquents also come from broken homes and that if you consider all causes—death, divorce, desertion and illness, the chances are that a majority of homes are broken at some time in a child's life between infancy and the age of 18. At any rate the statistics are not conclusive and merely indicate that a broken home is one of many factors complicating a child's development.

Mass entertainment media—movies, radio, TV and comic books are another favorite. Dr. Frederic Wertham, a noted psychiatrist and leading consultant on crimes of violence, recently published *Seduction of the Innocent*, an attack on comic books that got a lot of publicity. When he was called in on a particularly brutal teen-age murder case he declared:

"Children weren't committing crimes like this 15 years ago. I know. I've studied thousands of cases. Children are being educated to be sadistically inclined and the education is coming from television and comic books."

It all depends on what psychiatrist you read. With Kardiner it's working mothers, with Wertham, comic books. The most serious mistake they make—and this is true of a great many of the experts and amateurs who write on the subject—is the attempt to explain delinquency in terms of a single cause. Human behavior is extremely complicated and there are a great number of interacting forces in our cultural and social environment which combine to produce the anguished and violent protest of today's teen-agers.

I don't think much of TV and comic books, either as entertainment or education, but to condemn them as the cause of juvenile crime is like saying—as some people do—that the increased use of narcotics is due to the fact that drugs are more readily available than they were 20 years ago. They're available, obviously, because of the demand—so you still have to explain why there's a growing demand. It is also doubtful that the evil influence of American television and comic books has extended to the children of Asia and Europe, but reports of rising delinquency come from all sections of the world.

Parental failure is another of these so-called explanations that I find irritating. When Eisenhower made a speech on delinquency in which he gave parents most of the blame, he evidently failed to check some interesting government publications on the subject. *Parents and Delinquency*, a report on a conference held in 1954, is in pretty sharp disagreement with the President's thesis. It gives one example in which a group of non-delinquent Puerto Rican boys, attacked by chauvinistic gangs in their school, organized their own gang in self-defense. The two gangs are still fighting, one boy has been killed and many are in prison.

"Now, says the pamphlet, "we get back to where is the parents' responsibility. These were Puerto Rican parents. The parents were desperately upset at what was happening and they tried their best to do something about it. Then what was the responsibility of the parents of the other gang, of the children who were the instigators of the whole thing? We rapidly found out that, in keeping with the prevalent social norm in America today, where prejudice is the norm rather than the exception, these parents were prejudiced against the Puerto Rican kids. But do we say because our society permits and/or encourages feelings of prejudice, that the parents were responsible when they transmitted such feelings to their children?"

Dr. Harris B. Peck, Director of the Mental Health Services of the Domestic Relations Court in New York City, also believes it's not the parents, but society, that is the real delinquent, a point of view conspicuously rare among officials who have any connection with the city government or courts.

"It's hard," he says, "to instill those built-in controls of hostile behavior when children are being reared in a world that reeks of hostility and in which the whole economy is geared to the ultimate expression of hostility — death and destruction."

He makes some pertinent comments on a group of parents who failed to respond to treatment. Eighty per cent were mothers who carried the whole responsibility for a fatherless home.

"We brought a number of these parents together in therapy and as they talked we were struck by the immensity of the problems which confronted them. After such sessions we were forced to revise our evaluation of parents who had been characterized as 'rejecting' and to

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appreciate the bitter struggles of these women."

Who Is Responsible?

Working mothers, TV, comic books and delinquent parents are just popular scapegoats for officials and other so-called leaders who don't want to face their own responsibility for the tragic crisis of our youth.

Dr. David Abrahamsen in *Who Are The Guilty?* says: "Each society has the number of criminals it deserves."

What young people want most is to grow up. Consequently they model their conduct on the adult world they see around them. If this results in murder, rape, dope addiction, sadism, sex perversion and other undesirable forms of behavior, it's a pretty accurate reflection of what they see. When apologists for our present social system, who try to pass off wars, depressions, racial antagonism and the witch hunt as a normal democratic culture, wonder what's happened to our young people, I feel like asking—what the hell did you expect?

A curious thing about juvenile delinquency is that teen-agers—who presumably don't have as much self-control and understanding as their elders—are supposed to behave so much better. A great many "crimes" for which young people under 18 are arrested are considered perfectly acceptable behavior if you're a few years older. Milton Barron lists some of these offenses: knowing association with vicious or immoral persons, growing up in idleness or crime, visiting a house of ill repute, patronizing public poolrooms, wandering about railroad yards or tracks, habitually using obscene or vulgar language in public places, loitering and sleeping in alleys, using intoxicating liquors, smoking cigarettes, begging or receiving alms . . . Many of these would obviously not be considered criminal for an adult.

Dr. Peck of the New York Domestic Relations Court points out that there is a positive correlation between the rate of delinquency and war or cold war. Most of the other articles, pamphlets and books on youth have very little to say about World War II, Korea or the H-bomb. It's almost 14 years since Pearl Harbor. Today's teen-agers grew up in a world at war. Young men of 18-19 or in their early twenties did most of the fighting in Korea. Boys automatically face the draft as they get through high school —not only the draft, but the prospect of fighting overseas at any moment United States imperialists decide that Formosa or some other remote territory is worth the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of American lives.

People in their thirties and forties have had a chance to enjoy some of the dubious benefits of the artificial prosperity that goes with war production. They bought homes and cars and television sets. This prosperity doesn't mean much to a boy of 18. It's natural, I think, that he should feel he is the object of special discrimination. If you're 30, in addition to all the other advantages of being an adult, you can stay out of the army, hold down a job and enjoy some of the widely proclaimed material advantages of American "free enterprise."

At 18 you have no such prospect ahead of you. Even if you don't get blown up by a super bomb, you will probably have to fight, maybe get killed, in a country you never heard of before which for some obscure reason has suddenly become "essential" to the defense of the United States.

War also underlies many of the secondary factors which are so frequently considered "causes" of delinquency. It was during World War II that so many homes were broken. Fathers went into the army, mothers went to work and children were suddenly deprived of both parents.

They got very inadequate substitutes. A great deal of the day care provided was substandard, with dozens of children crowded into unsanitary nurseries that had no trained staff, no equipment and no program. Door-key kids wandered the streets without supervision. It was not any feminist desire for a career but the miserable army allotments which drove mothers to work. These youngsters whose lives were disrupted by war are now 16, 17, 18 years of age.

But war is only one factor that contributes to the emotional confusion and desperation of young people.

Statistics indicate that a great many more delinquents come from slums than from middle-class or well-to-do neighborhoods. This is not surprising. Most people agree that it's an inevitable result of substandard housing, overcrowded schools and lack of recreational facilities. In *The Challenge of Delinquency,* Teeters and Reinamann estimate that two-thirds of all young people in trouble with the law are "situational" delinquents.

> "They have crime thrust upon them. They are **not** delinquent no matter how many laws they break. Their behavior is the result of the socio-economic-moral atmosphere in which they have grown up."

But closer examination of case records and court procedures gives a somewhat different picture. It's true that most *convicted* delinquents come from the slums. Youngsters from middle-class families and wealthy families may frequently be delinquent, but unless their offenses are very serious, they rarely wind up in a reform school. *The Challenge of Delinquency* puts it bluntly:

> "There is a differential treatment of the lower social and economic classes who lack the ability or influence to avoid arrest."

The delinquency rate among Negro children is almost five times higher than whites. Unless you believe that Negro children are really five times as delinquent—and I don't—these figures can only be explained by the bias of the judges. Milton Barron confirms this in *The Juvenile in Delinquent Society.* Judges convict Negro boys at an earlier age, and for less serious offenses, than white boys. While there is a good chance that a white boy will be paroled to the care of his parents—his home is considered a suitable place for him—there's an equally good chance that a Negro boy's home will not be considered suitable and he will land in a reform school. There is a curious exception with regard to Negro girls. Teen-age girls are generally arrested for sex offenses. The virtue of a Negro girl is apparently not too important, because she frequently gets off without a sentence. But a white girl who is promiscuous will be sent straight to a reform school and stay there for years. According to Barron, this is to protect the virtue and purity of women of the dominant race in cases where they refuse to protect themselves.

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There is a good deal of hidden delinquency among middle-class and upper-class youth. The sensational cases that hit the newspapers show that young people from these social groups are frequently involved in violent and sadistic crimes. Undoubtedly they also commit many minor offenses which never reach the attention of the police or at any rate are never prosecuted by them and therefore don't show up in the statistics. This does not alter the fact that a large number of our disturbed young people grow up in the misery and filth of the rapidly spreading slums of our large cities, with violence and degradation a part of their daily lives. But like war, a bad economic environment is only one aspect of this question. There are other features of our culture which cut through class lines and play a destructive role in the lives of all young people. I'd like to go into some detail regarding at least three of these—home, church and school.

An Old Prescription

I know these three are considered time-honored remedies. A great many different theories are advanced to explain why youth goes wrong, but experts and amateurs alike are agreed on the cure. Home, church and school can fix things up. A boy is sure to turn out OK if you give him a good home, a good education and teach him the fear of God. This fails to explain why many young murderers, dope addicts, sadists and gunmen are well-educated, religious youths from good homes.

Far from preventing delinquency, these institutions may be major factors in bringing it about. Religious beliefs have certainly not proved much of a check on violent crime. Delinquent teen-agers interviewed by social workers were more devout, and attended church more regularly, than non-delinquents. A census of penal institutions revealed that 71.8% of the inmates are church members as against 46.6% of the population as a whole. Juvenile gangs are frequently racial or religious groups organized for the purpose of combating other gangs of a different race or religion. The race and religious prejudices which foster this kind of conflict are obviously nothing the youngsters themselves dreamed up and I don't think I have to point out where they got these attitudes of discrimination and intolerance.

Family relationships as they exist in our society are largely responsible



for the emotional disturbances which develop in early childhood and which in many cases lead to violent anti-social behavior at adolescence. A detailed analysis of childhood conflicts is beyond the scope of this article, but an elementary understanding of these conflicts is necessary in a discussion of teen-age behavior. It's true in a general sense that a child's growth and character development are the result of social and economic conditions, and he is a product of our society as a whole. But as an individual he first comes into contact with this society through his parents and other members of his family. It is their emotional attitudes which first influence him and they are quite likely to have a disastrous influence. This is not the fault of parents, who are merely victims of the emotional frustration and conflicts of their own unhappy childhood.

Many parents do *not* love their children and are either indifferent or hostile to them. A child who meets this kind of rejection will try to find sustitute satisfactions for the love he doesn't get. On the other hand, many parents love their children in a kind of overwhelming way and do everything for them. In this case children can't develop their own capabilities; they feel weak and helpless. In either case, whether they are badly neglected or overindulged, children will develop a great deal of hostility toward their parents. Since this is not a socially acceptable attitude — you're supposed to love your parents — they will also feel guilty about their hostility. All this underlies the disturbed behavior of teen-agers and explains why many of their crimes seem irrational.

They may attack a stranger as a substitute for the parent toward whom they feel so much repressed hostility. They may commit crimes in order to get punished because punishment relieves them of their intense feeling of guilt.

We live in a highly competitive society founded upon the institution of private property. Marriage laws and family relationships reflect this basic concept of private ownership and a tremendous social pressure is transmitted through the parents. At an early age a child feels that he has to achieve something, to acquire status and to own a lot of things. Parents naturally urge children to go after the things they themselves wanted and frequently did not get. In this age of feverish advertising it's not difficult to figure out what these things are—cars, homes, television sets, fur coats, deep freezers and thousands of other items enticingly offered on the pages of every magazine and newspaper.

Unfortunately a great many young people have no realistic prospect of getting all this stuff. In face of the continuous pressure to acquire some of these products of American culture, they may look for short-cuts—short-cuts suggested by the activities of adults whom they are watching closely. Some 225,000 cars were stolen last year—125,000 by youngsters under 18.

In school, too, there is insistent emphasis on competition and achievement. Children who have difficulty fitting into the set patterns of our schools are likely to play truant and look for more interesting activities and associates. Habitual truancy is considered an early symptom of delinquency. It is certainly the first consistent protest against overcrowded

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schools, inadequate teachers and the rigid conformity of our educational methods.

The drop-out rate is another indication of how youngsters feel about the schools—more than 50% do not complete four years of high school.

Marshall B. Clinard in *Secondary Community Influences and Juvenile Delinquency* says:

"In reality schools are places where juveniles, during a process of several hours a day, are routinized, bored, crushed in their individuality and thrown into needless competition with others rather than aided in the development of co-operation."

Our schools present what educators have described as "packaged" courses which fulfill a middle-class ideal of white-collar academic achievement. Vocational schools, which were supposed to counteract this to some extent, have become a dumping ground for students who are considered mentally incapable of such academic accomplishments. Teachers generally consider an assignment to a vocational high school the equivalent of exile in Siberia.

Blackboard Jungle by Evan Hunter, who was formerly a teacher in a vocational high school in the Bronx, gives a vivid picture of these schools. Hunter can't successfully conceal his contempt and hatred for the boys in his class. He infers that among them there may be a few that can be salvaged, but the vast majority are a bunch of anti-social morons who can't absorb any education and obviously don't need any.

One fact emerges from his book with striking clarity. What goes on in these classrooms is not just boyish mischief. It's war—a war waged against all authority with sustained intensity and bitterness. But Hunter never asks *why* these youngsters are at war with authority. Presumably, from his account, because they have a low I.Q. It doesn't occur to him that their hostility to authority may be based on the kind of personal experiences they have had with various types of authority.

Our schools are notoriously overcrowded, children attend in double shifts and sit two at a desk. Buildings are so old and in such a bad state of repair that they are dangerous. Low pay for teachers forces competent men and women into other jobs where they can make a living thus creating a shortage of teachers. All this reflects the low value placed on education by our society.

Higher education used to be different. Colleges and universities in the thirties were not so rigidly conformist and there was plenty of discussion on the campus, frequently led by "red" professors. Radical students engaged in political demonstrations and anti-war strikes.

Today both students and teachers have learned to toe the line. Dissenting professors lose their jobs. Students today are faced with the Smith Act, the McCarran Act, the threat of loyalty investigations and the blacklist prepared by the Attorney General. If they're labelled "subversive," their prospects for employment or a professional career are rather dim.

It's not surprising that educators complain that young people today seem to have no militant beliefs; they don't speak out for anything. Rabbi I. Newman, in a sermon on the topic, said:

"The campaign to enforce conformity among persons of independent thought is likely to create a generation of supine, spineless young men and women."

The N. Y. Times comments:

"A subtle, creeping paralysis of freedom of thought and speech is attacking the college campuses—limiting both students and faculty in the area traditionally reserved for the free exploration of knowledge and truth."

The Troublemakers, a bold and remarkably honest play (which closed after about seven weeks in a small theater off Broadway) told the story of a non-conformist on the campus, a political rebel, who was killed by a group of classmates on a week-end drunk. They picked on him because he was different, un-American, didn't have the same ideas as the rest of them. Most of the play dealt with the efforts of the whole town, including faculty and police, to cover up. They refused to admit this brutal incident could occur in a respectable university town. This play was based on the actual killing of a student at a New England university two years ago.

Another sad example of this trend is the incident in Rhode Island where Boy Scouts planned to celebrate Lincoln's birthday by burning books at a revolutionary shrine at Fort Butts. They invited everyone in town and the admission price was an objectionable book. If you couldn't make it in person, they'd pick up your books and burn them for you. There was considerable protest; so at the last minute they called it off and the books collected were sold as waste paper.

I have attempted so far to outline the social factors that contribute to delinquency—war and the threat of war, the misery of growing up in a slum environment, racial and religious antagonisms inherent in our culture, the tremendous pressure for conformity on the part of parents, schools and other agencies who insist on adjustment to the status quo as the only normal way of life, the whole pattern of competitive achievement and acquisition of property in capitalist economy—all of these add up to a society that is delinquent, a society that is responsible for the anti-social behavior of our desperately troubled youth.

Problem of Sex

There is one other vitally important question in which society plays a repressive and hypocritical role. Most of the popular articles and books on teen-age problems don't say too much about sex. Either they believe that this is an age of sex freedom and it's not much of a problem these days, or they think that such problems arise later when young people reach their early twenties. No adolescent, subjected to the highly erotic stimulation of our mass entertainment media, could avoid an early consciousness of sex. This comes naturally, of course—movies, television and comic books merely provide a hopped-up version of sex and an insistent pressure which resembles the appeal of advertisers to buy unobtainable merchandise. An adolescent's normal interest in sex is continuously aggravated while no satisfactory outlet is offered.

A teen-ager, as he reaches physical maturity, is not in position to marry;

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and activities regarded as normal for adults are a serious crime at the teen-age level. Recently two youngsters of 15 and 16 wanted to get married but couldn't get their parents' consent. They ran away from home, were discovered in an upstate hotel and arrested as juvenile delinquents. This could mean a sentence of several years



in a reform school. Kinsey pointed out that most of the famous lovers of history were teen-agers who would wind up behind bars in modern America.

As I said earlier, what young people want most is to grow up. Yet for a great many years they have an indeterminate age status; the teen-ager is no longer a child but he is not an adult. He is held responsible for his actions, he can be drafted into the army or sent to the electric chair, but he can't vote and is not entitled to most of the privileges of adults.

So far I've discussed teen-agers in the United States because I got most of my data from American publications. But there is some evidence that other countries have similar problems although in typical American style, our problem seems bigger. There has been a rise in violent crime in England since World War II and recently Marlon Brando's film "The Wild One" was banned there because it might have an undesirable effect on young hoodlums. A socialist paper from Ceylon reports a rise in violent crime among Ceylonese youth and mentions that the United States has similar difficulties. Reports from Australia on the activities of young people sound very much like some of the more sensational news stories here.

The Soviet Union may have a delinquency problem as serious as that in America. It's difficult, of course, to get facts about Russia. TV producers, defending themselves before a congressional committee on charges that their programs were causing delinquency, mentioned the absence of TV sets in Russia where the delinquency problem is as great as ours. The N. Y. Post carried a story on the "Butterfly Boys" who are plaguing Russian cops. Apparently the equivalent of our zoot-suiters, they wear long "Tarzan" haircuts and brilliantly colored clothes.

In six months, 60 stories appeared in the Russian press on youthful hooliganism and drinking. Some reported crimes of serious violence. An 11-year-old schoolboy knifed a teacher to death; an Odessa school boy was beaten to death by other boys; four boys 15 to 17 engaged in a series of armed robberies. "Soviet courts," says the article, "are dealing severely with the offenders."

A most depressing report on German youth was made by Melvin J. Lasky in the N. Y. Times. Like American youth they want to buy cars and refrigerators. They want to get ahead. They want to live "like in the movies" and ride noisy motorcycles through town—maybe "The Wild One" wasn't banned there.

"The new youth," says this writer, "reads gossipy newspapers and picture magazines, has started working at what seems a rather good job and has precious little feeling that the times are out of joint."

Visiting American generals and senators can't conceal their sympathy for a people "so much like ours" and a German economist commented happily that "Germany will get the best workers it has ever had!" What is the outstanding characteristic that arouses the admiration of generals and politicians and which will make the Germans such good workers? They are "adjustable" according to one observer. "Bourgeoisified" says another. They have achieved what Lasky calls a new "individualism" which is summed up in the slogan: "What's in it for me?"

"Young workers," he says, "no longer want to rise **with** the ranks but **from** the ranks. As for polities, they're apathetic and even students are merely concerned with their own private professional careers. A German writer sums it up by saying: 'They are the oldest young generation ever.'"

This may sound familiar. Time magazine's report on "The Silent Generation," written three years earlier, said that American youth were the "oldest young generation in the world." I don't believe one writer was plagiarizing the other; I think they were observing a similar phenomenon. German youth, too, seem to be held in the grip of a deadening conformity and self-centered egoism.

What Can Be Done?

With this general picture of what's happening to youth and why, let's consider what's being done about it, how so-called delinquency is being cured. It would be more accurate to say, what methods are used in handling cases, because the measures employed are in most cases *not* a cure.

Eisenhower acknowledged the importance of the question by allocating $3,000,000 in his latest budget toward prevention of delinquency. This may not seem like much compared with the military budget of $34,000,000,000. However it's quite a bit more than last year's budget of $75,000.

Of the 1,000,000 children who are arrested each year, approximately 400,000 actually get to court. Others are referred to social service agencies and psychiatric clinics or dismissed with a warning to parents and child. There are 200 children's courts in the United States concentrated in eight states. In the other 40 states, juvenile cases are lumped in with other judicial proceedings. The courts in the eight fortunate states, with rare exceptions, aren't working too well. To quote *Children in Court*, a pamphlet published by the Public Affairs Committee, these courts "serve to reinforce the feeling the children already have

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of the world's hostility or indifference."

What's wrong? According to this pamphlet, just about everything. First, no money; courts don't have adequate appropriations with which to work.

Even if they had the money, many of the judges have been appointed in payment of political debts and are not equipped to handle delinquent children.

If we did have good judges, they couldn't accomplish much. The court depends on its probation staff and half the counties in the U.S. don't have probation staffs. When they do, it is usually "overworked, inadequately trained, underpaid" and capable of giving only "the most casual, routine, cursory service."

That's not all. If there were good probation services, the courts would still have a tough time because many of the children must be "sent away" and there aren't enough "places" to send them. The institutions that do exist "aren't all the right kind." That's certainly an understatement! Schools intended for 200 children have as many as 400 and when the population gets this big, says the pamphlet, "it is almost impossible for a training school staff to avoid using mass regimentation methods and arbitrary discipline." It's also doubtful that anyone tries to avoid it. Everyone familiar with so-called training schools knows that the children get trained for just one thing—a life of adult crime.

The Children's Court in New York City does have a probation staff. The probation officers are able to see most children from five to 20 minutes a month, or one to four hours a year. They *never* get around to seeing some of them.

Some of the judges "order" teenagers to promise better behavior or to read selected books. Some go in for lectures to parents and children on the desirability of good conduct. One judge doesn't believe in psychiatry and never reads the reports of psychiatric examinations. Another reads these reports but pays no attention to them, preferring his own "common sense." Some insist on regular church attendance and writing the Ten Commandments a given number of times. So far none of these measures has checked delinquency.

The most miserable aspect of this situation is what happens to the young people who are held in detention. About 100,000 are put in adult prisons while waiting for their cases to come to court. This is because there are no juvenile detention homes available. Frequently there is no segregation and youngsters are locked up with hardened criminals. Where there are juvenile detention homes or training schools things are not much better. In *Juvenile Officer* Capt. Harold L. Stallings of the Los Angeles police describes them frankly. He says in a chapter on "The Detention Horror":

"Conditions in Los Angeles county are no worse than in other parts of the country but that isn't saying much for the detention situation over the land is a disgrace. In our detention places for juveniles we inbreed the very characteristics we spend millions to outbreed. As Vice-President of the National Jail Association I visited city and county detention jails over the country. Physical conveniences are almost non-existent. Cells are dank and stinking. Personnel is uninspired and disinterested. There is nothing for inmates to do, no work and no play."

He tells how boys arrested for minor offenses like petty thievery, thrown in with experienced criminals, are subjected to sadistic homosexual attacks, frequently with the cooperation of the guards.

Some years ago I had a waitress job in a small town in Massachusetts and I remember boys from the local training school at work mowing the lawn and doing other odd jobs probably described as vocational rehabilitation. Recently about a dozen officials of this institution—teachers, they're called—were arrested and charged with forcing homosexual relationships on the 13- and 14-year-old inmates. There were a total of 106 charges against them, they were convicted and got nine months.

This seems like a moderate sentence compared with, let's say, two or three years that a boy of 14 may serve because he had a normal sex relationship with the girl next door. As I pointed out, juveniles are expected to behave a lot better than adults.

Milton Barron, in *The Juvenile in Delinquent Society* describes some of the punishments inflicted in these institutions.

"Duck-walking. The offending child must grasp his ankles and waddle about like a duck.

"The squats. This is deep knee-bending for a specified period or number of times. Some children are sentenced to 5,000 squats, worked out in intermittent sessions to avoid collapse.

"Rice-polishing. Boys crawl on their knees across a floor strewn with rice grains until bleeding starts and suffering is intense enough to satisfy the disciplinarian that 'justice' has been done.

"Burlap party. Offenders are made to push piles of burlap bags across a floor flooded with water. When the bags are soaked through, they have to wring them and then resume sopping up water with burlap until the floors are dry.

"Runaway pills. Captured runaways are dosed with laxatives to 'help them run.'

"A 'game' played in some institutions is called 'flying home.' The idea is to administer a kick or paddle-whack to a boy's backside so sharply and expertly as to shock his nervous system and literally lift him off the floor. Failure or success for the disciplinarian is measured by the height reached by the



offending child and the distance he travels."

The Get-Tough "Solution"

In the Women's House of Detention in New York City, described by Corrections Commissioner Anna Kross as "indecent" and a "hellhole," girls are usually released right before lunch with a lecture and 25 cents. In most cases they are arrested for prostitu-

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tion and it's not difficult to figure out why they go back to it—fast.

In the last couple of years many judges, police officials, capitalist politicians and similar characters have come out for a "get tough" policy. In view of what I quoted above, it hardly seems possible, but they believe that juvenile offenders have been coddled and advocate really throwing the book at them.

Judges in open court have referred to teen-agers on trial as hoodlums and punks. Judge Leibowitz of Brooklyn, sentencing a couple of teen-age murderers—they got 20 years to life—asked for a new approach in dealing with the "vicious, depraved, heartless, cruel and cunning type of young criminal. What was good and proper 25 years ago when kids used to steal bananas off pushcarts and tear down fences for election bonfires is as out of date as the horse and buggy. The young criminal of today is sadistic, he has to see the blood of his victim flow. He is more cunning and defiant than the old-type adult burglar or other type of criminal." The depraved boys whom he condemned were 17 and 18 years old.

Another Brooklyn judge held 31 boys on $5,000 bail each on charges of unlawful assembly. The police had a tip they were going to start a street fight but since it had not yet started when they arrived there were no real charges against the youths. The judge had to let them go when the case came to court—with a speech. He said there were too many vacuum cleaners in modern homes and not enough brooms because parents ought to go back to using the broomstick on wayward children. Furthermore, he thought patrolmen on the beat should use their clubs.

He'll be happy to learn that cops are not only using their clubs but their guns, too. In recent months several teen-agers were killed by conscientious policemen who thought they were up to no good. A mother wrote to the N. Y. Post:

> "I have two teen-age boys and every time they go out my husband and I are in a cold sweat for fear some innocent boyish gesture might be misinterpreted and arouse suspicion, and some trigger-happy rookie might empty his revolver in them."

Various laws have been proposed, and in some cities have been enacted, to back up the get-tough policy. A teen-age curfew which does not permit young people under 18 on the streets after 10 P.M. is in effect in Chicago, Philadelphia and a number of other cities and is being discussed in New York. This means a young fellow or girl of 17 can't go to a movie after work.

Another proposal would make parents pay the cost of teen-age vandalism. If a youth didn't care much for his parents, this would be a perfect weapon. One police-state measure under consideration is the fingerprinting of all school children. Public whipping has also been suggested.

George Sokolsky, the Hearst columnist, sees a close relationship between the rise of delinquency, which indicates a lowering of moral standards, and the "moral weakness" of many U.S. soldiers in the Korean war. Their weakness consisted of not wanting to fight because they had no positive goal. He advocates a revival of religion and nationalism and as a first step suggests singing the national anthem at all public gatherings, baseball games, concerts, etc.

Liberals and social service workers, who don't go for either police clubbings or the national anthem as a solution, advocate various measures to adjust young people to the community; but don't explain how they can make a normal adjustment to this abnormal society and its bitter alternative of joblessness or war.

Whatever its shortcomings, the work of social service agencies and psychiatric clinics is the only attempt being made to prevent or to cure the delinquent behavior of disturbed children and adolescents. There is an acute shortage of these facilities. In the entire United States, there are less than ten psychiatric clinics attached to juvenile courts. The psychiatric care in detention houses and reform schools was described cynically by a prison official:

> "The three minute wonders—those institutional psychiatrists who give the kids quick check-ups like they were looking for measles."

Clinics and other agencies are so overcrowded with cases that they can't possibly handle them properly. Like the Children's Courts, they are hampered by hopelessly inadequate funds. They are understaffed and the personnel they do have is underpaid. The result is that they only get to the tough cases which have already reached an emergency stage and are rarely able to do preventive work in the early phases of emotional illness when it might be of some real help. Last year the Bureau of Child Guidance in New York City processed 13,000 cases. They estimate that there were 200,000 other children who needed help.

One curious development is that the clinics and institutions which were originally set up to deal with delinquents are becoming more and more interested in the neuroses of middle-class and upper-class youngsters. Dr. Donald Bloch of the U.S. Public Health Service says:

> "They find that such cases are very productive in therapy. They can really get somewhere with them, so they are giving up treating delinquents."

Clifford Shaw of the Institute of Juvenile Research in Illinois confirms this. "The delinquent," he reports, "is very largely outside the whole range of social agencies."

But at best, these agencies would only be able to take care of casualties. They could do nothing to solve the fundamental problems and conflicts which drive youth to violent rebellion. What these youngsters want is a society that appreciates them and their problems and needs instead of publicly branding them as hoodlums, punks, and teen-age beasts. They want a useful place in the world; they want to make plans; they want a future.

The Real Choice

All they see ahead is the threat of atomic destruction and violent death. It's because they feel that they have no choice and there's no way out that they wind up in the blind alley of narcotic addiction or tear down the highway with police bringing up the rear.

There *is* a choice. These young people, who have totally rejected the false ideals of today, do not yet realize that what they have rejected are the ideals of modern *capitalist* socie-

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ty. They have not learned to fight against capitalism. When they do—when they see the possibility of a society of abundance and peace, the society of socialism—they will find the positive goal that was so conspicuously lacking on the battlefields of Korea.

In the last session of Congress, a proposed constitutional amendment that would have lowered the voting age to 18 was hastily buried by the U.S. Senate. In a N. Y. Times panel discussion, Dr. T. V. Smith, a professor of politics and philosophy, revealed with surprising frankness why the politicians don't welcome 18-year-old voters. According to the Times:

"He warned that young people were prone to carry idealism into politics and expect too much from government officials. 'Sportsmanship and magnanimity,' he said, 'were a part of party politics and despite campaign charges, mudslinging and all the other fury of campaigns, the winning and losing candidates resumed their friendship after the votes were tallied. Youth would not know this and in its idealism might spoil this facet of politics.'"

Young people are not supposed to have any voice in shaping the policies that may mean life or death for them. A 15-year-old boy who attempted to attend a talk by Judge Leibowitz on juvenile delinquency was told that he was "too young." The boy of 18 who is about to be drafted is "too young" to decide the issues of war and peace. Adolescence, according to popular journalists, is a carefree, irresponsible time of life.

I'd like to say to any teen-ager, "You have a right to share in the decisions that will determine what kind of world you are going to live in. If no one offers you this right, take it anyway. Make yourself heard. It's up to you to challenge the society that stunts your development, deprives you of hope for the future and threatens you with annihilation in a third world war without giving you the elementary right to decide whether or not *you* want to fight. The socialist movement is not afraid of the idealism and honesty of youth. We want young people to take part in the struggle against the misery and violence of the capitalist world."

I know it's difficult to argue against the cynical, tough-guy attitude of so many young people who want to conceal their feelings of helplessness and despair. But let any youth who feels that way listen to the youth of a different generation who faced similar problems and found their way to a satisfying answer. Here is what one of them, James P. Cannon, says in his pamphlet, *The Road to Socialism:* "Don't ever make the mistake of thinking that anything contrary to the rules and ethics of capitalism is utopian or visionary or absurd. What's absurd is to think this madhouse is permanent and for all time."

When millions of young people in America begin to see it that way too, they will no longer accept the "safety" of a paralyzing conformism or look for an escape in narcotics and violent crime. When they see the possibility of the new world that's within their grasp, they will find the program and take the decisive action to make that new world their own.

The Case for Socialized Medicine

The Polio Vaccine Scandal

by Theodore Edwards

FOR the vast majority of the American people, the polio vaccine drama opened April 12, 1955. The following days were exciting and pleasant, the imminent conquest of poliomyelitis being celebrated by the entire world. Three short weeks later, this dynamic success had become the most abject of fiascos, a national scandal, and a dead failure to boot.

The public felt cheated, tricked, let down. Nor has the continuous flow of syrupy statements in Washington been able to soothe them. This is not surprising since the Eisenhower administration has yet to explain in forthright manner what went wrong with the Salk vaccine. More than one "all-out campaign to restore public confidence" has been set in motion, but public confidence is not easily restored when the Federal government makes promises one day, breaks them the next, reinstates them the third day, only to break them anew the fourth.

What went wrong and why? Why is the government so reluctant to tell what really happened?

First of all we must understand the character of the National Infantile Paralysis Foundation. This is a private charity organization, the creation of Franklin D. Roosevelt, his pet charity, so to say, which grew out of his personal encounter with polio in 1921 and out of the Georgia Hot Spring Foundation founded by him in 1927. The Polio Foundation was incorporated in 1938 and has collected funds since then through its so-called "March of Dimes" for the "fight against polio."

The more publicity the Polio Foundation drums up, the greater the public donations it receives. In this case, the publicity experts of the Foundation bordered on sheer genius. The entire nation waited with baited breath for the report by Dr. Francis Jr. evaluating the 1954 field trials of the Salk vaccine. For days, the press, radio, and television played up the coming report. Case-hardened newspaper reporters noted that the event looked more like a super-colossal Hollywood premiere than anything connected with science.

Outside the hall, where Dr. Francis Jr. was to read his report to the select audience of 500 scientists and physicians, tens of thousands milled about, while television cameras and radio microphones singled out medical

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bigwigs going into the meeting. In the press room, more than 150 newspaper, radio, and television reporters scrambled for the 300 copies of the Francis report handed them one hour and five minutes before the actual reading. And when Dr. Francis Jr. appeared at the lectern, a battery of 16 television and newsreel cameras went into action.

The same afternoon, Basil O'Connor, president of the National Infantile Paralysis Foundation, announced that nine million children were going to receive free vaccine contracted and paid for by the Foundation.

The theatrical setting of the Francis report could not possibly have had any bearing on the defective vaccine discovered later. But it did make it more difficult for Washington to get off the hook when millions of enraged parents demanded an explanation. The real question involved is not whether the Polio Foundation had overpublicized the report but whether medical research and treatment, in the richest country the world has yet seen, needs to be subsidized by private charity organizations and annual charity drives, a question to which we shall return later.

The Eisenhower administration, certainly, is hardly in position to complain about overpublicity, since it contributed its share to the hullabaloo. Even while Dr. Francis Jr. was talking to his Michigan audience, the administration, through United States Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby, was preparing to rush center-stage and take a deep bow for an achievement in which it had played little or no part.

Mrs. Hobby's signature licensing the production of the vaccine (as required by the National Biologics Control Act of 1913 for such materials) was to have been what is known in Washington as a "full dress ceremony," with photographers, television, newsreels, etc. Unfortunately, as Dr. Scheele, Surgeon-General of the United States, explained, "things were running a bit behind schedule in Ann Arbor," and the ceremony was cancelled.

This minor mishap, however, did not deter our Republican stalwarts. As Mrs. Hobby stated the next day before the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee: "The White House is very much aware of this problem and how best to publicize the polio vaccine." Eisenhower instructed the United States Department of State to give the world full information about the polio vaccine. John Foster Dulles, in turn, stated that he would immediately send copies of the Francis report to American embassies in the 75 nations with which the United States has diplomatic relations.

This act of the Republican administration, too, fell rather short of the mark, since the United States Department of Commerce slapped export controls on the vaccine. (Fortunately for the rest of the world — and unfortunately for us — polio is predominantly a North American affliction, more than one-half of all reported cases occurring in the United States and Canada.)

The Republican administration was not alone in trying to get into the Polio Foundation's act. No sooner had O'Connor announced the free immunization program than the American Medical Association spoke up. The Polio Foundation had stipulated that physicians dispensing the free vaccine would not be permitted to charge for it. Both the Chicago and the Illinois Medical Societies (Chicago is the home office of the AMA) objected *"on principle"* to the Foundation's stipulation. The AMA had an alternate plan: Physicians should charge for injecting the free vaccine. The Polio Foundation refused to budge, and, rather tepidly, the AMA decided to play along, swallowing its "principles."

By way of compensation, no one opposed its "principles" when it came to the vaccine being sold through regular commercial channels. In chorus, local chapters of the AMA decided that doctors should charge costs: $6 retail for the vaccine, $4.33 wholesale to the doctor, plus an estimated $5 for each of three office visits for the shots.

There are probably at least 100 million people in this country anxious to be immunized against polio. At $15 a head, that equals 1½ billion dollars. Divided among the 100,000 physicians and pediatricians reportedly available for this work, that amounts to $15,000 for each physician! Since the doctor buys the vaccine wholesale at $4.33 and sells it for $6, that means another $1,670 for each physician. We can see that the "principles" of the AMA come at a high price.

In comparison to this, the take of the pharmaceutical concerns manufacturing the vaccine seems almost paltry: 100 million people times $4.33 equals 433 million dollars. However, since annual pharmaceutical sales by all the drug companies in this country total roughly 1½ billion dollars, the increase in the volume of business due to the polio vaccine (433 million dollars, prorated over three to four years) would expand the drug market by 7 to 10%, with the increase being shared by only six companies.

Wall Street greeted the Francis report by making drug shares the most active items on the Stock Exchange. But speculators rushing in for the bonanza found that, actually, they were a little late. Supposedly, no top secret during the war had been more zealously guarded than the Francis report. According to newspaper reports, not even Dr. Salk or Basil O'Connor had read it beforehand. But as Loeb, Rhoades and Co., one of the country's largest stock brokers, observed in a private newsletter circulated among their clients, "the financial community, with its usual perspicacity and aplomb, knew the findings well in advance" and, we might add, had supplied itself well with investments in the appropriate stocks.

Drew Pearson, in his May 25 column revealed that, following the 1954 field trials of the vaccine, Dr. Salk was unable to interest the drug companies in producing the vaccine. Only after O'Connor of the Polio Foundation laid nine million dollars cash on the barrelhead in orders did some of the drug companies become interested. This bit of information not only proves even to such a staunch free-enterprise supporter as Drew Pearson that the drug companies hardly deserved the juicy plum handed them by Dr. Salk and the Polio Foundation, it also illustrates that O'Connor

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knew that the vaccine was a success even without reading Dr. Francis' report and that all the hoopla around the report was strictly publicity.

When confronted with the high cost of the vaccine, quite a few people began to ask embarrassing questions along these lines: The research behind the development of the polio vaccine and the field tests had cost 22 million dollars, all of which had been paid by the Polio Foundation. Every penny of these 22 million dollars thus had come directly from the annual "March of Dimes." The American people had opened up their hearts and their pocketbooks for the "fight against infantile paralysis." More than that, in the field trials last year, involving almost two million children, parents had gone further and volunteered their children. People felt that the vaccine was theirs, that it was developed with their money and tested with their chidren, and that therefore polio shots should be free for everyone. However, as we have seen, the AMA and the drug companies were more concerned with fees and profits than with any "fight against infantile paralysis."

A typical advertisement in the Los Angeles Times appealing to speculators in drug stocks, points out what a boon the polio vaccine business was going to be to the drug companies, "now that the exaggerated 'wonder drug' boom of a few years has worn off."

The "Wonder Drugs"

As a matter of fact, many of the new "miracle drugs" deserve their success, but it has been clear for some time to responsible medical authorities that neither the antibiotics (such as Penicillin, Streptomycin, or the broad-spectrum antibiotics, such as Terramycin, Aureomycin, or chlorotetracycline) nor the synthetics (such as the sulfa drugs) actually met the real challenge of the virus infections.

As each new "wonder drug" hit the market, sensational cures were reported — until the germs adapted and became resistant. Instead of people becoming immune to the germs, the germs became immune to the cure! Another "wonder drug" would hit the market and the cycle would be repeated. Along that road, there is no end in sight.

The medical profession continues to prescribe "wonder drugs," more often than not to reassure the patient and to justify the doctor's fee. It seems a rather expensive variation of the placebo (sugar pill) cure. In a sick human being, the psychological effect of such medical trickery may be of great and sometimes even of paramount importance, of course; but it must be pointed out that the old sugar pill was a lot less expensive than the antibiotics or the antihistamines, some of which retail for 50 cents or $1 a pill.

The drug companies have grown fat and complacent on the "wonder drugs." As a group, the antibiotics constitute a 260-million-dollar-a-year business: Penicillin alone brings in 130 milion dollars a year, Streptomycin 50 million dollars. Among the broad-spectrum antibiotics, Terramycin is patented by Pfizer, while Cyanamid owns Aureomycin, the current big seller being chlorotetracycline which commands a 40-million-dollar-a-year market (at 50 cents a pill, six to 12 pills per prescription, this means that it is prescribed about 1½ million to 3½ million times a year).

The general public has probably never even heard of tetracycline since it is sold as Tetracyn by Pfizer, Polycycline by Bristol-Myers, Achromycin by Lederle, Steclin by Squibb, and Panmycin by Upjohn — all of whom are fighting tooth and nail for patent rights on tetracycline in the courts. As *Chemical Week* puts it, the 40-million-dollar-a-year tetracycline market is well worth fighting for, as is the 50-million-dollar-a-year cortisone market, which is also in the courts.

In contrast to the haste and profusion with which most drugs are thrown on the market and enter clinical practice, the polio vaccine developed by Dr. Salk was field-tested by means of the largest control tests ever conducted. The polio vaccine field trials of 1954 involved 1,800,000 children and cost 7½ million dollars, paid for by the Polio Foundation. The evaluation report of the trials, by Dr. Francis Jr. and his staff, alone cost $900,000, also paid for by the "March of Dimes" funds.

We have come a long way since 1880, when Louis Pasteur vaccinated one nine-year old boy who had been bitten by a rabid dog, thereby establishing the vaccine in medical practice. Today, it takes almost two million children, teams of investigators, consisting not only of physicians, but of chemists, pharmacologists, nurses, social workers, statisticians, electronic brains, and what not, AND 7½ million dollars to test a vaccine. Yet, contemporary American medical practice is organized and conducted along the same lines as in Pasteur's day, 75 years ago.

With doctors competing for patients, private medical practice provides no efficient mechanism for rigidly controlled mass tests of new remedies. The "family doctor," who under the present set-up of fee-for-service medicine forms the backbone of medical practice in this country, can test new remedies on his own patients, if his private practice is large enough, or, if he has a hospital connection, the doctor might test it on the patients there. But mass clinical testing, including the checking of the preparation of the drug, the dose and method of administration, the recording of effects in suitably selected samples of the population, the rigid statistical analysis of results, requires more knowledge, skill, time, effort, and *money* than the "family physician" can provide. Controlled clinical mass trials thus are an exception rather than the rule in this country today.

The Council of Pharmacy and Chemistry of the AMA is supposed to fill the gap by informing the practising physician about new remedies. Its reports are long-delayed and far between, not to mention the fact that the doctor-businessman in his private practice hardly has the time to keep abreast of the avalanche of medical literature pouring from the presses. The drug companies, in the meantime, exert quite a bit of pressure on the practitioner. Some of it is quite subtle; some just the opposite.

"Low-Key" Selling

Thus, 54,000 physicians, or almost one-third of all doctors in this country, attended a closed-circuit televi-

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sion showing of the Francis report at 61 private conclaves throughout the country. In New York, the grand ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria was crowded with upward of 2,000 physicians and their wives. Throughout the country, the showing was sponsored by none other than Eli Lilly, one of the vaccine makers! This technique is known as "low-key" selling in the advertising game.

Thus, Squibb, Pfizer, Winthrop-Stearns ring the cash register with medical movies shown free to the doctors. Lederle Labs specialize in film programs plus day-long medical symposiums, organized in cooperation with local medical societies.

At such shows or symposiums, there is a pamphlet rack containing the company's literature; company salesmen mingle sociably with the medics at luncheon; a company M.D. at the speaker's table is introduced; both the printed program and the chairman briefly mention the company's sponsorship. A special program for the doctors' wives is provided — a fashion show, tea, a card party, a hair-styling demonstration. There are souvenir mementos, pocket combs, playing cards, all with the company's name, of course. And then comes the sales call at the doc's office by the company salesman. At that point, we can be safe in assuming, the sales pressure becomes a little more direct.

Dr. Hildebrand, president of the American Academy of General Practice, addressing the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association in June of this year, indicated that one of the main complaints of the practitioner was that the drug-company salesmen were "not always truthful about their products." As Dr. Hildebrand put it rather delicately: "Business relations and ethics have been under considerable strain as of late and the competitive rush for dollars has caused problems."

The Federal Food and Drug Administration has a label indicating that the drug showed no initial ill effects on laboratory animals or humans. But this does not mean either that the effects claimed for the drug are fully justified or that the remedy has been adequately tested for all possible toxic or side effects under rigidly controlled clinical experiments. Chloromycetin, for instance, was shown to be a valuable broad-spectrum antibiotic, free from any initial toxic effect on laboratory animals or humans. Not until two years after its registration by the Food and Drug Administration and its introduction into clinical practice was it shown to cause serious blood changes (aplastic anemia) to susceptible persons. Initial and usually exaggerated successes are one thing, mass field or clinical tests quite another.

If the testing of the polio vaccine is compared with that of most other new remedies, it becomes clear that the Francis report was not at all "a premature announcement of a medical discovery insufficiently tested," as the General Federation of Womens' Clubs almost said on May 26. Nor is it true that the use of the vaccine was "premature" and that "perhaps we were not justified in 'rushing' it into wide use," as Dr. Price of the AMA inferred June 15 before the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. Basil O'Connor was much closer to the truth when he asserted before the same group that no remedy "in the history of the world had the preparation, testing, and evaluation that the Salk vaccine did."

The Rush Is On

If anyone was "rushing," it was the drug companies, poised like arrows on taut bows waiting for the licensing formality. On April 13, the morning after Mrs. Hobby licensed the vaccine, shipments went by air to Cutter's branch offices in New York, Chicago, Dallas, and Los Angeles. When newspaper reporters attempted to find out how much had been shipped and where, Cutter and the others considered this an unwarranted invasion of company secrets. Commercial shipments of vaccine were not stopped until April 17 or thereabouts, but in these few days more than half the vaccine on hand entered commercial channels and thus was lost to the Polio Foundation's program of free vaccinations for first and second graders.

The vaccine sold commercially was used for inoculations in total disregard of priorities for the age groups most vulnerable to infantile paralysis. Manufacturers and drug merchants slipped the vaccine to their families, friends, and favorite customers, while doctors inoculated their families, friends, and favorite patients. A black market and super-profiteering arose.

Dr. Murray of the AMA urged parents not to rush to the doctor's office ahead of their children and he suggested that public welfare and relief agencies purchase a supply of the vaccine for those unable to pay. All questions of "principle" are forever being reduced by the AMA to high fees coupled with charity work for "those unable to pay," pious invocations and moral exhortations being all that is dispensed gratis.

On April 14 (two days after the licensing of the vaccine!) Eisenhower, away from Washington on one of his "work-and-play" jaunts, instructed Mrs. Hobby to draw up a strictly voluntary plan for distribution of the vaccine. Some Democrats such as Lister Hill of Georgia, chairman of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee, at first agreed with Hobby and Eisenhower that the channeling of the vaccine to children and to the Polio Foundation should be stricly voluntary and not by compulsion. But public indignation became so strong that most Democrats began to call for federal control of distribution. Reuther and Meany joined the chorus, as did 37 out of 39 governors at a conference held in the beginning of May.

But the staunch free-enterprise gang in Washington stood pat on "voluntary" priorities, even while the various medical societies of New York made examples of a few doctors — unfortunate enough to get caught administering the vaccine to adults — by politely reprimanding them. Mrs. Hobby's plan of distribution, presented back to Eisenhower on May 16, reiterated the strictly "voluntary" aspect of vaccine distribution plans.

The billionaires behind Eisenhower's cabinet show no such reluctance nor do they rely on "voluntary" allocations when it comes to shortages of copper, tin, or aluminum. These "strategic" raw materials are stockpiled by the government at the current rate of one billion dollars a year to insure smooth-rolling profits

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for the barons of industry. Obviously, under "free enterprise," vaccine to immunize children against the crippling ravages of polio is not a "strategic" raw material.

Even if it had been adopted, federal control of distribution could not have altered the succession of events that began on April 27 when the Cutter vaccine was banned. The polio vaccine drama had become a heart-rending tragedy, striking deep into the feelings of anxious parents and into the nervous tissue of children and adults, paralyzing, maiming, killing. The world was stunned to discover that instead of providing immunity, the vaccine was spreading the disease.

On May 7, all vaccinations were ordered stopped, but the macabre total of polio infections continued to grow. As of June 17, cases of polio among vaccinated children stood at 146, of which 97 were paralytic cases. The break-down of cases per manufacturer is as follows: Cutter 72, Lilly 42, Parke-Davis 12, Wyeth 12, Pitman-Moore 4. There were also 81 cases among families of vaccinated children and 22 cases among other persons who came in contact with the children.

Exactly how many of these cases are due to defective vaccine and how many to natural infections can never be established. So far, the government has admitted finding live virus only in an unnamed number of batches by Cutter and in two by Wyeth. (In the case of Wyeth, the defective vaccine was caught in time.) In order to be appreciated in its true light, however, the American record must be compared to that of Canada.

The Canadian Experience

Canada vaccinated half a million children, *none* of whom contracted polio after vaccination. Like the field trials of 1954 in the U.S., the Canadian experience with the Salk vaccine proves that a safe and effective vaccine can be produced and used. What the American debacle puts in question is not the safety of the vaccine but whether private enterprise can produce a safe and effective vaccine.

The Canadian government took over both production and distribution of the vaccine, initiating a vaccination program in which the provinces and the central government each paid half the cost. This program was drawn up in October 1954, long before the Francis report was made public. This, too, confirms the view that the sensation created by the Francis report was a publicity build-up and also gives the lie to Mrs. Hobby that "no one could have foreseen the public demand" for the vaccine. The Canadian government did foresee it, started the Cannaught Laboratories of the University of Toronto on production of the vaccine, and contracted for all of its output at cost.

The cost turned out to be $1.50 for three shots, the same three shots for which the Canadian government would have had to pay $4.33 if it bought it wholesale from American companies. We see then that the "margin of profit" obtained by the American drug companies is indeed quite "wide" — $2.83, or cost plus 189%.

The Canadian government kept the profit motive from entering into either the production or distribution of vaccine. Buying it at cost, the government distributes it free to the most vulnerable age groups on a strictly priority basis. The results are spectacular: No black market, no doctor's fee, and no defective vaccine.

In Canada, national control of production and distribution was supplemented by exhaustive double-checking; once by the Cannaught Laboratories and then by the Federal Laboratory of Hygiene in Ottawa. This was in accordance with the practice during the 1954 field trials in the U.S. when each batch was triple-checked; first, by the laboratories of the manufacturing concerns; second, by Dr. Salk's laboratories at the University of Pittsburgh; third, by the Federal Biologics Laboratory.

But then in the U.S. the precedent set in the 1954 field trials was not followed. Senator Morse was almost right in asserting that the U.S. government was more careful in its inspection of meat packing than it was of Salk vaccine production. Before May 7, the Federal Biologics Laboratory was only spot-checking batches of the vaccine. Thus in actuality the vaccine was being checked only once — by the manufacturer. Instead of making three, or at least two checks per batch, the government took the drug-makers at their word that everything was all right.

Each drug concern worked out its own particular manufacturing methods for the vaccine. As a result, no two processes were exactly alike. It was only after all vaccinations had been ordered stopped that government scientists began touring the plants to "study" the various processes. The government did not even know exactly how the vaccine was being made nor did it have a record of how many bad batches the manufacturers had thrown out.

The Democratic charges of bungling actually hide the real issue. It is a question of the holy fear of "creeping socialism" that animates the Eisenhower administration. Government intervention in private business is considered the deadliest of all sins. Dr. Scheele, United States Surgeon-General, for instance, fell all over himself in thanking the drug-makers for permitting government scientists to inspect the sacrosanct privacy of their plants and for being so unselfish as to pool each other's production experience in making the vaccine.

The government sent squads of scientists "to appraise the facilities and procedures" of the drug-makers — not to test the batches, but to survey the productive methods. The release of each lot of vaccine was then highly publicized, with the inference that the reason for clearance was that the batch test reports and the plant appraisal program had established its safety. The inference was wrong. Parts of these batches had already been used to vaccinate hundreds of thousands of children. After an appropriate interval, when no trouble arose, the remainders of the batches were cleared!

The Government Report

On May 21, the inspection of drug concerns by the governmental flying squads was finished. On May 26, their findings and recommendations were reported. To locate the actual government findings, it is necessary to wade through a welter of mumbo-jumbo, through verbal dodges, feints

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and ducks, through pleasant words and mellow phrases, through declarations that the vaccine had always been safe and that it was merely being made safer — safer than safe! — but in the end the actions proposed by the government proved a dead give away. As usual, it was not what was being said but what was being done that was important.

The government's first proposal was reorganization of the manufacturing processes of the various vaccine producers. Cutter in particular would have to start from scratch. Secondly, the Federal Biologics Laboratory was reorganized and enlarged to a staff of 150 (almost five times its previous size). Moreover, a government inspector was to be stationed at each drug house.

These actions speak for themselves. They reveal the real issue; namely, that free enterprise cannot safely produce the polio vaccine — nor any other ticklish material where quality is paramount — without the strictest government intervention and supervision. The National Biologics Act of 1913 as well as the Food and Drug Act of 1937 were enacted precisely because profit-hungry capitalists cannot be trusted not to cut a corner here and there to save a few pennies in production or in transport, spoiling the product in the process.

That is why government inspectors during the war checked every rivet in airplanes, ships and tanks produced for military purposes; that is why there were almost as many government inspectors in the war plants as workers — but that of course was vital "war materiel" not such a trivial thing as polio vaccine for the nation's children.

It is not that the drug-makers are a pack of scoundrels and rascals — we shall accept the assurances of O'Connor and the AMA that they are a bunch of high-minded, honest, American businessmen — the point is that when production takes place for profit then profits are the paramount consideration, not the quality or safety of the product. This was to be proved at once in real life, because all the vaccine-makers objected to the new procedures proposed by the government. On what grounds? That it would cost too much, that production (i.e., profits) would be slowed down. There is some indication that the final procedures adopted were some kind of compromise between the government and the manufacturers, what kind is not clear.

But the lesson to be drawn from the polio vaccine fiasco is clear enough: The Eisenhower "free-enterprise, laissez-faire" policy suffered shipwreck. By its actions, the government admitted that only under the strictest state supervision could "American businessmen" be saved from themselves and their own greed and be made to produce a safe vaccine.

The underlying issue of socialized medicine was raised not by the Democrats but by the Republicans when the Democrats in Congress proposed (not the elimination of the profit motive, or federal control of production and distribution) but merely that 130 million dollars be appropriated to provide free vaccine for all persons under 20. This, to the Republicans, was "creeping socialism"; the Eisenhower plan provides only 35 million dollars for *needy* children. The AMA, needless to say, does not like the Eisenhower proposal either, giving it only lukewarm assent as a sort of lesser evil. To the AMA, the Eisenhower plan too is "creeping socialism," only it creeps a little slower than the Democratic proposal.

The Polio Foundation was able to develop a successful vaccine by the judicious application of a mere 22 million dollars for research and development, demonstrating what can be done with a few million dollars worth of medical research. However, the total annual income of all the foundations in this country is a mere 500 million dollars, only a small fraction (roughly one-fifth) of which is devoted to research.

If we look to the government to finance medical research, then we look in vain. The Hoover Commission reported that the annual federal expenditure for basic medical research in all fields amounts to 18 million dollars; that is, .0024% of the federal budget, or four million dollars less than it took to develop the Salk vaccine! The government spends more than a billion dollars a year on research to produce bigger and better H-bombs. Total military expenditures this year were listed at 32 billion dollars.

The Department of Agriculture is going to spend 10 million dollars more for investigating the prevention of *plant* and *animal* diseases than the U.S. Public Health Service is going to spend for research on cancer, arthritis, nervous and heart diseases all combined. Cows and oranges are more important in this country than people.

Even the stingy Hoover Commission had to admit that the situation smelled to high heaven. Medical schools in the United States are running an annual deficit of 15 million dollars. As a consequence, medical schools have had to restrict research and also the number of students. Thus, there were fewer medical school graduates in 1950 than there were in 1905. In proportion to the population, we have fewer doctors today than 100 years ago — in 1855!

If we turn to the medical profession as such for medical research, we can come only to the sad conclusion that, as presently organized in competitive private practice, it is simply not geared to *prevent* disease. The doctors are in business to cure disease *after* it has taken place. The medical profession, as we noted before, does not even have an efficient set-up for evaluating the new drugs offered them by the drug companies, much less some way of engaging in research either individually or as a group.

The American people are spending close to 10 billion dollars a year for medical services. This amount, at one and the same time, is too much and too little. It is too much because eight million families are in debt for medical care. It is too much because today illness is something that only the rich can afford. Among 90% of the American people, serious illness wipes out all savings, plunging families into economic distress from which it takes years to recover.

At the same time, 10 billion dollars a year for medical care is not enough. The AMA itself estimates that over a quarter of a million people die unnecessarily each year. With the present knowledge and skill of the

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medical profession, they could have been saved — *IF* (and this is the big "if") sufficiently early diagnosis and treatment had been provided. Unfortunately, private competitive medicine and preventive medicine are mutually exclusive. To save 250,000 people a year from dying unnecessarily, it would be necessary to socialize medical practice.

Adlai Stephenson, speaking at the dedication of a new building at Bellevue Hospital in New York City on June 2, advanced the current Democratic Party program for reforming medical practice in this country. This program is quite ambitious; it conceives of nothing less than expanding voluntary, private, pre-payment health insurance. Even Stephenson, however, had to admit in the same breath that the coverage of such insurance plans is very rarely comprehensive and that only a very small percentage of medical costs is ever taken care of in this manner.

Medical insurance plans cover 75 million people today, a tremendous increase over the last few years — Stephenson thus is on safe grounds, advocating something that is taking place anyway. All these medical insurance plans together, however, paid only 8%, or 800 million dollars, of the total of 10 billion dollars spent by the American people for medical care.

Private health insurance plans have been found to cover the higher income groups rather than the lower, whites rather than Negroes, the North rather than the South, and the healthy rather than the sick. The insurance companies are no fools. They know what most doctors seem to have forgotten, that most diseases go hand in hand with poverty. Both the doctors and the insurance companies shy away from the poor. All that the expansion of commercial health insurance plans has done is to put another barrier in the path of reforming medical practice in the United States. The insurance companies fight shoulder to shoulder with the AMA and the drug concerns against the socialization of medicine.

Even from the purely medical point of view, competitive solo practice by individual doctors is as outmoded as medieval handicrafts. We have long passed the time when medical knowledge was so limited that one man could know all there was to know and one man could do all there was to do — when the doctor's black bag held all the instruments and medicines he would likely need. A century ago, in the infancy of medical science,



DR. JONAS E. SALK

the personal element binding the patient to his beloved family doctor was perhaps the most important element in diagnosis and treatment, because so little was known about illness then.

Today the "sacred" personal relation between family doctor and patient (as the AMA is fond of calling it) is as outmoded as the intimate personal relation between the custom tailor and his client.

The family doctor is trained in observation and physical examination with his hands, stethoscope, and such aids, but today accurate diagnosis is made scientifically in a laboratory, from a few drops of blood, by a young man or woman who has never seen the patient. What difference then does it make whether the physician has his patient's confidence, or whether he knows the whole family background and personal history of the patient, if a few injections of some chemical might be the cure? What good is the abdominal examination with the palpation and the percussion and the auscultation, when X-rays, lab tests of stomach contents, electrocardiograms, blood studies, urinalyses will tell the story sooner and more accurately?

Just as surely as hand tailoring and hand shoemaking had to give way to garment shops and shoe factories so the family doctor and the AMA are going to have to make way before the Clinics, the Out-patient Departments, before the teams of medical specialists working as groups supplied with all the latest scientific implements, and practicing preventive medicine.

All the advanced countries of the world, and some not so advanced, have reformed medical practice: Germany, France, England, Canada, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Latin America, and others, all have some form of socialized medicine. The AMA and big business interests in this country have bitterly fought this most elementary concession to the American working man and woman, who can afford family physicians as little as they can afford custom clothes or hand-made limousines.

The AMA has been dominated throughout the years by the older members of the medical profession — men who have achieved professional, financial, and social success and prominence. These doctors are settled in their ways, satisfied with life; outside their narrow and highly technical field, they think little and read less. They have put the American medical profession in the utterly ridiculous and untenable position where its leading organization has opposed any and all improvements of medical care ever suggested, planned, or put into effect. The AMA has fought cooperative clinics, group practice, state health boards, public health services, voluntary or compulsory health insurance.

There is a saying among American doctors that "'you can get away with murder in surgery." This refers both to the fees that surgeons command and to the fate of their patients. The saying applies to the American medical profession and to the system of competitive medicine as a whole. The polio vaccine scandal has proved once more that socialized medicine is one of the most pressing of all social reforms needed in the United States today.

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Early Years Of the American Communist Movement

by James P. Cannon

The Pre-War Left Wing

July 22, 1954

Dear Sir:

RE: Bittleman's *History of the Communist Party of America.* (Reprinted in "Special Committee on Communist Activities (Fish Committee) 1930, House of Representatives Hearings.")

I have studied this document, to which you called my attention, at the Los Angeles Public Library and found it very interesting indeed. It is obviously the synopsis of a series of lectures prepared by Bittleman for some classes either in New York or Chicago. I judge from internal evidence that it was written in the latter part of 1923 or early in 1924.

This "History" shows Bittleman at his best as a student and critic, and it explains why, at that time, he was appreciated by those of us who came to the party from syndicalism. Bittleman, as a student, knew a great deal more about the party-political side of the movement, its tradition and the theoretical differences within it, than we did.

* * *

The old pre-war division of the left-wing movement into a narrowly "political" party wing and an "anti-political" syndicalist wing was a very bad thing all the way around. I have never seen this side of left-wing history adequately treated anywhere. Bittleman's exposition, despite its telescoped conciseness, is probably the best you will find.

I think there is no doubt that in the period before the Russian Revolution, the syndicalist wing of the American movement was the more revolutionary, had the best and most self-sacrificing militants and was most concerned with mass work and real action in the class struggle. But the syndicalist reaction against the futility of parliamentary socialism was a bad over-correction, which produced its own evil. By rejecting "politics" altogether, and the idea of a political party along with it, the syndicalists prepared the destruction of their own movement. The syndicalists made a cult of action, had little or no theoretical schooling or tradition and were rather disdainful of "theory" in general.

The difference between the two wings, as I recall it from that time, was often crudely formulated as "action versus theory." Being young then, and very fond of action, I was an ardent disciple of the Vincent St. John school of "direct action" — and to hell with the "philosophers" and "theorizers." I still believe in action, but the sad fate of the IWW in later years ought to convince anybody that action without the necessary theoretical direction is not enough to build an enduring revolutionary movement.

* * *

Bittleman's "History" is an instructive, succinct explanation of the defects of the pre-war left-wing movement in the SP, and a good factual account of its progressive evolution under the influence of the First World War and the Russian Revolution. His description and criticism of the left-wing conception of the party as "an auxiliary to the revolutionary union and a propaganda instrument of socialism" (Part IV, Section C) is quite pertinent. He might have added that the right-wing socialists had the same basic theory with a different twist. They simply interpreted the restricted role of the SP to mean in practice that it should not interfere with the affairs of the labor fakers *within the unions,* criticizing them only for their politics at election time.

* * *

Especially interesting is Bittleman's report about the role of Trotsky — during his sojourn in New York in 1917 — in making *Novy Mir,* the Russian socialist daily, "a new ideological center of the left wing"; and his activity in promoting the publication of *The Class Struggle* as the first ideological spokesman "for the English speaking elements" of the left wing. This corroborates Trotsky's own references to his work in America in his autobiography, *My Life.* Trotsky had a lot to do with the development of the communist movement in America from its beginning out of the left wing of the SP in 1917, through its big crisis over legalization in 1922, through the later period which culminated in our expulsion in 1928, and in the activity of our party ever since. Bittleman's truthful reference to the role of Trotsky in re-orienting the left wing in 1917, even *before* the Bolshevik Revolution shows me conclusively that his document was not written later than early 1924. After Trotsky was put in the minority in the first stages of the fight in the

A student who is doing research work on the history of early American communism asked James P. Cannon, as well as other participants, a number of questions about the events and prominent figures of the pioneer movement. Cannon's answers, which began in the summer 1954 issue of **Fourth International,** are continued here.

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Russian party, Bittleman, who read the Russian press and took his lead from it automatically, could never have mentioned Trotsky favorably under any circumstances.

* * *

Bittleman's one-paragraph description of the "Michigan group" (later the Proletarian Party) is correct, to the point and complete. (Section XII.) One paragraph in the history of American communism is just about what those pompous wiseacres, who, as Bittleman says, "completely missed the everyday fighting nature of Leninism and communism," are worth.

* * *

Bittleman's account of the National Conference of the Left Wing in 1919 (Section XII) is well worth studying as the report of a strictly New York "political," alongside my own impressions as a provincial stranger in New York for the first time. Especially interesting is this quotation: "There was a third group at the conference, most of them English-speaking delegates from the western states, that favored going to the Socialist Party convention because they were totally unprepared for a break with the social reformists."

As I previously wrote you, we non-New Yorkers knew that the SP was not ready for a split in 1919. But Bittleman's statement is the first place I have seen it clearly written that the New Yorkers really understood the attitude of the "English-speaking delegates from the western states" — the "western states" being the whole country west of Manhattan Island. I may be a little out of focus, in view of everything that happened since June, 1919, but I still get burned up when I think about the ignorant arrogance of the New Yorkers who dragged the left wing into that premature and costly split.

* * *

Bittleman's account of the caucus of the Russian Federation at the first convention of the CP, and of how this caucus dominated the convention (Section XII, Subsection B), is the only inside report of this grisly business that I have ever seen. And despite its brevity, I believe it is completely accurate. Bittleman, himself a Russian, was obviously a member of the Hourwich (Russian) caucus and speaks with authority about its proceedings.

Bittleman's revelation is truly a priceless historical document. Just consider his report of the way the Russian bosses toyed with and chose between those leaders of the "English speaking group" who broke the solidarity of the native movement to play the Russian game:

"Leadership of federation caucus knew that it must have the services and support of an English speaking group in order to form and lead the party. Two English speaking groups to choose from. The Michigan group or the group of the Revolutionary Age. Each of the two groups presents its program to the federation caucus."

And this: "After long struggle, federation caucus adopts program of the group of Revolutionary Age."

And finally the conclusion of Bittleman's summary: "First meeting of central executive committee shows rift between federation group and English speaking group."

Just to be reminded today by Bittleman's document of how this wrecking crew played with the native left-wing movement, at that critical turning point in its development, and the heavy costs of their mad adventure, makes me almost mad enough to want to go back and fight that battle all over again.

* * *

Bittleman's section on the "Role of Foster Group in the Labor Movement of the U.S." (Section XII, Subsection B), is grossly inflated and exaggerated. It shows Bittleman in his more accustomed role as factionalist, making a "case" for his own faction — the new Foster-Cannon-Bittleman combination — and forcing or inventing evidence to make it look good.

The facts are that the Foster group did not amount to a tinker's dam as a revolutionary factor in the AFL. They actually followed a policy of ingratiating adaptation to the Gompers bureaucracy, not of principled struggle against it. It is quite true that Foster himself, with a few assistants, did a truly great work of *organization* in the stock yards and later in the steel strike of 1919. But that was done by and with the consent of the Gompers bureaucracy, and at the cost of renouncing all principled criticism, including the principle of principles, the First World War.

(See the testimony of Gompers, Fitzpatrick and Foster himself in the U.S. Senate Committee report entitled: "Investigation of Strike in Steel Industries, (1919), Hearings Before the Committee on Education and Labor, United States Senate — Sixty-sixth Congress, first session" — quoted in *The Militant*, August 15, 1929.) [Reprinted on page 129 of this issue of *Fourth International*. — Ed.]

I do not think it is historically correct to speak of the Foster group in the AFL as a serious current in the revolutionary left wing which was later to become the CP. It was pretty strictly a progressive trade-union group, and I never knew a half dozen of them who ever became communists.

Yours truly,
James P. Cannon

Foster and Browder

August 4, 1954

Dear Sir:

My statement about the limited number of Foster's AFL group who became communists corresponds to the facts, and even probably gives this group a little the best of it. Only two of them, besides Foster — Joe Manley and Jack Johnstone — ever played a noticeable role in the party. I knew Jay Fox by reputation as an anarchist editor of pre-World War I days, but never encountered him anywhere in the CP. That meant pretty nearly for sure that he wasn't there, because I knew everybody who was in any way active or prominent from one end of the country to the other. The same applies to David Coutts whom Foster mentions (in his *History of the Communist Party of the United States.*)

It is quite possible that these people and a few, but not "many," others of the Foster AFL group, formally joined the party and then dropped out

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without attracting anyone's attention. Sam Hammersmark played a minor role in the Chicago local organization during the time I was there in 1923-1927. But like most of those whose ideas and methods of work had been shaped in the narrow school of trade unionism, he was lost in the complexities of party politics.

Foster himself, in a big way, and Johnstone and Manley to a far lesser extent, made *personal* contributions to the CP. But it would be historically false to represent the Foster AFL *group* as a contributing current in the new movement. Even Browder, who had been a pre-war Fosterite syndicalist, did not come to the CP by way of Foster. He jumped over the head of the Foster group — if it is proper even to speak of such a formation as a definite ideological tendency — and came in as an individual three years ahead of Foster. It was Browder who was commissioned by the party to invite Foster to attend the Congress of the Profintern in 1921 and thus started him on the road to the party.

By one of those historical quirks, for which I never saw any reason to claim credit, I was directly responsible for Browder's coming into the left wing of the SP in the first place in 1918; for his introduction to the national leadership and his coming to New York in 1921; and for his delegation to the Profintern in the same year. It was in Moscow at the Profintern Congress that Browder got together with Foster again and then became his first assistant, and a very efficient one, in the office of the TUEL.

Browder's background and my own were almost identical, as were the successive stages of our political evolution. We were both about the same age, both originated in Kansas, were both socialists from early youth, and both made the switch from the SP to syndicalism along about the same time. Thereafter, for a number of years our paths diverged a bit. Browder became a convert to the Fosterite version of syndicalism and I remained an IWW. However, partings of the ways organizationally never brought such a sharp break in cooperation and in personal relations as has been the case in later years after the war and the Russian Revolution.

In those days people in the various groups and tendencies used to maintain personal contact and cooperate with each other in causes of mutual concern, particularly in labor defense matters. Browder and I became well acquainted and worked together, along with radicals of other stripes in Kansas City, in defense committees for Tom Mooney, in the Schmidt-Kaplan case which grew out of the MacNamara affair, and in similar activities of a "united front" character before we ever heard of that term.

We were drawn together more closely by America's entry into the First World War and our common opposition to it. Browder and his brothers were influenced by the anarchist propaganda of Berkman and Goldman and attempted to organize an open fight against conscription, refusing on principle to register for the draft. I took a somewhat different tactical line — favored by most of the IWW's and left socialists — of registering for the draft as a "conscientious objector."

Shortly before his first imprisonment for a year in 1917, for refusing to register for the draft, Browder had made a trip to New York. There he contacted the people connected with the Cooperative League of America and began to lean very strongly in the direction of work in the cooperative movement, both as an occupation and as a means of political expression. While he was in jail I was completely revising my syndicalist views under the influence of the Russian Revolution and the popularization of its leading ideas in *The Liberator* and *The Revolutionary Age*.

To put my newly acquired political conceptions into practice I decided to rejoin the Socialist Party and connect myself with the national left wing, then being promoted by the *Revolutionary Age*. I got together with a number of other militants in Kansas City, who were favorable to the idea of a new political alignment, and we decided to start a weekly paper in Kansas City to express our views. At an early stage in the promotion of this project Browder and his brothers were released from jail and I immediately took up the new program with them.

I am quite sure that such a drastic reorientation had not occurred to Browder before this meeting. But he, like myself, was a pronounced anti-capitalist revolutionist to start with, and I found him receptive and sympathetic to the new idea. We soon came to agreement and then went to work in earnest to launch our paper, the *Workers World*. We joined the Socialist Party Local at the same time, along with a number of other live-wire militants in Kansas City — former IWW's, AFL syndicalists, socialists, and quite a few independent radicals who had previously dropped out of the SP, finding it an inadequate expression of their radical views.

Browder was the first editor of the paper, but a short time later he had to go to Leavenworth to begin serving a second two-year term for conspiracy to obstruct the draft, and I took over the editorship. We ran the paper for about six months, until I was arrested in December, 1919, and indicted under the war-time Lever Act, because of my agitation in the Kansas coal fields against the anti-strike injunction of the federal government.

When Browder finished his second prison term, along about January, 1921, I was already in New York, a member of the Central Committee and in the thick of party politics. Browder was unknown to the other party leaders, but on my motion was brought to New York and placed in charge of organizing the delegation to the Profintern Congress. It was in that function that he resumed his contact with Foster and arranged for Foster also to attend.

This is a rather long and involved explanation of the original point — that the Foster AFL group was not the medium through which Browder came into the CP, although he had been previously connected with Foster.

* * *

In his *History of the Communist Party of the United States* Foster makes an elaborate attempt to backwrite history by blowing up the minuscule Foster group of practical trade unionists in the AFL, and represent-

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ing it as a serious ideological tendency and a contributing current to the movement of American communism. Here Foster really outwits himself. He actually does himself an injustice, although I would not accuse him of such an intention. If no more were involved than that, one could well afford to let the matter rest. But since history is no good, and is even worse than useless, if it is not true, I feel obliged to defend him against himself in order to set the record straight.

Foster's astounding success in organizing the packinghouse workers (1917-1918) in an AFL set-up almost designed and guaranteed to make such a thing impossible, and his repeat performance in the steel strike (1919) under still more difficult conditions,

Foster in World War I

(The material printed below, indicating the attitude of William Z. Foster toward American imperialism in World War I, consists of extracts from the public stenographic record of the Senate investigation of the steel strike in 1919. The published volume is entitled: "Investigation of Strike in Steel Industries. Hearings before the Committee on Education and Labor, United States Senate — Sixty-sixth Congress, first session. Pursuant to S. Res. 202 on the Resolution of the Senate to investigate the Strike in the Steel Industries." Foster today is National Chairman of the American Communist Party. — Ed.)

FOSTER AND GOMPERS

FITZPATRICK: He (Foster) is not preaching and is absolutely confining himself to the activities and scope of the American Federation of Labor, and has done so for the years that I have known him. This is not a new thing for me. I have known Foster for probably six or seven years. (Page 75.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you ever discussed this book **(Syndicalism)** with him at all?

FITZPATRICK: Oh, he joked about the views he had in his younger days, when he associated with men who were actuated with radical thoughts, and he was imbued by it, but when he got both his feet on the ground and knew how to weigh matters with better discretion and more conscience, he had forgot all of those things that he learned when he was a boy, and is now doing a man's thinking in the situation. (Page 76.)

GOMPERS: About a year after that meeting at Zurich — no, about two years after the Zurich meeting, (Where Foster had appeared as an International delegate of the I.W.W. — Ed.) and about a year after that pamphlet **(Syndicalism)** had been printed, I was at a meeting of the Chicago Federation of Labor, conducted under the presidency of Mr. John Fitzpatrick. I was called upon to make and did make an address. One of the delegates arose after I had concluded and expressed himself that it would be wise for the men in the labor movement of Chicago and of the entire country to follow the thought and philosophy and so forth which President Gompers had enunciated in his address. I did not know who was the delegate. He was a new personality to me. I might say that I was rather flattered and pleased at the fact that there was general comment of approval of not only my utterances but of the delegate who had first spoken after I had concluded.

Much to my amazement, after the meeting was over I was informed that the delegate was W. Z. Foster, the man who had appeared in Zurich and the man who had written that pamphlet. I think I addressed a letter to him expressing my appreciation of his change of attitude, his change of mind, and pointing out to him that pursuing a constructive policy he could be of real service to the cause of labor. He was a man of ability, a man of good presence, gentle in expression, a commander of good English, and I encouraged him. I was willing to help build a golden bridge for mine enemy to pass over. I was willing to welcome an erring brother into the ranks of constructive labor. (Pages 111-112.)

FOSTER: I am one who changes his mind once in a while. I might say that other people do. I shook hands with Gustave Herve in La Sante Prison. At that time he was in there for anti-militarism and for preaching sabotage, and today I think Gustave Herve (Herve had turned Socialist Patriot. — Ed.) is one of the biggest men in France. (Page 396.)

THE CHAIRMAN (to Foster): But at that time, when you were advocating the doctrines of the I.W.W. through the country and abroad, you were running counter to the policies of the American Federation of Labor?

FOSTER: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gompers, however, has not changed his views concerning the I.W.W., but your views have changed?

FOSTER: I don't think Mr. Gompers views have changed — only to become more pronounced possibly.

CHAIRMAN: And you say now to the Committee that your views have so changed that you are in harmony with the views of Mr. Gompers?

FOSTER: Yes, sir, I don't know that it is 100 percent, but in the main they are. (Page 423.)

FOSTER AND THE WAR

SENATOR WALSH: What was his attitude toward this country during the war, if you know?

MR. FITZPATRICK: Absolutely loyal, and he did everything in his power to assist in every way. I worked with him. I worked with him during the whole of the war, and I know the service that he rendered to the country. I think that he rendered as great a service, not only to the United States Government, but to the Allies, as any man. (Page 75-76.)

SENATOR WALSH (to Foster): What was your attitude toward this country during the war?

FOSTER: My attitude toward the war was that it must be won at all costs.

SENATOR WALSH: Some reference was made by Mr. Fitzpatrick about your purchasing bonds or your subscribing to some campaign fund. Do you mind telling the committee what you did personally in that direction?

FOSTER: I bought my share, what I figured I was able to afford, and in our union we did our best to help make the loans a success.

WALSH: Did you make speeches?

FOSTER: Yes, sir.

WALSH: How many?

FOSTER: Oh, dozens of them.

WALSH: I would like to have you, for the sake of the record, tell us how many speeches you made, what time you devoted, and what money you expended for bonds, for the Red Cross or for any other purposes.

FOSTER: Well, I think I bought either $450 or $500 worth of bonds during the war. I cannot say exactly.

WALSH: You made speeches for the sale of bonds?

FOSTER: We carried on a regular campaign in our organization in the stockyards.

WALSH: And your attitude was the same as the attitude of all the other members of your organization?

FOSTER: Absolutely. (Pages 398-399.)

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were extraordinary *personal* accomplishments.

In the late Thirties the unionization of the steel industry was a push-over; the official leaders simply rode the tide of a universal labor upsurge generated by the long depression, and Lewis got U.S. Steel's signature to a contract without a strike. But in the year 1919 — before the depression and before the rise of the CIO — no one but Foster, with his executive and organizing skill, his craftiness, his patience and his driving energy, could have organized the steelworkers on such a scale and led them in a great strike, through the road-blocks and booby-traps of craft unionism, under the official sponsorship of the Gompers AFL.

Foster's steel campaign was unique. It was all the more remarkable precisely because he did it all by himself against all kinds of official sabotage, and with the assistance of only a small handful of people of secondary talents who were personally attached to him and worked under his direction. His ex post facto attempt to represent himself in this grandiose action as the instrument of an ideological tendency tributary to the communist movement, not only falsifies the historical facts, but by indirection, detracts from the magnitude of his personal achievement.

The Foster group in the AFL began with a revolutionary program outlined in a pamphlet based on French syndicalism (1913). But this first programmatic declaration was soon withdrawn, re-written and watered down to nothing but a tongue-in-cheek affirmation that mere trade-union organization would automatically solve all problems of worker's emancipation. Thereafter, Fosterism was simply a method of working in the AFL by adaptation to the official leadership.

By adaptation individuals can get a chance to work. Foster demonstrated that to the hilt in practice. But adaptation is not a movement and cannot create a movement, for the question of who is serving whom always arises. Gompers, who knew Foster's past and was no fool, thought that Foster's work and adaptation could serve Gompers' aims. He permitted Foster to work under AFL auspices for that reason, as he testified with brutal frankness before the Senate Committee Hearings on the Steel Trust Strike. Fitzpatrick was evidently of the same opinion. Both he and Gompers proved to be correct. Foster's later adaptation to the Communist Party worked out the same way.

Foster's work and achievements in the early days of the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL) under the Communist Party, were no less remarkable than his stockyard and steel campaigns. His rapid-fire organization of a network of effective left-progressive groups in a dozen or more different unions demonstrated most convincingly that his previous successes in the AFL were no fluke. It proved, for the second time, under different auspices, that given the forces and the machinery to work with, Foster was a trade-union organizer without a peer. In each case, however, his work was permitted and controlled by other forces which Foster had to serve. For that reason there never was and never could be such a thing as a Foster "movement" or, strictly speaking, even a Foster group. Foster has been condemned throughout his career, ever since he left the IWW, to serve the aims of others whom he sought to outwit by adaptation.

Foster was the leader of his own faction in the CP only within this framework. In the very first show-down in the original Foster group in 1925, when political issues of party interest were posed point-blank, he found himself in the minority and discovered that the policy of the Foster group was not his to determine at will.

In the second show-down of the group, by then reduced to a smaller composition of ostensibly pure Fosterites — in 1928, at the Sixth Congress caucus meeting of the opposition delegates in Moscow — the leader found himself completely isolated. Bittleman, seconded by Browder and Johnstone, attacked him most brutally and disdainfully on that occasion and took complete charge of the "Foster group." He was left without a single friend or supported in the caucus. (The rest of us, members of the opposition bloc but not Fosterites, simply stood aside and let the Fosterites fight it out.)

All Foster had left at the time of the Sixth Congress in 1928, was his name and the manifest intention of Stalin to use it for his own purposes. His name represented not a political tendency, however small, which had to be recognized. It was the symbol, rather, of his personal achievements as an organizer, of his public renown which was not yet seriously tarnished by his internal party defeats.

But, ironically, even his name and fame, which had been well earned by real performance, and which gave him a scrap of a special position in the party, was an obstacle to the realization of his ambition to be the official leader of the party, be it only by the grace of Stalin. For his own purposes Stalin needed in the U.S., as elsewhere, leaders without independent strength, leaders made by him and completely dependent on his favor. Browder filled the bill. He was the perfect example of the candidate distinguished not by the defect of his qualities, but by the quality of his defects.

* * *

Browder was an intelligent, industrious and dependable chief clerk by nature, but in no case an executive leader of independent capacity and resource. He was capable of filling the office of formal leader of the party by the permission of Stalin for 15 years without having, in his wildest imagination, previously entertained such an ambition and without having the slightest idea of how it came about or how his regime was brought to an end so precipitately and so easily. I don't doubt that Browder began to think he was ten feet tall in the long period where he walked on stilts above the party multitude. But I doubt very much whether he could explain to himself or others how he got up so high in the first place, or why the stilts so suddenly gave way under him.

* * *

The original relationship between Foster and Browder, and the proper one, considering the personal qualities of each, had been the relation between executive and first assistant. The appointment of Browder to the first

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position in the party, with Foster subordinated to the role of honorary public figure without authority, really rubbed Foster's nose in the dirt. It was not pleasant to see how he accepted the gross humiliation and pretended to submit to it.

When Browder was finally deposed 15 years later, Foster was permitted to officiate at the ceremonies. It was pitiful to see how he gratified his long-standing grudge and gloated over the victim in celebration of his hollow victory. In reality the great organizer, who accepted the office of formal leadership without the power, was celebrating his own utter defeat as an independent political figure.

Yours truly,
James P. Cannon

Origins of the Foster-Cannon Group

March 17, 1955

Dear Sir:

The Foster-Cannon group, as a definite faction in the party, originated as a direct result of the labor party convention in Chicago, on July 3, 1923, which culminated in the split with the Fitzpatrick group and the formation of the still-born "Federated Farmer Labor Party" under CP leadership and control. It would be a big mistake, however, to isolate this single "political issue" from its context and to judge the ensuing struggle purely in terms of differences on the labor party question. The sources of conflict were far deeper and more complicated than that. The launching of the ill-fated "Federated Farmer-Labor Party" simply triggered the explosion which had been building up out of the general situation in the party.

Behind the unfortunate action at Chicago stood Pepper, and "Pepperism" was the real issue in the first stages of the long fight. The author of the policy which produced the Chicago fiasco was Pepper, and the fire of the new opposition was at first directed against his adventuristic policy, and his dictatorial domination of the party. The new opposition came into conflict with Ruthenberg only after he definitely aligned himself with Pepper, and after efforts, repeatedly made by Foster, to come to an agreement with him had failed. There were profound reasons for Ruthenberg's alignment, as well as for ours, and these reasons transcended the political dispute of the moment.

The labor party question — more specifically, the question of the "Federated Farmer-Labor Party" — was the immediate and central question of policy at issue in the first stages of the faction fight. But at the bottom of the conflict there were other causes. Each of the contending factions had deep roots in different past experiences and traditions, and the alignments on each side in the "power struggle" took place very quickly, and all the more "naturally," because of that.

It should be recalled that prior to the Russian Revolution the revolutionary movement in this country, as in some other countries, notably France, had been split into a party-political wing, conceiving "political action" in the narrow sense of electoral and parliamentary action, and a syndicalist wing, rejecting "politics" altogether. For the greater part, the two tendencies had been separated from each other organizationally. Therewith there had been a rather sharp division in their activities and fields of work. The "politicals" devoted themselves primarily to socialist propaganda and election campaigns, while the syndicalists concentrated on "direct action" in the economic struggle — union organization campaigns and strikes.

* * *

The attempt of the Comintern to fuse these two tendencies together in the new communist parties had more success in the United States than elsewhere. Prominent activists from both sides of the old movement came into the CP, and they brought a part of their old baggage with them. The "politicals" had come to recognize the importance of trade union work, but — at that time — it was still a strange field for them; they had no real understanding of it, no "feel" for it. The ex-syndicalists and practicing trade unionists had come to recognize the necessity of a party and the importance of "political action," but — again at that time — their first interest was trade union work.

There were exceptions, of course, but by and large, the old predilections determined the tendency of the party activists to align themselves with one faction or another; they felt more at home with people of their own kind. These differences of background and temperament, which were also reflected in different social habits and associations and different ways of working, made for an uneasiness in personal relations among the leaders. This was evident even in the period prior to the blow-up in July 1923, when they were collaborating most effectively on the main projects of the time — to legalize the party and to expand its public activities, and to swing the party support behind the Trade Union Educational League.

We were all beginning-learners in the field of Marxist theory and politics; and, in the best case, further study, time and experience in working together would have been required to fuse the two tendencies together into a harmonious working combination. I believe there was a general will to effect such a fusion, and things might have worked out this way in a normal course of development. But the high-powered intervention of Pepper, with policies, methods and designs of his own, cut the process short, disrupted the collaboration and deepened the division.

* * *

I was quite well aware of Pepper's general operations and machinations in the party — far more perceptively, I venture to say, than Foster and the other Chicagoans — and I didn't like the way things were going. I thought at first that my objections were restricted to internal party affairs. It took the shock of the July 3 Convention to convince me that Pepper's politics was all of one piece; that the fantastic unrealism of his internal party policy had its counterpart in external adventurism.

For that reason, perhaps, when the conflict over the catastrophic policy at the July 3 Convention broke into the open, I was not content to rest on

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that single issue. From the beginning of the fight I conceived of it as a general struggle to overthrow the Pepper regime. It didn't take Foster long to come to the same conclusion, and that's the way the issue was posed. The alignments, on both sides, in the ensuing struggle took place on that basis. Pepper's labor party policy was only one item in the catalogue.

* * *

Within this context, it would be completely correct to say that the formation of the Foster-Cannon faction took place as a reaction to the July 3 Convention at Chicago. The unavowed faction of Pepper, however, existed long before that. The presentation of the Ruthenberg-Pepper "thesis," attempting to justify the "Federated Farmer-Labor Party," and the vote of Foster, Bittleman and Cannon against it, at the Political Committee meeting of August 24, 1923, could perhaps be taken as the formal starting point of the internal struggle.

Prior to that, and leading up to it, were my conversation with Foster at Duluth, as related in my letter of May 28, 1954, and my articles in the *Worker* in the summer of 1923, which indirectly criticized the official party policy. Other background material, and my account of the struggle up to and at the December 1923 convention of the party, are contained in my letters of May 19, 27 and 28, 1954. I have checked these letters again and find nothing to change. That's the way it was; at least that's the way it looked to me.

* * *

You ask how I look at my own role in the formation of the Foster-Cannon group. I think that is indicated in the account I have written in those letters. I had the highest regard for Foster's ability in general, and for his feel and skill as a mass worker in particular — a most essential quality which the leaders of the other faction seemed to lack — but I never belonged to Foster's staff of personal assistants and was never in any sense a personal follower. Relations between me and Foster, from start to finish, always had the same basis. Cooperation in internal party affairs depended on agreement on policy, arrived at beforehand. That was no trouble in 1923; our thinking ran along the same lines.

Foster was the party's outstanding mass leader and most popular figure, and he carried himself well in that role. But he was not a political infant as he has often been represented; he knew what he was driving at. He symbolized the proletarian-American orientation, which the party needed and wanted, and I thought he was justly entitled to first place as party leader and public spokesman.

He was rather new to the party at that time, however, and was still feeling his way carefully. As one of the original communists, I knew the party better. I had closer connections with many of the decisive cadres and probably had more influence with some of them. Our combination — while it lasted — was an effective division of labor, without rivalry, at least as far as I was concerned. Each made independent contributions to the combination and each carried his own weight.

* * *

Browder's belated claim that it was he, not Foster, who conducted the labor party negotiations with the Fitzpatrick leadership in Chicago could be true only in a technical sense. Behind Browder stood Foster; Browder was the agent and, as always, an intelligent and capable agent, but in no case the "principal." Foster's influence in the Chicago Federation of Labor, and his authority, solidly established by his great work in the campaigns to organize the packing-house workers and steel workers, in which he had secured the effective collaboration of Fitzpatrick and won his confidence, determined and governed Fitzpatrick's relations with the Workers Party forces, from the first liaison to the break at the July 3 Convention.

Further, Browder's report of his activities in the internal party situation of that time may be factually correct, but they certainly did not have the significance which he attributes to them. His attempt to depict himself as playing an independent role in the internal struggle of 1923-1924 strikes me as historical "backwriting" — as an adjustment of the facts of that period to fit the role he later came to play in the party, by grace of Stalin, after Foster had lost his original influence, and after such inconvenient obstacles as Pepper, Ruthenberg, Lovestone and Cannon were out of the way.

If Browder played any independent part whatever in 1923 I didn't know anything about it; and I surely would have known it because I was in the center of things where the decisions were made and was in a position to know how and by whom they were made. There is no doubt that he, like many others, was bitterly dissatisfied with the Pepper policy and its results. This widespread sentiment, which could properly be classified under the head of disgruntlement, provided the material, ready-made, for an effective, and eventually victorious, opposition. But this opposition first had to be organized by people with the necessary influence and authority to carry the party; and they had to know where to begin and whom to begin with.

As I have previously related, the opposition of 1923, as a definite movement in the party aiming at party control, began with the agreement between Foster and me. That was decisive step number one. The next was the agreement with Bittleman. The leading people of the Chicago District — Browder, Johnstone, Swabeck and Krumbein — and the better half of the leadership of the youth organization — Abern, Shachtman and Williamson — along with numerous other influential party militants such as William F. Dunne, were important supporters of the new opposition from the start. But the *initiative* came from the three people mentioned above, and the main influence in the leadership, from the beginning until the break-up of the faction in 1925, was exerted by them. This was so well established, and so widely recognized, that Browder's present report is the first I have heard to give a different interpretation.

* * *

I don't know what went on in Browder's head at the time, or what he imagined he was doing, but I do know that his latter-day recollections of furious activity as an independent

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force have very little relation to reality. Browder's report and interpretation of his conversation and agreement with Ruthenberg in August 1923 impress me as an unwitting revelation of his own naivete. He may very well have had such a conversation with Ruthenberg, but his impression that Ruthenberg agreed to a combination with him, regardless of Pepper and Foster, not to speak of Lovestone and Cannon, was most certainly a misunderstanding on Browder's part.

Ruthenberg knew the relation of forces in the party too well for that. Ruthenberg was pretty cagey, he knew what he wanted, he had a high opinion of himself and was concerned with problems of self, and I don't think he rated Browder very highly as a party leader. Moreover, Ruthenberg had shown no disposition to oppose Pepper's policy. Just the contrary — witness the Ruthenberg-Pepper "thesis," presented at the very time Browder imagined he had secured Ruthenberg's agreement to separate himself from Pepper — *August 24, 1923!*

What probably happened was that Browder talked and Ruthenberg simply listened, and Browder came away with the impression of an "understanding" that did not exist. I do remember Browder telling me, along about that time, that Ruthenberg had expressed antagonism to Lovestone on the ground that he exacerbated the factional situation and poisoned the atmosphere generally. This was quite true about Lovestone, and the objection to his ugly quarrelsomeness would have been in character for Ruthenberg, who was himself invariably polite, courteous and "correct" — I used to think he was too "correct" — in all discussions and relations with colleagues in the Committee. Browder may have taken Ruthenberg's remark about Lovestone for an "understanding" in the internal party situation.

However, as is usually the case, as the internal struggle unfolded, the deep-going political differences cut across and cancelled out minor irritations in both camps. Ruthenberg, as events had shown and were to continue to show, was in essential agreement with Pepper's political line, and it was foolish to think he could be influenced by Browder to determine his course in the party on secondary issues. I don't think Ruthenberg "broke faith" with Browder. More likely, Browder's "understanding" with him was a misunderstanding on Browder's part.

Ruthenberg was a proud man, with a high-and-mighty haughtiness. Unlike Foster, he appeared to stand above the dirty little vices, such as outright lying, double-dealing, betrayal of confidence. He would have considered such things, if he thought about them at all, as not simply wrong but, more important, beneath his dignity.

* * *

Foster's knowledge and feel of the trade union movement surpassed that of all the other party leaders in the early days, but his experience in that field was not all profit. He had learned too much in the school of the labor fakers, who got what they wanted one way or another, without regard to any governing theory or principle, and he mistakenly thought such methods could be efficacious in the communist political movement. Crude American pragmatism, which "gets things done" in simple situations, is a poor tool in the complexities of revolutionary politics.

Foster was somewhat mechanical and eclectic in his thinking, and this frequently led him to summary judgments in complex questions which called for qualified answers. His one-sided, almost fetishistic concentration on "boring from within" the AFL, as the sole means of radicalizing and expanding the labor movement — a concept which had to be thrown overboard in 1928, and which was brutally refuted in life by the rise of the CIO — is an outstanding example of his limitations as a thinker.

But in the frame of comparison with the other leading figures of the pioneer communist movement in this country, which in my opinion is the proper way to judge him historically, Foster was outstanding in many ways. Attempts to represent him as some kind of babe in the woods, led astray by craftier men, which have been recurrently made throughout the history of the party, beginning with his alliance with me in the formation of the Foster-Cannon group, never had any foundation in fact.

Foster was a shrewd and competent man, far more conscious and deliberate in all his actions than he appeared and pretended to be. Everything that Foster did, from first to last, was done deliberately. In fact, he was too shrewd, too deliberate in his decisions, and too free from the restraint of scruple; and by that he wrought his own catastrophe. The actions which, in a tragic progression, made such a disgraceful shambles of his career, derived not from faulty intelligence or weakness of will but from defects of character.

Foster was a slave to ambition, to his career. That was his infirmity. But this judgment, which in my book is definitive, must be qualified by the recognition that he sought to serve his ambition and to advance his career in the labor movement and not elsewhere. Within that field he worshipped the "Bitch-Goddess" of Success as much as any business man, careerist on the make, or politician in the bourgeois world.

Foster was a man of such outstanding talent, energy and driving will that — in the conditions of the country in his time — he could easily have made his way in any number of other occupations. But the labor movement was his own milieu, deliberately chosen in his youth and doggedly maintained to the exclusion of virtually all other interests. Within that limit — that he had no life outside the labor movement — Foster subordinated everything to his mad ambition and his almost pathological love of fame, of his career. To that, with a consistency that was truly appalling, he sacrificed his pride and self-respect, and all considerations of loyalty to persons and to principles and, eventually, to the interests of the movement which he had originally set out to serve.

Shakespeare's Gratiano said they lose the world "that do buy it with much care." Foster's too-great consistency in his single-minded pursuit of fame and career at any price became a self-defeating game. His will-

(Continued on page 143)

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Belinski And Rational Reality

by G. V. Plekhanov

This discussion by G. V. Plekhanov of one of the outstanding Russian intellectuals who came under the influence of Hegel in the 1830's, is presented here in an English translation for the first time. The opening installment of the essay appeared in the spring issue of **Fourth International.**

Chapter V

A negative attitude toward politics, however, was no solution to the problem of why evil so often triumphs over good, force over right, lie over truth. And so long as this problem remained unsolved, the moral gains from "conciliation" were not substantial. Belinski remained, as before, beset by doubts. But he was now confident that Hegel's system would help him get rid of doubt forever. His further acquaintance with this system was aided by the same "dilettante of philosophy" who had expounded Fichte's doctrine to him. How powerfully Hegelianism reacted upon Belinski and exactly which of his wants it filled, is shown by the following lines from his letter to Stankevich:

"I came to Moscow from Georgia, there came B. ('dilettante of philosophy'); we are living together. In the summer he went through Hegel's philosophy of religion and the philosophy of right. A new world opened before us. Force is right; right is force. No, I can't describe my feelings when I heard these words. This was emancipation. I seized the idea of the downfall of empires, the lawfulness of conquerors. I understood that there is no reign of savage material force; that there is no sway of bayonet and the sword; there is no club-law, no arbitrariness, no accident. And my guardianship over mankind terminated, and the meaning of my native land rose before me in a new cast. . . Previously, K-v [Katkov], too, had passed on to me and I accepted, as best I could, a few results of [Hegel's] esthetics. Good God! What a new, luminous, boundless universe! . . . The word, 'reality' has become for me the synonym for the word, 'God.' And you needlessly advise me to look more often up into the blue sky, into the stamp of infinity, so as not to stumble into scullery reality. My friend, blessed is he who sees infinity symbolized in the stamp of sky, but, after all, the sky is frequently cast over by greyish clouds, therefore more blessed is he who is able to illuminate a scullery, too, with the idea of the infinite."

There now followed a genuine conciliation by Belinski with reality. A man who tries to illuminate even a kitchen with the thought of infinity, will not bother, naturally, to reconstruct anything in the life about him. He will enjoy the consciousness and contemplation of life's rationality and the more he venerates reason, all the more is he bound to be irritated by any criticism of reality. Understandably, Belinski's passionate nature was bound to lead him far in this direction. It is hard even to believe today that he used to enjoy the contemplation of reality about him in the same way an artist enjoys looking at a great work of art.

"Such is my nature," he said, "under stress, sorrowfully and with difficulty, my spirit accepts both love and hate, and knowledge, and every idea and feeling, but once having accepted, it becomes saturated with them down to its most secret, innermost bends and windings. Thus in my spirit's forge has worked out independently the meaning of the great word, **reality**. . . I look on reality so scorned by me before, and tremble with a mysterious joy, comprehending its rationality, seeing that nothing can be cast out of it, nothing sullied or rejected. . . 'Reality!' I repeat as I arise or go to sleep, night and day; in this new mutation which becomes more and more noticeable with every passing day, reality envelops me and I feel it everywhere and in everything, even in myself."

This "mysterious" joy face to face with rational reality resembles the joy some of us experience when communing with nature, those who are able simultaneously to enjoy nature's beauty and the consciousness of being indivisible from nature. A man who loves nature with such a love, simultaneously philosophic and poetic, will observe all of life's manifestations with equal satisfaction. Just so Belinski now followed everything about him with the same loving interest.

"Yes, reality ushers one into reality," he exclaims. "Viewing everyone not from a preconceived theory, but in accordance with the facts each individual himself supplies, I am beginning to gain the ability to enter into real relations with him, and for this reason everybody is satisfied with me, and I am satisfied with everybody. I am beginning to find interests in common in discussions with people with whom I never dreamed I had anything in common."

Accepting a post in a surveyors' institute, he was inordinately satisfied by his activities as teacher, not high-sounding but useful.

"With insatiable curiosity I look into the means, so crude, so tedious and prosaic on the surface, by which this lack-lustre and imperceptible usefulness is created, imperceptible unless one follows its development in time, invisible, from a superficial standpoint, but great and bountiful in its consequences for society. So long as my strength endures I am determined at all cost to bring my offering to the altar of social welfare."

Not a trace is left of "abstract heroism." Worn out by previous mental effort, Belinski seems to have lost even theoretical interest in great social questions. He is ready to be content with an instinctive contemplation of how rational is life about him.

"Knowledge of reality consists," he said, "of a kind of instinct, or tact by reason of which each step a man takes is a sure step, each proposition rings true, all relations with people irreproachable, unstrained. Naturally, he who through his thought, adds the conscious to this penetrative mental faculty, is doubly able to possess reality; but the main thing is to know reality, no matter how."

In the previous period of his development Belinski tried, as we have seen, to solve the contradiction that tormented him, the contradiction between abstract ideal and concrete reality, by equating to zero one side of this antinomy. He proclaimed as a

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phantom all reality that contradicted the *ideal*. Now he does just the opposite. Now he equates to zero the opposite side of the antinomy, that is, he proclaims as a *phantom*, as an illusion, every ideal that contradicts *reality*. In point of theory this new solution is, naturally, just as wrong as the first one. In the second instance, as in the first, there is no sufficient ground for reducing either side of the antinomy to zero. Nonetheless, the new phase of Belinski's philosophic development represents a giant step forward from the prior phase.

To clarify fully the meaning of this new phase it is necessary to pause a while on his article on the battle of Borodino.

Of chief interest in this article is Belinski's attack on the rationalistic interpretation of social life and its elucidation of relations between individuals and society as a whole. The rationalistic view with which Belinski lived in obvious harmony during the Fichtean period, now seems to him the acme of absurdity, fit only for French babblers and liberal abbots.

"From the days of old, concerning which we know only from history down to the present, there has not been and there is not a single people which was consolidated and shaped through a mutual, conscious compact of a certain number of individuals, desirous of becoming a component part of this people; nor did it take place in accordance with anyone's idea, not even the idea of a genius. Let us take, say, the origin of monarchical power. A liberal babbler would say that it arose as a product of the depravity of the people who, upon becoming convinced of their incapacity for self-rule, found themselves in bitter need of submitting to the will of a single individual, chosen by them, and invested by them with unlimited power. For superficial attitudes and abstract minds in whose eyes ideas and events do not contain within themselves their own causality and their own necessity, but sprout like mushrooms after a rain, not only without soil and roots but suspended in mid-air — for such minds there is nothing simpler or more satisfactory than such an explanation; but to those to whom the profundity and inner essence of things lies open by virtue of the spiritual clarity of their vision there cannot be anything more foolish, laughable or senseless. Everything that lacks cause within its own self and appears only thanks to some 'other,' something 'outer' and not 'inner' to it, something alien to it, all such things are bereft of rationality and therefore also of sanctity. Basic state decrees are sanctified because they are the basic ideas not merely of a certain people, but of every people; and also because, by passing over into phenomenal by becoming facts, they obtained their dialectic development through the historical movement. So that the very changes they have undergone constitute progress in their own idea. And for this reason the basic decrees are not laws promulgated by man but appear, so to speak, before their time and are simply expressed and cognized by man."

Evident here is a certain indexterity in the use of philosophic terms. For example, from the foregoing lines it would seem that, in Belinski's opinion, the *inner essence of things* may lie open to a philosopher. But what is this *inner* essence? As we see it, Goethe was absolutely correct when he said:

Nichts ist innen, nichts ist aussen
Was ist drinnen, das ist draussen.

(There is nothing inner, nothing outer. Whatever is from within, is also from without.)

But let us not dwell on details. Let us instead recall the general character of Belinski's views at the time.

From his new standpoint, what is the role of an individual in the dialectic process of social development?

"With regard to individuality, a human being is particular and accidental, but with regard to the spirit, to which this individual gives expression, he is general and necessary," says Belinski. "Hence flows the duality of his position and of his strivings; the duality of the struggle between the I and whatever lies beyond the I, and constitutes the **not-I**. . . To be real and not illusory, a human being must be a particular expression of the general, or a finite manifestation of the infinite. He must therefore renounce his subjective individuality, recognizing it as a lie and a phantom; he must submit to the world, to the general, recognizing it as truth and reality. But since the world, or the general, is located not within him but in the objective world outside, he must grow akin to it, merge with it, in order anew to become a subjective individuality but, this time, already real, already expressing not some accidental particular, but the general, the universal in a word, become spirit in the flesh."

To avoid remaining just an illusion, a human being must strive to become a particular expression of the general. The most progressive world outlook is compatible with this view of individuality. When Socrates attacked the outmoded conceptions of the Athenians, he was serving nothing else but "the general, the universal"; his philosophic doctrine was ideally the expression of a new step forward by the Athenians in their historical development. That's why Socrates was a *hero* as Hegel called him. In this way, discord between an individual and the reality about him is wholly valid whenever the individual, as a *particular expression of the general*, prepares by his negation the historical soil for the new reality, the reality of tomorrow.

But that is not how Belinski reasons. He preaches "submission" to the existing order of things. In the article on Borodino and especially in the article on Menzel, Belinski falls with indignation upon the "little, great men," for whom history is an incoherent fairy tale, full of accidental and contradictory collisions of circumstances. According to Belinski, such an interpretation of history is the sorry product of the human understanding. Human understanding invariably grasps only one side of an object, whereas reason surveys the object from all sides, even if these sides seemingly contradict one another. And on this account, reason does not create reality but cognizes it, taking in advance as its dictum that "whatever is, is necessary, lawful and rational."

"Reality constitutes the positive in life," says Belinski in another article, "illusion is its negative." If we grant this, then his attacks on the "little, great men" who deny reality become perfectly comprehensible. Personalities who deny reality are sheer phantoms. It is likewise comprehensible why Belinski should fall into an extreme optimism. If every denial of reality is illusory then reality is faultless. It is instructive to follow Belinski's attempts to prove by historical examples that the "destinies of the earthborn" are not left to blind accident.

"Omar burned down the Alexandria library. Cursed be Omar, for he wrecked enlightenment in the ancient world for ages to come! Pause, gentlemen, before you curse Omar! Enlightenment is a wonder-working thing. Were it an ocean and some Omar dried it up, there would still remain beneath the earth an unseen

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and secret spring of living water that would not long tarry before breaking out in clear fountains and become converted into an ocean. . ."

Naturally, this argument is quite strange. From the fact that the "Omars" cannot succeed in drying up all the sources of enlightenment, it by no means follows that their activities are harmless and that we should pause "before cursing them." In his optimism Belinski reaches the extreme of naivete. But we have seen that this optimism stems ineluctably from his new outlook on reality. And this new outlook owed its origin not to the fact that Belinski had understood Hegel poorly, but rather to this, that he had fully assimilated the spirit of Hegelian philosophy, a spirit which found its expression in the introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*.

The views Hegel set down in this introduction have already been dealt with in detail. Let the reader compare them with Belinski's "conciliationist views," and he will be struck by the virtually complete identity. The sole difference is this, that "furious Vissarion" became much more heated than the calm German thinker and therefore went to extremes Hegel avoided.

Belinski said that Voltaire "resembles a Satan, freed by the Highest Will from adamantine chains by which he had been held in the fiery habitation in eternal darkness and who used his brief span of freedom to the ruination of mankind."

Hegel said nothing of the kind and would have never said it. Not a few similar examples could be adduced, but all of these are details which do not alter the gist of the matter which is this, that in expressing his views Belinski remained wholly true to the spirit of Hegel's *absolute* philosophy.

And if these conciliationist views appear "strange" to Mr. Volynski, then it shows how poorly acquainted he is with the works of "a man who thought eternity," i.e., Hegel. True enough, Mr. Volynski happens to be repeating on this occasion only what had been previously said by N. Stankevich, by Herzen, Turgenev and others. But he had promised to review the question of Hegel's influence on Belinski's world outlook "with the necessary thoroughness" and "through a comparison of Belinski's well-known views with their original sources." Why then did Mr. Volynski confine himself to repeating the errors of others? Could it be, perhaps, that the "original source" is rather poorly known by him?

More fully than any of his friends, say, M. B. or N. Stankevich, Belinski had assimilated the conservative spirit of the Hegelian philosophy which claimed to be *absolute truth*. The likelihood is that he felt this himself because friendly admonitions designed to cool his "conciliationist" ardor did not sit well with him at all. After all, these friends held the same standpoint of alleged absolute truth which Belinski was now, in Hegel's footsteps, advocating, and from this standpoint any concession to "liberal babblers" was only a sad inconsistency. (In a letter to L. M. Neverov, Granovski says that Bakunin was the first to rise up against Belinski's articles on Borodino, etc. It is unfortunately unclear from Granovski's letter just what Bakunin's uprising consisted of. Anyhow, it could not have been based on an understanding of the progressive side of Hegel's philosophy to which M. B. was to arrive much later.)

Of course, it may be argued that while Hegel in the days of the publication of the *Philosophy of Right* did make his peace with Prussian reality, it doesn't therefore follow that Hegel would have conciliated with Russian reality. That is so. But there are negations and negations. Hegel would have pronounced Russian reality to be semi-Asiatic; he generally held that the Slav world constituted an entity midway between Europe and Asia. But Asian reality is likewise "reason embodied" and Hegel — not Hegel, the dialectician, but Hegel, the herald of "absolute truth" — would have scarcely approved of an uprising against reality on the part of finite reason of individuals.

Chapter VI

Let us now approach Belinski's conciliationist views from another side.

Social theories of "liberal babblers" kindled his ire by their superficial, anti-scientific character. "Babblers" imagine that social relations can be changed by popular whims, whereas, actually, social life and development are regulated by "immutable laws, lodged in the essence of society." Babblers see arbitrariness and accident there where in reality an ineluctable process of development is taking place. Social phenomena unwind dialectically, from within themselves, by inner necessity. Whatever bears no cause within itself but appears on account of something alien to it, something from "without," is devoid of rationality, and whatever is irrational is nothing more than an illusion, a phantom. Such are the views Belinski counterposes to the rationalist outlook on social life, inherited from the 18th century. And his views are incomparably more profound and more serious than the rationalistic outlook, which leaves no room for a scientific explanation of social events.

One has to be very much an honor-laden Russian sociologist to be able to discern nothing except philosophic "rubbish" in Belinski's conciliationist views. Similarly, only a very honor-laden Russian sociologist could, in view of Belinski's foregoing outlook on life and the evolution of human society, make the remarkable discovery that his "flair for truth" more or less betrayed our genius-critic each time an "esthetic phenomenon became complicated by philosophic and politico-moral principles." If by flair for truth is meant an instinct for theoretical truth — and in questions of this sort there cannot be talk of anything else — then it is necessary to admit that Belinski disclosed a highly developed instinct for truth when he hastened with enthusiasm to acquire and with heat to propagate the interpretation of history as a necessary and therefore a lawful process. In this instance, Russian social thought in the person of Belinski grappled, for the first time and with the boldness of genius, with the solution of the very same great problem which absorbed, as we have seen, the best minds of the 19th century.

Why is the position of the working class so bad? Because the modern economic order in Europe began to take shape at a time when the science "in charge of" this cycle of events "didn't as yet exist." That is how Mr. Mikhailovsky philosophizes. Belinski would have recognized in this ratioci-

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nation the rationalistic outlook he despised so much and he would have likened it — by its inner worth — to the lightminded pronouncements of *liberal abbots*.

"Reality as the manifestation of embodied reason," he wrote, "always comes prior to cognition, because it is necessary to have the object for cognition, before the act of cognition can take place."

For this reason, a science "in charge of" a given economic order could make its appearance only after such an order had taken shape; but to elucidate by its later appearance one or another positive or negative quality of this economy is as full of wisdom as it would be to ascribe the existence of contagious diseases to the circumstance that when the world was created there were no physicians from whom nature could have acquired the concept of hygiene. Needless to add, Belinski would be perfectly right, from the standpoint, that is, of modern objective science. And it therefore follows that as far back as the end of the 1830's Belinski's instinct for theoretical truth was more highly developed than it is today in Mr. Mikhailovsky and other honor-laden sociologists like him. It cannot be said that this is a consoling conclusion for all the friends of Russian progress, but the truth must be served above everything else and so we shan't suppress it.

Take another example. The Populists have written a lot in Russia about the agrarian commune, the *obshchina*. They were often wrong — erring more or less sincerely — in talking about its history, or its present-day conditions. But let us grant that they didn't make a single mistake and pose a simple question: Weren't they wrong to clamor that it was necessary to "strengthen" the *obshchina* at all cost? What were they guided by? They were guided by a conviction that the present day *obshchina* is capable of growing over into the highest economic form. But what are the existing economic relations within the *obshchina?* Can their evolution lead to the transition of a modified, present-day *obshchina*, to the highest form of communal life? No. Because their evolution leads, on the contrary, to the triumph of individualism. The Populists themselves agreed more than once on this; anyhow, the more sensible among them did. But in that case what did they count on? They counted on this, that the external influence exercised on the *obshchina* by the intelligentsia and the government would overcome the *inner logic* of its development.

Belinski would have dismissed such hopes with scorn. He would have correctly noted in them a residue of the rationalistic outlook on social life. He would have rejected them as illusory and abstract, since everything is illusory which bears no cause within its own self and appears because of something else alien to it, something from "without" and not from "within." Again, this would be perfectly correct. And again it is necessary to draw the conclusion, unflattering for Russian progress, that toward the close of the 1830's Belinski had already drawn closer to a scientific understanding of social phenomena than have our present-day champions of old principles and institutions.

(It is worth noting, however, that only a few Populists continue nowadays to dream about the transition of the *obshchina* into the highest form of communal life. The majority of these worthy people, turning their backs on all "nonsensical" ideas, are "concerned" only about the prosperity of the business-like little mouzhik in whose hands the *obshchina* has become a fearsome weapon for exploiting the rural proletariat. It is undeniable that "concerns" of this sort have nothing "illusory" about them nor have anything in common with the "abstract ideal.")

Basic state decrees "are not laws promulgated by man but they appear, so to speak, before their time and are only expressed by man." Is this so, or not? Belinski's reasoning on this subject is considerably obscured by his custodial ardor at the time, owing to which he sometimes expressed himself with foggy pomposity. However, in these reasonings, too, it is not hard to find a perfectly healthy kernel. From the standpoint of modern social science [Marxism] there is no doubt whatever that not only basic state decrees but juridical institutions generally are an expression of actual relations into which people enter, not arbitrarily but by dint of necessity In this sense all legal institutions in general are only "expressed by man." And to the extent that Belinski's words carry this meaning they must be recognized as absolutely correct.

It would not hurt to recall them repeatedly even now to those bearers of the "abstract ideal" among us who imagine that juridical norms are created by popular crotchets and that a people can make of their legal institutions any eclectic hash they please. (Thus, for example, there are many among us who believe, on the one side, that Russia could with comfort "strengthen the *obshchina*" and, on the other, transplant on this "strengthened" soil, that is, on the soil of Asian landownership, certain institutions of West European social law.)

Russian social thought, in the person of our genius-critic, let us repeat, for the first time and audaciously, undertook the solution of that great task which the 19th century had posed before all the thinking minds of Europe. Comprehending the colossal importance of this task Belinski suddenly felt firm soil beneath his feet; and, enthused by the boundless horizons opened before him, he, as we saw, surveyed for a while the reality about him through the eyes of an Epicurean, anticipating the bliss of philosophic cognition. And, after all, how could one not get angry at the "small, great people" who with their idle talk — *and it is time to recognize this* — their absolutely groundless talk in point of theory, hindered the tranquil and happy enjoyment of the unexpectedly discovered treasure-trove of truth? How not attack the bearers of the "abstract ideal," how not heap ridicule upon them when Belinski, from his own experience, knew its utter practical worthlessness; when he still remembered that grievous cognition of self as a "cipher" which constantly accompanied the intense joy this ideal had aroused? How not despise those who, although they wanted happiness for their near and dear ones, nevertheless, out of myopia, considered harmful the only philosophy which Belinski was convinced could make mankind happy?

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But this mood did not last long; conciliation with reality proved shaky. By October 1839, departing for Petersburgh and carrying with him the still unpublished article on "The Sketches of the Battle of Borodino," Belinski was already far removed from the radiant and cheerful view of everything about him which came upon him in the first period of his infatuation with Hegelian philosophy.

"My inner sufferings have turned into a sort of dry embitterment," he said. "For me no one existed, because I myself was dead."

True enough, this new oppressive mood was conditioned to a considerable degree by lack of personal happiness, but knowing Belinski's character it can be said with certainty that he would not even have noticed this lack had Hegel's philosophy given him so much as a fraction of what it had promised.

"How laughable it is and how exasperating," he exclaims in a long letter to Botkin, written from December 16, 1839 to early February 1840. "The love of Romeo and Juliet is love in general; but the need of love, or the reader's love is an illusion, a particular love. Life in books, that there is; but in life itself there is nothing."

Note these words. They show that Belinski was already cohabiting poorly with Hegel's "absolute" conclusions. In fact, if the task of a thinking man is limited to cognition of reality about him; if every attempt on his part toward a "creative" attitude to reality is "illusory," and condemned to failure in advance; then for him nothing really remains except "life in books."

Furthermore, a thinking man is under obligation to reconcile himself with whatever is. But living is not "whatever is." Whatever is, has already ossified, the breath of life has already sped from it. That lives which is in the process of becoming *(wird)*, which is being worked out by the process of development. What is life if not development? And in the process of development the element of negation is indispensable. Whoever in his outlook fails to assign adequate room for this necessary element, for that individual life does actually turn into "nothingness," because in his conciliation with "whatever is" he engages in transactions not with life but with what used to be life, but had ceased living in the interim.

Hegel's absolute philosophy, by proclaiming contemporary reality to be immune from negation, thereby also proclaimed that life can exist only in books, but outside of books there was to be no life. It correctly taught that an individual ought not place his personal crotchets and even his vital personal interests above the interests of the "general." But to this philosophy of the general, the interests were the interests of stagnation.

Belinski sensed this instinctively much earlier than he was able to become cognizant of it through reason. He expected philosophy to point out the road to human happiness. The general question of the triumph of accident over human reason often appeared to him in the shape of a particular question of *why does force triumph over right?* What was Hegel's answer? We saw what it was: "There is no reign of savage material force; there is no sway of bayonet and the sword; right is force and force is right." Leaving aside the somewhat paradoxical manner of this answer (the formulation is not Hegel's but Belinski's), it is necessary to admit that it encloses a profound truth, the sole prop for the hopes of the partisans of gradual progress. It is strange, but it is so. Here is a graphic example. "Our feudal rights are based on conquests," shouted the defenders of the old order in France to Sieyes. "Is that all?" he replied. "Very well, it's now our turn to become conquerors."

In this proud answer was expressed the cognition that the Third Estate had already matured for rulership. And when it became truly a "conqueror," its rule was not exclusively the rule of material force; its force was likewise its right, and its right was validated by the historical needs of France's development. Everything that does not correspond to the needs of society, has behind it no right whatever; but, contrariwise, whatever has behind it corresponding right will, sooner or later, have force behind it as well. What can be more gratifying than such assurance to all the true friends of progress?

And such assurance is ineluctably instilled by Hegel's attitude on the interrelation of right and force, *provided it is correctly understood.* But in order to understand it correctly, it was necessary to regard both history and present-day reality from the standpoint of *dialectic development* and not that of "absolute truth," which signifies a cessation of all movement.

From the standpoint of absolute truth, the right of historical movement became converted into the sanctified and immutable right of the Prussian Junkerdom to exploit the peasantry dependent on them; and all of the oppressed were condemned to eternal servitude solely because "absolute truth," on making its appearance in the realm of cognition, found the peasants weak and hence without any rights as well. *C'etait un peu fort,* as the French say. And Belinski was bound to notice it, too, as soon as he started to take stock of his new world outlook.

From his correspondence it is evident that his so-called break with Hegel, mentioned so often in our literature, was provoked by the inability of Hegel's "absolute" philosophy to answer social and political questions which tormented Belinski.

"I am told: Unfold all the treasures of your spirit for the freest enjoyment thereof; weep so that you may be consoled; grieve so that you may be joyful; strive toward perfection, scramble up to the top rung of the ladder of development, and should you stumble, then down you go, and the Devil take you. . . Thank you obediently, Yegor Fedorovich. I bow to your philosophical conical hat; but with all due respect to your philosophic philistinism, I have the honor to inform you that even if I did succeed to climb the topmost rung of the ladder of development, from there, too, I would ask you to give an accounting for all the victims of life and history, for all the victims of accident, superstition, Inquisition, Phillip II, and so on. Or else I would jump head first from the ladder's topmost rung. I don't want happiness even for free, unless I can rest tranquil about every one of my brothers in flesh and blood. . . It is said that discord is the premise for harmony. Maybe so. This is quite advantageous and delightful for music lovers, but, after all, it is not so for those whose lives are destined to express the idea of discord. . ."

What does it mean to get an accounting for the victims of accident, superstition, Inquisition, etc? In the

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opinion of Mr. Volynski it means exactly nothing.

"To these perplexities," he says, "which Belinski set down, for wit's sake, in the form of a departmental report, with a malicious questionnaire of a compromising nature attached, Hegel, with a condescending smile, would have cut h excited opponent short and would have said: 'Development demands sacrifices of man, the onerous exploit of self-renunciation, a mighty grieving over the welfare of the people, failing which there can be no individual welfare, but the philosophy of idealism does not hallow accidental victims, nor does it reconcile itself with superstition, with Inquisition. The dialectic process of development contains a mighty weapon — **negation,** which leads people out of the caves of inquisitorial casemates, out into the free air, into freedom. Accident is an anomaly and that alone is rational which bears the stamp of divine justice and wisdom. . .' " **(Russian Critics,** page 102.)

In these eloquent lines there is, as usual, a lamentable lumping of undigested concepts, peculiar to the philosophic talent of Mr. Volynski. To begin with, Hegel would have said exactly nothing to Belinski anent the sacrifices and self-renunciation that are demanded of an individual by his own intellectual and moral development. That's for sure. Hegel would have understood that Belinski is not talking about sacrifices of this sort at all.

To be sure, the German idealist would have thereby let slip a precious opportunity to coin eloquent phrases in the rhetorical style of Mr. Volynski but by way of compensation he would have come sooner to the point. And the point here touches precisely the following question: Wasn't the element of *negation,* this truly "mighty weapon," reduced to zero by the "absolute" conclusions which Hegel drew and by the conciliation with reality which he preached in the introduction to his *Philosophy of Right?* We have already seen that the answer is — yes; that such a contradiction did actually exist and that it flowed from the root contradiction, inherent in Hegel's philosophy generally, i.e., the contradiction between the dialectic nature of this philosophy and its pretensions to the title of "absolute truth." Mr. Volynski apparently doesn't even suspect the existence of this contradiction. This does his "philosophic talent" no honor. Belinski, in contrast, already sensed as early as the end of the 1830's that this contradiction existed.

"I have long suspected," he says in the above-cited letter," that Hegel's philosophy is only a moment, even though a great one, but that the absoluteness of his results isn't worth anything*; that it is better to die than reconcile oneself with it." (*A footnote of Mr. Pypin accompanies this phrase; it reads: "A sharp expression used in the text of the letter has been altered by us.")

A Russian who "suspected" such things, and this, moreover, toward the end of the 1830's had truly to possess a high "philosophic organism." And feeble indeed are "philosophic organisms" who to this day fail to understand Belinski. What they deserve is not a "condescending" but the most scathing smile that can be smiled.

Belinski, naturally, doesn't hold Hegel responsible for the exploits of the Inquisition, for the cruelty of Phillip II, and so on. When he asks Hegel for an accounting of all the victims of mankind's historical movement, he charges Hegel with not remaining true to his own philosophy. And this charge is as valid as any charge could be. According to Hegel *freedom* is the *goal* of historical development and *necessity* is the means leading toward this goal. A philosophy, which interprets history from this elevated standpoint, cannot of course be held responsible for what has happened, independently of its will and influence. But one may justifiably demand from it that it point out the means wherewith reason shall triumph over blind accident. And these means can be supplied only by the process of development. By proclaiming himself as the possessor of absolute truth and by reconciling himself with the existing conditions, Hegel turned his back on all development and recognized as *reason that necessity* from which mankind of his day suffered. This was tantamount to proclaiming oneself a philosophic bankrupt. And it is exactly this act of bankruptcy that aroused Belinski. He was vexed that he, following in Hegel's footsteps, had been able to perceive "a most perfect state" in the Russia of his day.

This most perfect state rested on the exploitation (through extremely antiquated methods) of the majority for the benefit of a privileged minority. Rising up against Hegel's "absolute" philosophy, Belinski understood this perfectly. He went over wholly to the side of the oppressed. But these oppressed did not appear in his eyes as producers, living under given historical conditions. He regarded them as people in general, as oppressed human individuals. For this reason he protested in the name of individuality.

"It is high time," he exclaims, "for human individuality, unfortunate enough as it is, to free itself from the ignoble shackles of irrational reality, from the opinions of the mob and from traditions bequeathed by barbarous times."

On this account there are some who would not be averse to picture Belinski as something akin to a liberal individualist. But this is absolutely groundless. Belinski himself clarifies his state of mind at the time quite excellently.

"Within me has grown a sort of fantastic love for freedom and independence of the human individuality, which is attainable only in a society based on truth and courage. . . Human individuality has become a focal point on which I am fearful of losing my sanity. I am beginning to love humanity in Marat's way: to make a tiniest fraction of it happy, I would, it seems, destroy the rest with fire and the sword."

Liberal individualism this does not represent in any case. Nor has the following categorical declaration anything in common with it:

"I have now fallen into a new extreme — it is the idea of socialism which has become for me the idea of ideas . . . the alpha and omega of faith and knowledge. . . For me, it has swallowed up history and religion and philosophy. And therefore I now explain by it my life, your life and the lives of all those whom I have met on life's highroad" (letter to Botkin, September 8, 1840).

Mr. Pypin hastens to assure us that Belinski's socialism was at bottom perfectly harmless. The honor-laden scholar, in this case, labors in vain. Who doesn't know that the socialism of Belinski's day generally contained nothing dangerous to the social order of the time? But Belinski's infatuation with socialism, while containing nothing dangerous, happens to have been a very important event in his mental life. And for this reason it ought not be left in the shadows but must be brought out into the clearest possible light.

(To Be Continued)

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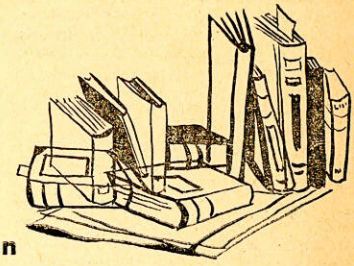
BOOKS

Marcus Garvey -- The "Black Moses"



by George Lavan

Black Moses, The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association, by Edmund D. Cronon. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison. 1955. 278 pp. $5.

In the years following the end of World War I the largest mass movement of the Negro people this country has yet seen was built and led by Marcus Garvey, who had but recently arrived from Jamaica. It held parades and conventions in Harlem and in the Negro communities of other cities which stirred the people as nothing before had. The world convention of the Garveyite organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, in 1920 sent tremors through the colonial offices of the imperialist nations. It brought the attention of the U.S. State Department and the witch-hunters of the Department of Justice, for whom the movement was just another of communism's hydra heads.

Little is left of this once great movement and little was ever known of it except by hearsay. Garveyism has been described as everything from Negro chauvinism to a stock-swindling scheme. Now a major gap in U.S. social and political history and the history of the Negro struggle has been remedied by Mr. Cronon's excellent book, the first full-length study of Garvey and his movement.

The author well portrays the social position of the Negroes in the North at the end of World War I and their political mood. He also traces the evolution of Garvey's program for redemption of the Negro people in all countries of the world where they are exploited. It was the arrival of the Jamaican agitator in the U.S. at the right time which resulted in the post-war explosion of the Negro masses in the particular direction of Garveyism.

In 1916-1918 about a half-million Negroes migrated from the South to the cities of the North. With minor interruptions this movement, started by employment opportunities in war production, continued through the early 1920's. These Negro workers rapidly discovered that though Jim Crow was less total in the North than down South, they were still second-class citizens. Moreover, the factories wanted them only as unskilled labor for the dirtiest, poorest-paying jobs and the end of war production and the minor depression of the period hit them hardest with unemployment.

Politically their hopes had been aroused by the wartime propaganda of the U.S. government, abetted by Negro leaders, about the rights of oppressed minorities. They hoped this applied to themselves, although the U.S. warmakers intended it mostly for the restive minority nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian empire and as an idealistic war facade for home consumption. Nearly 400,000 Negro soldiers served in the U.S. army. Their relatives at home thought this deserved some reward in political rights after the armistice; as for the soldiers, those who had served in France had first-hand experience with a white population devoid of racism.

Instead of improvement in their position, the Negro people were treated to increased lynchings as the "war for democracy" drew to its close. Then came the "Red Summer" of 1919. From June to the end of the year there were 26 race riots. The riots were often the result of competition between Negro and white workers for the completely inadequate housing in cities and towns overcrowded with war workers. The influx of Negro migrants jammed to overflowing the ghettoes designated for them. As they spilled over the boundaries of the ghetto from sheer physical pressure, they were met by hostile whites, regarding them as invaders. Continuous friction resulted in the explosion of race riots when bigots put their matches to such tinder.

Racist bigotry was on the upsurge as a result of the "war for democracy." The newly revived Ku Klux Klan became powerful all over the South — and what was more alarming spread throughout the North where it had never before existed.

A notable fact about the race riots was that the Negroes fought back with courage that terrified and infuriated their persecutors. Indeed throughout the Negro population — not merely among the returned troops — there was evident a new spirit of combativity.

Cronon writes: "Up to this time no Negro organization had either seriously attempted or succeeded in the organization of the Negro masses. None of the racial improvement groups such as the National Urban League or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, had directed much attention to lower-class Negroes, but had instead depended upon the upper classes, both white and Negro for intellectual and financial support. This was a basic weakness that tended to separate the bulk of the colored population from its leadership, and the unfortunate result was that Negroes were denied any very effective racial organization."

But the social struggle, no less than nature, abhors a vacuum, and the great mass of urban Negroes in the North, though but a few years from a peasant status, uneducated and politically unsophisticated, would find leadership even though the "talented tenth" denied them it.

Who offered to lead the great mass of super-exploited, discriminated-against Negro workers eager to fight for freedom? On the one hand there was a small group of Negro radicals who pointed the way to unions, socialism and alliance with the white workers. (A defect of this book is the scant treatment of the Negro socialists.) But the Negro masses saw little tangible in the direction these far-sighted men were pointing. The evidence seemed to contradict them. The AFL and the railroad brotherhoods then comprised almost the whole of the union movement. Were they not Jim Crow? Were not the white workers the ones who so bitterly opposed their moving into new neighborhoods? Were they not competing against white workers for jobs in the factories? Moreover, hundreds of thousands of these Negro workers were but shortly in the plants and had not yet become proletarianized — had not begun to think in class terms.

The other leader who presented himself to the Negro masses was Marcus Garvey, who saw the Negro struggle in international terms, who had developed a program based on the experience with Negro workers in the West Indies and Central America. His program in no way derived from the situation in the U.S.; it mis-

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understood it in several respects — but it had not an ounce of Uncle Tomism or gradualism in it. It was his leadership which the Negro masses of the U.S. chose at that particular moment in history.

Garvey's great accomplishment was to be the first to unite the Negro masses and thus demonstrate to themselves and to the rest of the world their potential power. In addition his propaganda emphasis upon the achievements and glories of the Negro people in the past succeeded in giving millions what they wanted — a positive pride in their color. Finally, his Negro internationalism struck the responsive chord of solidarity with similarly oppressed people of their own race.

Indeed, in a period when the Negro masses despaired of finding an ally among the classes of the white majority in the U.S., Garvey pointed to the millions of allies they had in the Negro peoples of Africa, the West Indies, Central and South America.

In this connection, Cronon's estimate of the American Negroes' attitude toward the "back to Africa" slogan of Garvey seems to be just. Negroes in this country, who followed Garvey, read his newspaper, bought stock in the Black Star Line, attended his meetings and mourned his deportation, did not, save for a tiny handful, have any intention or desire to go to Africa. They regarded this aspect of Garveyism much as American Jews, who support Zionism, regard going to Israel. An African homeland, they thought, would help Negroes in other countries and they had no objection to any from this country going, but they had no intention of going themselves. In addition to helping the people of Africa throw off the yoke of imperialism, a Negro nation in Africa, many thought, would help them in their battle for first-class citizenship in the U.S. by giving the Negro people a new prestige in the world.

Garvey's utopia led him into terrible disasters, as with the unbelievable financial chaos and mismanagement of the Black Star Line. His experience in the West Indies, where the light-skinned Negroes had been corrupted into a tool of the tiny white ruling class, led him to attempt a division of the American Negro people into Negroes and Mulattoes. Stubborness or prejudice prevented him from realizing that the white ruling class had not needed to accord light-skinned Negroes a privileged caste position in this country. Discrimination blighted the lives of all. Criminal in its blindness was Garvey's maneuvering with the Ku Klux Klan, which also urged sending the Negroes "back" to Africa.

For those interested in the struggle of the Negro people, this thoroughly documented, well-written and engrossing book about a significant movement in U.S. and Negro history is required reading.

Best Seller in Germany

by Trent Hutter

Fragebogen (The Questionnaire), by Ernst von Salomon. Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, N. Y. 1955. 525 pp. $6.

Der Fragebogen, recently published in the U.S. in an English translation, has aroused the ire of the American critics, although they admit that the German book is well-written and interesting.

Ernst von Salomon, whose family seems to be of Italo-French origin, was born in 1902 at Kiel, the son of a former army officer and high police official of Prussia. He wanted to be a professional army officer and got the usual cadet's training in 1917-18.

Before von Salomon graduated, World War I ended in Germany's defeat. He joined one of the "Free Corps" fighting the Polish units that sought to conquer Upper Silesia. In protest against the government of the Weimar Republic carrying out the Versailles Treaty, he joined other young Free Corps members in 1922 in a plot to assassinate Foreign Minister Rathenau. For this he was sentenced to five years imprisonment.

After serving his sentence, he became a successful novelist. He did not support the Hitler regime, but while it was in power he became a highly paid script writer for Germany's leading movie studio. He was not drafted in World War II.

In 1945 the American Army interned him — "erroneously," as the occupation authorities admitted when they released him in 1946.

Von Salomon's strangely fascinating memoirs are written in the form of detailed answers to the 131 questions of a questionnaire which the American occupation forces used in the farce of their "de-Nazification" attempts. Through this device, the author gives us a novel insight into certain aspects of German history between 1918-45, even if we do not in the least accept his reactionary views — the views of a frustrated Prussian would-be militarist who also happens to be a bourgeois intellectual with a definite individualist - nihilistic tendency.

Von Salomon comes from the lower nobility, the military and official caste of the Prussian state. His real fatherland, as he explains, is not the German Reich (which he preferred to be merely a federation of German states, not a centralized structure), but Prussia, destroyed by Hitler's dictatorship and officially dissolved by the occupation powers in 1945 after the Potsdam conference.

His allegiance is to Frederick the Great's and Bismarck's idea of the Prussian state — a state that did not correspond to any ethnological notion, a state based on a dynasty, a feudal aristocracy, a military and official caste with a very strict code of honor; and, after the industrial revolution, on an alliance between the feudal-military and the bourgeois - industrial and commercial forces, with the feudal families and lower nobility retaining sizable privileges in the army, the administration and the diplomatic service.

This state concept is, of course, alien to the spirit of any mass movement, including the 20th century's fascist mobilization of petty-bourgeois masses for the support of capitalism. The representatives of genuine Prussianism sometimes flirted with Nazism, a movement that used Prussian militarism as best it could, but they could not accept Nazism without sacrificing their Prussianism.

Von Salomon remained loyal to Prussianism, never entered the Nazi party; yet he abstained from actively resisting it. The former plotter against the Republic had developed into an intellectual sceptic who began to doubt the value of any struggle. Von Salomon the terrorist in the ranks of reaction had already believed far more in the action of the individual (for action's sake) than in the result of that action. Hence his nihilism, which is not Prussian, but a product of the shattering of bourgeois morality and middle-class security in and after World War I.

The same nihilism threw many other bourgeois and petty - bourgeois persons into the arms of fascism. Von Salomon, Prussian and individualist that he was, opposed all political parties. Prison life and increasing weariness gradually transformed the nihilist activism of his youth into a nihilist hedonism. His aims narrowed to enjoyment of the pleasures of life without any political responsibility. Intellectually rejecting the Nazi regime, he accepted the risk of loving a Jewish girl whom he saved from the dreadful fate of the German Jews under Nazi barbarism.

Several critics have referred to von Salomon's ultra-nationalism, alleged pro-fascist sympathies and avowed anti-American feelings. We Marxists do not find him likable either. Still we do not deny that he is a sharp, witty and frequently bitter observer of German bourgeois politicians, conspirators, intellectuals and officials, an observer of the complex tensions and struggles in the German bourgeois camp that finally ended in utter ideological bankruptcy.

Salomon is, in fact, an exponent of this very bankruptcy. He began as a Prussian careerist; then became a right-wing terrorist in the years that followed the defeat of the German revolution of 1918-19. He never cared for the toilers or their

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fate. He never did anything to actively resist the Nazis on their march to power. Under Hitler he lived, on the whole, quite contentedly although in private he criticized the totalitarian dictatorship. He ends in this book as a conceited nationalist, whining about the injustice done him by the Americans who interned him by mistake, and grumbling about the punishment of the Nazi bigwigs after World War II.

What made **Der Fragebogen** a German best-seller? Among the German bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ranks, millions hated the Weimar Republic just as von Salomon did. Nourishing fond memories of Prussian glory, they considered Hitlerism a little too vulgar but did not have the courage (or even much desire) to oppose it once it had seized power.

They declare today that they never approved of anti-Semitic or other cruelties but would rather not hear about them any more. They think it was regrettable to speak about "war criminals" and to ask that they be sentenced.

These millions have found in Ernst von Salomon a literary spokesman and a sophist who tends to absolve them from responsibility and guilt. They read **Der Fragebogen** with relish and relief. They enjoy the undeniable sparkle of this very un-heroic Prussian whose book of wit and lamentations provides the American reader with a curious but instructive picture of German bourgeois currents, a picture deserving the attention of the critical student of history.

A Stirring First Novel

by Anne Chester

Youngblood, by John O. Killens. Dial Press, New York. 1954. 566 pp. $3.95. [Pocket Books Inc. 1955. 50c.]

Early in the summer of 1954 a new name appeared among American writers — that of John .O. Killens. To my knowledge, Killens is the first Negro writer to show the struggle carried on through generations and groups and masses of people; also the first, to my knowledge, to approach it from a class point of view.

Other Negro writers show the heroic struggles of the individual which end and can end only in death, despair, or escape to the north. Richard Wright, outstanding and most important, is typical. In his first novel, **Youngblood**, however, Killens shows death as part of the struggle; but here the death of the individual is shown as a new beginning for those left behind to continue the fight.

The story is placed in the heart of the deep South — Georgia, which is typical in its race relationships. Here the line-up of white against black and the undertone of black against white is sharp and clear and the repressions brutal. But also here in Georgia the fighting spirit of the Negroes is high. Today, for instance, agitation for school integration has reached its highest pitch in the Deep South in Georgia. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in that state is one of the strongest, with great initiative and fighting capacity. This is the spirit that is reflected in **Youngblood.**

Killens takes the Negro people as they are in the South, shows why they are what they are and at the same time shows how they have picked up the thread of the struggle dropped with the defeat of Reconstruction, determined to win through to victory. The author starts us off at the turn of the century with the birth of Laurie Lee, but takes us back in consciousness to slavery and the fierce struggle against it through Big Mama, the grandmother, who is the inspiration for the determination to win through.

"Donchoo cry, honey," she told Laurie Lee. "Git mad, yes Godamighty, but donchoo waste a single tear . . . donchoo never let em walk over you. . . Fight em every inch of the way, especially the big rich one. . . They the one took over where ol' marster left off. They lynch us, they starve us and they work us to death, and it ain-na gonna change till you young Negroes gits together and beat some sense in they head."

The people you meet in **Youngblood** are real, everyday people. There is nothing shadowy about them. Each person is an individual and yet at the same time representative of a particular layer within the class.

Laurie Lee is the link between the struggles of the past and the struggles of the present and future. Richard Myles, the northern school teacher, is the organizing center of that struggle. The story of the Jubilee program built around the history of the spirituals, a program that sets the white population rocking on its heels and builds up the spirit of struggle in the Negro population, is one of the most gripping sections of the book, as for example when Robby Youngblood is narrating the story of "Let My People Go." "'. . . And there was a little black woman named Harriet Tubman, a friend of John Brown, a woman of greatness. Harriet Tubman overpowered her whipping boss and escaped from slavery. But she wasn't satisfied with just her own freedom when she crossed over Jordan. She couldn't sit still till the South was free. She went back south, she went down in Egypt Land, time and time again, and she led the Hebrew children to freedom. And they called her Harriet and they called her Moses. The next selection by the Pleasant Grove School Chorus will be **Go Down Moses.**'

"He almost burst out laughing, and at the same time crying, when he heard Fat Gus' mother, Miss Lulubelle, who was seated in the front row, say — 'Moses been going down too damn long now — He need to git up off his devilish knees and stand up and fight!'"

The role of the educated middle-class Negroes is expressed through Rev. Ledbetter when he says: "'We're scared of our shadow. . . Scared we'll lose this little bit of security the white man handed down to us. . . Sometimes I think we more scared of the Negroes over in the Quarters than we are of the white folks. . . You know where Monroe Terrace is located? Our street is two blocks long. It runs to the west smack into Peckerwood Town, but north of us is the rich white folks and south of us is the black folks. And here we are in the middle. And you know what it is to be in the middle.' He laughed and he slapped his knee. 'Yes-sir-ree.'"

The thread that runs through this book is the knowledge that the way to win through to freedom is by a combination of struggling in organized fashion as an oppressed people, and organizing as workers together with the white workers, because poor white is just as much downtrodden as colored. The Negro in the South is like the worker anywhere in the world — he cannot run away from his troubles. He must stand up to them, face them and make up his mind to fight them.

Youngblood shows the innate dignity and courage of the Southern Negroes: their feeling that although victory is not achieved in single battles, each battle is a step forward; that what is begun by one generation is picked up and advanced further by the youth of the next. In the march toward victory there are many defeats, but these are temporary. These are the milestones along the road of struggle of black and white together for a world of genuine brotherhood.

The Origin Of West Virginia

by John Thayer

West Virginia and Its Struggle for Statehood 1861-1863, by Isaiah A. Woodward. Morgan State College, Baltimore. 44 pp. 1954. $1.50.

This slim but well-documented study deals with a fragment of Civil War history that should command more attention — the split within the Southern states on class and regional lines.

Lincoln's resistance in the first part of the war to the abolitionists and their revolutionary program was publicly de-

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fended as his "border state" strategy. That the split of the western counties of Virginia from Secession, the Northern political successes in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee, and Kentucky's decision to remain "neutral," were achieved by Lincoln's conservative policy has not been historically proved.

In examining this historical question, studies, such as this, are of interest and use. Mr. Woodward has worked industriously. His research, for example, included winnowing the huge Robert Todd Lincoln manuscript collection of the papers of Abraham Lincoln, which was opened to public scrutiny only in 1947.

The author, however, has severely restricted himself (as the size of the volume itself indicates). He deals only with the political aspects of the western counties from the Old Dominion and the chronicle of the legal steps by which it was admitted into the union as a new state.

Such a political history is useful to students of the origin of West Virginia and to those specializing in the border-state problem during the Civil War. The need still remains, however, for an analysis of the social and economic conflict of interests, conditioned by geographic differences, that long divided the west Virginians and other mountain-region people of the Southern states from the plantation-owning ruling class. It was this conflict which culminated in what Mr. Woodward treats. Such a volume would have a broader interest than does this work.

No Thaw Yet

by Joseph Hansen

The Thaw, by Ilya Ehrenburg. Henry Regnery Co., Chicago. 1955. 230 pp. $3.50. With a Special Supplement, **The Death of Art**, by Russell Kirk. xxxi pp.

Kirk shoots at the wrong target. Taking **The Thaw** as an example, he contends that 1918 "put an end to Russian literature." "The terrible decay of Russian literature," he asserts, "is produced directly by Marxism, and cannot be arrested so long as the Marxist ideology prevails."

To evade discussing the Trotskyist explanation that the decay of Russian literature as of all Russian art is a reflection of the degeneration of the 1918 Revolution — due in the final analysis to the imperialist encirclement of the workers' state — Kirk misrepresents the Trotskyist position, picturing it as the simplistic belief that "somehow the Revolution had slipped into the hands of Wicked Men, Stalinists, who perverted the pure doctrines of Marx and Lenin."

The decay of art is not confined to the Soviet Union and therefore cannot be put "directly" at the door of Marxism even if you honestly believe that Marxism and Stalinism are the same thing. Kirk, I think, could find superior examples of the decay of art closer at home. With no more research, in fact, than a trial run across the channels of any TV set. A frank examination of the causes of the decay of art in America would, however, lead Kirk directly to the door of some giant corporations and ultimately to the capitalist system itself. Like the Russian hucksters, Kirk, we may suppose, prefers not to get crossed up with the powers that be. It is safer — and more profitable — to confine one's attention to the phenomenon as it appears in the camp of the Enemy.

The material basis of the ideology expressed in Ehrenburg's novel is easily shown. Indeed it is so crudely apparent it seems difficult to miss.

On the death of Stalin, the dictator's heirs faced the simple political need of relaxing tensions. They needed time to consolidate their position. They promised (1) an end to the worst abuses of the Stalin regime, (2) an improvement in the living conditions of the masses. These promises were taken at face value by many impressionists and superficial observers. They interpreted them as signs of the "mellowing" of the ruling clique, of the "self-reform" of the parasitic Soviet bureaucracy.

The political maneuver found its reflection in Soviet "literature." The Moscow oligarchy, as on occasion under Stalin, loosened the check reins on its "artists," perhaps even gave them a touch of the whip. The result was mild criticism of some of the bureaucratic evils that beset the Soviet peoples, and intimations that things were now to become better under the new crew in the Kremlin. Ehrenburg's novel was part of this criticism on-order.

The bureaucracy as a whole could not stomach even this thin soup — eloquent testimony to their state of nerves in face of the mass hatred. Ehrenburg had to complete the ritual of criticism by the ritual of "self-criticism" and the book proved as ephemeral as the promises of more consumers' goods.

The Thaw is, nonetheless, interesting. Its caricature of the middle bureaucracy carries conviction. They are as stodgy intellectually barren and emotionally repressed as their American middle-class counterparts. As Ehrenburg intimates, an abyss separates them from the generation that made the Revolution.

Those that stand out sharpest are the artists and the "typical bureaucrat" (who suffers the typical fate of becoming a scapegoat and "vanishing" after being called to Moscow.) Volodya, the cynical money-grubbing painter who knows how to "suck off" the top bureaucrats, strikes us as a possible self-caricature by Ehrenburg. In fairness to the author we must point out that he does introduce us to genuine Soviet artist, Saburov, regarded by most in the provincial town as "abnormal" if not "schizophrenic," since, at the cost of hunger and the indifference of society to the canvases he accumulates in his hovel, he insists on painting according to his own conscience.

Stalin is not mentioned in the book. But his rule is symbolized by the Siberian winter that holds the characters in deep freeze as the novel opens. The dictator's genial reign is indicated more directly in the abysmal housing suffered by the workers, the still-felt wounds of the great purges of the Thirties, some typical bureaucratic "excesses" indicative of the frame-up system, the pervading dread of Moscow. . .

Due to the spring "thaw," Ehrenburg's novel has a happy ending. In real life, unfortunately, a thaw is yet to be seen.

...Early Years

(Continued from page 133)

ingness to humiliate himself and surrender his opinions to gain favor with the Stalinist "power" only disarmed him before repeated exactions in this respect, until he was stripped of the last shred of independence. His disloyalty to people robbed him of any claim on the loyalty of others and left him without support at the most critical turning points. His readiness to profess opinions he didn't hold, for the sake of expediency, to lie and cheat to gain a point, lost him the respect of his colleagues and eventually destroyed his moral authority in the party cadres. He ended up friendless and alone as early as 1928, incapable of contending for leadership in his own name, and fit only for the role of figurehead leader.

But even for that shabby substitute for fame and career Foster has had to grovel in the dust, and to contribute his bit systematically, year after year for more than a quarter of a century, to the gross betrayal of the workers' cause which he had proclaimed as his own. "Success" in the world of Stalinism is dearly bought indeed — if by some horrible misunderstanding one should call Foster's pursuit of fame and career success.

Yours truly,

James

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