

LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Weekly

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DECEMBER 24, 1956

FIVE CENTS

Persistent Reports from Washington Raise the Question

Is U.S. Angling for a Deal with Moscow, Out of Fear of Revolution in East Europe?

"Founded on the Fears of Uprisings"

Additional evidence for the analysis developed in Gordon Haskell's article is provided now by James Reston's think-piece in the Dec. 18 *Times*. He makes explicit the fact that Washington's thinking on East Europe starts with fear of the revolution and moves toward a Russo-American deal.

Referring to the previous reports from Washington (discussed by Haskell) Reston first states in so many words that this idea comes from "one of the highest officials of the government and was founded on the fears of uprisings in East Germany and Poland..."

"It was this same fear," Reston continues, "that prompted the West German foreign minister, Dr. Heinrich von Brentano, to appeal to the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Paris last week not to encourage any dramatic action by the Eastern European states."

"Neither of these statements implied any criticism of the heroic efforts of the Hungarians to achieve national freedom. They were made because of apprehension that a spread of such uprisings might create a situation that could not be controlled by the Soviet Union, the United States or the West German government, and thus lead to general war."

Then taking up the "brighter side" of this picture—the dark side being the danger that the revolution may spread—Reston says in so many words that the only good thing about the East European revolution is that it may make Russia as well as Washington amenable to deals which have been so far rejected.

"This does not mean that the U. S. government has reached any conclusions about thinning out its troops in West Germany or that it has any plans to negotiate any new security arrangements in Europe."

"All it means is that some officials and diplomats in Washington see a new situation developing in Eastern Europe that is dangerous if not carefully handled but possibly productive of opportunities for negotiation if handled prudently and in time."

That's it. Reston makes it clear that the administration has not, or not yet, adopted any such line, or indeed any line at all. What we have here is the thinking of "the highest officials" of the State Department.

General Gruenther's name is mentioned as one of the leading opponents of this trend; and it is clear that this opposition is one which wants to go on as if nothing whatsoever had happened one way or the other.

Outside government circles, the latter seems also to be the line, for example, of the Meany-Lovestone school of foreign policy in the labor and liberal movement.

Thus Meany, who has become one of America's leading troglodytes in the sphere of foreign policy under the tutelage of Jay Lovestone, reacted to the Hungarian Revolution by demanding that the U. S. break off all contacts—social, cultural, or what-have-you—with Russia.

'DANGER' IN E. GERMANY—NOT ONLY TO RUSSIA

By JACK WILSON

Martin S. Hayden of the *Detroit News* sent the following brief but very interesting dispatch from Warsaw on Dec. 15:

"Is Poland returning to capitalism? Observers here feel this is just a Western pipe-dream."

"An old Red just released after being jailed in the Stalin purges of 1938 puts it this way: 'Stalin wasn't a Communist. I am.'"

"A Warsaw editor says: 'There is no conflict between socialism and humanity. Socialism is something people should want, not something they have to be for. Russia's totalitarian state completely contradicts socialism.'"

There is more political sense in these two observations than in all the reams of nonsense that nationalization equals socialism, or that somehow Stalin, in his own fashion, was "building socialism."

During the past week there were other

important political portents that seemed to escape many observers. Fear of a revolt in Eastern Germany is dominating the foreign embassies of the entire world. This was not said by some wishful-thinking socialist, but rather was repeated time and again on Edward Murrow's radio broadcasts, and by his string of correspondents covering Europe, including NATO sessions.

In his broadcasts, as well as in an Alsop-Kinter column last week, the story reprinted in *LABOR ACTION* about the 100,000 West German workers trying to cross into East Germany to help the workers there was verified. Alsop-Kinter says that American government pressure of the greatest sort was exerted on the Adenauer regime to keep the West German workers from crossing over; furthermore, that East German cops fought side by side with West German cops to keep the German workers apart.

By GORDON HASKELL

With each additional day of its survival, the Hungarian Revolution shakes the foundations of the Russian empire. Its towering flames have already cast such a glaring light on the true nature of the Kremlin's system that millions all over the world who once mistook it for socialism have come to recognize it for the brutal, oppressive imperialism it is.

But the Hungarian Revolution has not exposed the Russian rulers alone. It has also underlined, for this generation, what past generations of fighters for democracy and socialism learned from their own experiences about the reaction of all ruling classes to a genuine attempt by the common people of any country to take their destiny completely into their own hands.

With each day that passes it becomes clearer that the governments of the capitalist powers regard the Hungarian Revolution with mixed feelings at best. They seek to utilize it to pillory and discredit their enemy rulers in the Kremlin. But at the same time, they fear it.

And most of all, they fear the only thing which can save it: its extension into the whole of the Russian satellite area in East Europe.

NATO SEES "DANGER"

Before the Hungarian Revolution had been many days old, this attitude of "caution" was leaked by high sources in Washington to some of the State Department's most trusted newspapermen for dissemination throughout the land. (See Philip Coben's article in the November 12 issue of *LABOR ACTION*.) As the Hungarian revolution refused to die, and as reports of sympathetic demonstrations in Poland and unrest in East Germany and Rumania continued, the note of "caution" grew more insistent.

The first "official" declaration on this matter appeared in the statement issued after the meeting of the foreign ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty powers, and the inspired newspaper commentaries on its meaning.

Here is the way the *New York Times* (Dec. 16) puts it:

"Soviet leaders face a hard dilemma—either de-Stalinization or re-Stalinization may generate further revolt in the satellites."

"The West does not look on this dilemma with unalloyed satisfaction. In fact, it views it with considerable fear. For years the West has been seeking to drive a wedge between Moscow and the satellite peoples and waiting hopefully for the breakdown of Soviet control. But now, as Secretary Dulles told his NATO colleagues last Tuesday, the deterioration of the Soviet structure in Eastern Europe offered a great danger as well as a great opportunity."

"The opportunity is obvious enough. The revolt in Hungary has laid bare, for

the world to see, the naked Soviet force which represents consent in the People's Democracies. It has put Moscow on the defensive. It has provided the West with a real fulcrum to bring pressure on Moscow through the United Nations to set the satellites free.

"The danger lies in a possible chain reaction of revolts throughout Eastern Europe set off by the Hungarian uprising. This might lead to desperate reprisals by the Soviet Union which could set off a war. The greatest challenge to Moscow would be a full-scale revolt now in East Germany and there the greatest immediate danger lies."

There is a good deal of unclarity in the above statement. The "West" has been able to utilize the Hungarian Revolution to get a number of resolutions through the United Nations condemning the Russian repression of the Hungarian Revolution, and calling on Russia to withdraw her troops from Hungary. It has been utterly and clearly impotent to force the Russians out of Hungary, let alone out of the other satellites. By adopting their open attitude of seeking to limit the revolution to Hungary, the capitalist powers have demonstrated that they do not welcome the force capable of throwing Russia out of the satellites: the revolutionary action of the peoples of that area.

EYES ON EAST GERMANY

But let us go a bit further. If a spread of the revolution should lead to "desperate reprisals" by the Russians in Eastern Europe, how could this lead to the danger of a world war? Only if the capitalist powers should decide to defend the satellite peoples against these reprisals, or to support them in their revolution by the intervention of their own armed forces. But if they are not willing to take the risk of such intervention, or even of the many other effective steps short of military intervention which they could take, what alternative policy have they with regard to Russia?

The *Times* writers leave this to the
(Turn to last page)

Spend
NEW YEAR'S EVE
with the ISL & YSL

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Three Reports: Inter-Socialist Discussions and a Debate

Symposium on Socialism and Democracy Hears 5 Editors at Community Church

By P. WHITNEY

New York, Dec. 17

The lively panel discussion on "Socialism and Democracy: East and West" held at the Community Church on Friday, December 14, exceeded all expectations by drawing a crowd of close to 600, despite pouring rain and stormy weather. The meeting was sponsored by I. F. Stone, who issues *I. F. Stone's Weekly*, on the anniversary of the Bill of Rights. Stone acted as chairman and moderator.

The panelists consisted of editors of the independent and socialist left: Hal Draper for *LABOR ACTION*; A. J. Muste for *Liberation*; Dan Roberts for the *Militant*; and Harry Braverman for the *American Socialist*. Paul Sweezy of the *Monthly Review* was unable to come; and Norman Thomas sent regrets for his inability to attend in a letter which Stone read to the meeting.

Leading off the 10-minute presentations, Dan Roberts spoke for the Socialist Workers Party. Recent events, he asserted, had raised the question of whether socialism would bring more freedom or whether it represented more regimentation, as in Hungary and Russia. He insisted that the Hungarian events were not discrediting socialism, but rather cutting to shreds the lie that Stalinism is synonymous with Leninism and socialism. He predicted that they would lead to the regeneration of the revolution in Russia and that the worker's councils now being formed would lead to a rebirth of real soviets in the satellites and within Russia itself.

Braverman, speaking for the tendency led by Bert Cochran, traced the development of American democratic trends in a rather abstract manner. He stated that socialism had become identified with tyranny because of a bad beginning in Russia; "the machine had run wild." While the reprisals in Hungary were the worst and most horrible stain on the banner of socialism, wailing would do no good. "A new posture

toward Russia" was necessary. He stressed "honesty" in this approach but left other aspects very vague, outside of a reference to "sympathy" for Russia and China.

Hal Draper presented, as a key to the subject, the proposition that "Socialism and democracy are inseparable," and his discussion revolved around this. It is so under capitalism, he said, spending a couple of minutes on the witchhunt in the U. S. and civil liberties for Communists. It is so under socialism too: "Practically everybody comes out for democracy . . . but no socialist movement can be built here if it believes there can be socialism, not only without democracy, but indeed under a totalitarian system such as exists in Russia and its satellites."

He went on to challenge those who see "socialism" or a "workers' state" in Russia, tying this up with the Hungarian revolution, with the talk of "economic democracy" under Titoism, the fate of Djilas, illusions about the present Polish regime, etc.

"Socialism and democracy are inseparable in both camps of the world today," he concluded, and it is a banner for the Third Camp forces.

A. J. Muste devoted himself especially to commenting on the need for socialist regroupment today. He pointed out cogently that even the CP was no longer monolithic, being engaged in dispute and re-thinking, and that opportunities were opening up for inter-socialist discussion. Speaking autobiographically at the beginning, he also stressed the importance of the Bill of Rights for American life.

After the presentations, Stone in lively style asked each panelist a question before throwing the floor open for discussion.

He took Roberts to task for creating a "myth of the golden age" under Lenin, and asked him how he could equate the destruction of democratic rights with his concepts of democratic socialism. Rob-

(Turn to last page)

Inter-Socialist Conference Weighs Problems of Movement

(Press Release by A. J. Muste)

Thirty-five men and women including trade-unionists, editors of periodicals, economists, independent socialists, radical pacifists, members of the Socialist Party and a number of other radical groups met in New York on December 8 and 9. Another fifteen or more from various parts of the country sent word that they were intensely interested and regretted inability to attend at that time.

The participants in the discussion were there as individuals in response to a personal invitation from A. J. Muste, who has a long record of activity in labor and peace movements and is an editor of the independent monthly magazine *Liberation*.

In issuing his invitation Mr. Muste wrote: "We are in a new age. The problems of that age need to be stated, not to mention resolved. It seems elementary that this could not be done if each group continued to live to itself and regard itself as the True Church, possessed of the true and authentic revelation to which others needed only to adhere or be damned. It would be a healthy thing if discussion which transcended the traditional high and hard walls could be resumed."

Mr. Muste observed that the invasion of Egypt and especially the tragic events in Hungary tended to make "any kind of political gathering, except of like-minded people for the purpose of expressing emotions, very difficult, seemingly absurd. It is equally true," he added, "that precisely these developments make serious discussion among people who do not start from the same point imperative."

The discussions on December 8-9 on such questions as the meaning of events in Hungary, the economic and political outlook in the United States, and the possibilities of "socialist regroupment" or a "new Left," were frank and hard-hitting. At the same time there was evident a recognition that no one had all the answers and that a fresh start needed to be made in "a spirit of fraternity and with an emphasis on the humanistic aims of socialism which have too often been lacking in recent years."

The meeting was called on the basis that no action would be taken or organization set up, and there was no disposition to think a radical movement or party relevant to the American situation could be organized overnight.

There was, however, unanimous and enthusiastic agreement that such discussions as this should be organized in other places, and Mr. Muste was asked to carry forward his efforts along this line. There was also general agreement that in view of the vigorous and open discussion under way in the Communist Party and the considerable departure of a number of CP members from their former stands, some CP members might well be included in subsequent discussions.

A number of suggestions for providing a tentative structure for the educational process were made, such as a discussion bulletin open to varied points of view; a pamphlet for discussion purposes; the organization of local discussion groups, and perhaps in one or two places a school or institute for socialist studies. It was agreed that the utmost effort to include all elements in the discussion process should be made and premature crystallization avoided.

In Detroit CP Leader Debates Shachtman and Other Socialists

By JACK WILSON

Detroit, Dec. 16

Close to 800 persons attended a most unique and unprecedented debate held here last Monday night, Dec. 10, in which viewpoints ranging from Max Shachtman's independent socialism to Carl Winter's defense of Stalinism clashed.

The debate was a success in spite of a last-minute withdrawal from the event by Norman Thomas, who sent a letter indicating his refusal to appear on a platform with an apologist for the "Communist butchers" of Hungary. This action came as a result of strong pressure from Detroit right-wing socialist circles who argued that any appearance with a Stalinist would make them respectable and play into their hands.

How the Detroit press reacted to the debate, after playing up Thomas' refusal, was revealed on Tuesday, with a story in the *Detroit News*: The story was headlined "Socialists Lambaste Reds for Tyranny in Hungary."

The story read:

"Socialist leaders scolded a Communist spokesman here last night for attempting to 'whitewash' Russian aggression in Hungary.

"Carl Winter, chairman of the Communist Party of Michigan, tried unsuccessfully to woo an audience of 800 with his party's latest line—that the Hungarian revolt actually was 'Project X' masterminded by the U. S.'s Central Intelligence Agency headed by Allen Dulles."

In a word, the political weight of the meeting was against the Stalinist spokesman, and the distinction between socialist tendencies and the Stalinist line was clear and unmistakable.

The five speakers were, in order: A. J. Muste, the well-known pacifist spokesman; Max Shachtman, chairman of the Independent Socialist League; Carl Winter; Bert Cochran, editor of the *American Socialist*; and Sid Lens, socialist author and trade-unionist.

Since each speaker had only 20 minutes' time, the formal presentations were necessarily skimpy. Muste concentrated on how this meeting was held to find new answers on the road to peace, and to search for a ground for political realignment on the left.

DENOUNCE STALINISTS

Shachtman presented a summary of the Third Camp point of view, ranging from a blast at France and England at their Egyptian aggression to a scathing denunciation of Stalinism.

He pointed out that the road to peace lies in the support of the peoples who are rising up against all forms of imperialism, in all battles for democracy and socialism. In this connection, he challenged Winter to comment on the November 1917 Proclamation for Peace issued by the Soviet Congress, in which the new

Russian revolutionary power called for peace based on democracy, against all annexations, stressing above all withdrawal of all troops from all occupied countries and completely free elections in these countries. (Winter did not bite.)

Bert Cochran sought to place Stalinism in the historical perspective of what he called "the wedding of Marxism and oriental barbarism." Speaking after Winter, he told the CP leader "Don't try to hand us any whitewash of the greatest barbarism of our times!" Vigorously and unequivocally he condemned the Russian intervention in Hungary.

Lens emphasized the need for humanism and democracy in socialism. He showed the hypocrisy going on in both world camps, which use slogans like "peace" while they kill people and "progress" while they exploit people.

Winter came up with a demand for another Geneva meeting, the demand for withdrawal of foreign troops from all foreign soil—he obviously did not include Russian troops in Hungary in this category—and he did his best to slander the Hungarian revolution.

OLD TRICK

In the brief question period and summaries, the highlight turned out to be an exchange between a Stalinist in the audience and Shachtman, who had quoted from a sharp criticism of the Russian actions in Hungary. The Stalinist yelled out, "What Catholic paper are you reading from?" Shachtman was reading, of course, from the *Daily Worker*, as he readily pointed out to the audience.

As for Winter's apology that all was not clear in Hungary, Shachtman drove home the point that all Stalinist apologists are marked by one trait: In a second they leap to a firm position against imperialism in Egypt, in Asia or anywhere else in the world. They have a quick opinion about everything everywhere; but strangely they become confused, or not sure, or don't have enough facts at hand, when the situation involves Stalinist imperialism. "You can't get away with that trick any more," Shachtman told him.

The Rev. Henry Hitt Crane of the Central Methodist Church acted as moderator, and he did a good job. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Detroit Fellowship of Reconciliation chapter.

This was the largest political debate of this kind ever held in Detroit and it stimulated lively discussion before and afterwards in the labor movement here. As yet, there has been no account of it in the Stalinist press, but it may well appear this weekend in the Michigan edition of the *Worker*. Our own viewpoint is that for the Stalinists these kind of debates are disaster, and very hard for the remnants of the Stalinist movement to take.

"ANNEXATION"—1917 AND 1956

Though the following passage sounds as if it might be written in the light of the present Russian suppression of the Hungarian people, it dates to November 8, 1917.

On that day, the Soviet Congress in Petrograd, setting up the new Russian revolutionary government, adopted a "Peace Declaration" to the world, drafted by Lenin. It called for an immediate "just and democratic peace," "without annexations or indemnities." It then defined annexations "in accordance with the legal concepts of democracy in general and of the working class in particular," and went on to specify:

"If any nation whatsoever is detained by force within the boundaries of a certain state, and if that nation, contrary to its expressed desire—whether such desire is made manifest in the press, national assemblies, party relations, or in protests and uprisings against national oppression—is not given the right to determine the form of its own state life by free voting and completely free from the presence of the troops of the annexing or stronger state, and without the least pressure, then the adjoining of that nation by the stronger state is annexation, i.e., seizure by force and violence."

THE POLISH REVOLUTION

THE GOMULKA REGIME VERSUS DEMOCRATIZATION

By PHILIP COBEN

Poland is a land seething with revolutionary ferment from the bottom up, explosive in its possibilities: this is the key to present developments there.

In every department of political, social and cultural life, genuinely democratic socialist voices are here and there raised from the ranks or from elected spokesmen or from publicists—such as Bielicki's honest report on Hungary which we reprinted last week. These are the portents of revolution.

The other thing to be understood is that the regime on top, with Gomulka as its leader and spokesman, is presently engaged in desperately fighting against the sweep of this movement; it is trying to sit on the lid, to clamp down again, to re-totalitarianize, to hurl the new revolutionary spirit which wells up, if only in stormy street demonstrations, back into the safe and controlled bureaucratic channels where it can be quieted down and dissipated, so that the regime can consolidate itself against the people.

This course of revolution versus counter-revolution came out into the open with the Poznan uprising; flared to higher levels in the "October days," when the revolution forced a shake-up of the government and the rehabilitation of Gomulka as the only man who could control the masses; and is sizzling now under the heat of the Hungarian Revolution and the hatred of the Russian forces still occupying the country.

In all of this, the emphasis of Gomulka himself is on returning to or maintaining the old monolithism, keeping all political control in the hands of the ruling Party, maintaining the foundations of the one-party state, combating "spontaneity," and seeking to discredit any hopes of going further to a genuine democracy.

Gomulka has made two important programmatic speeches on this subject, neither of them adequately reported in this country. Every line of their text exudes the feeling of the totalitarian manipulator who is seeking ways to hold developments in the old framework, not the feeling of a man who wants genuine democratization, however prudently.

We have already considered, last week, some aspects of these two speeches of November 4 and 29 ("Warsaw Regime Fights the 'Second Stage'"). They took us to Gomulka's call for party "monolithism": "The Party must be and will be monolithic from top to bottom. . . . The leadership of the Party is monolithic. . . ."

WELL-KNOWN PHRASES

Those old phrases are not isolated. They are an integral part of the whole argument of the November 4 speech.

He is devoting himself to explaining the real meaning of the code-word "democratization":

"The democratization of our life . . . can be put into effect correctly—that is, in accordance with the best interpreted interests of the working people—only when the process of democratization is directed by the Party of the working class. And we are such a Party. The party of the working class in Poland is the Polish United Workers Party [the CP]. The principle that the process of democratization is directed by the party of the working class . . . is an unequivocal canon. Infringement of this principle must inevitably lead to distortion of the process of democratization and to revival and activation of backward trends represented by reactionary and capitalist elements hostile to the rule of the people. All the leading organs of the Party and all the members of the Party must realize this fully."

There is not even an obeisance to the simple idea that "the party of the working class" has to win the leadership of the people in a free and democratic

process, rather than itself control the "democratization."

On the contrary, Gomulka specifically polemizes against "spontaneity" in mass action—this in the land of Rosa Luxemburg. Speaking of "the process of the change in Party authorities," he says this movement is "healthy" but—

"Here and there, however, the movement bears marks of spontaneity, and the task in point is to contain it within the framework of the statute."

The constant stress and repetition is that the Party must be all-powerful, monolithically united, ruthless, all-controlling, etc.—well-known phrases which Gomulka uses in the well-known manner because of what they will convey to the hearers.

Party elections, he emphasizes, must be "aimed at strengthening the unity of the Party," etc. But this is the typically Stalinist concept of the role of elections, especially in the midst of boiling issues when it is necessary precisely to let people divide in accordance with the range of democratic opinion.

Party elections, Gomulka continues, must be used to "strengthen the party's political influence and guidance of the masses," etc. But outside, in the factories and down in the ranks, the regime is being inundated with resolutions, addresses, letters and appeals for the task of cleansing the party of its discredited Stalinist cadres. This is what the ranks are thinking about. As we saw last week, this is what Gomulka thundered against (while in actual fact the bureaucracy was being weeded out by spontaneous mass action below.)

All that Gomulka keeps hammering away at is: "Party organizations must

be politically and ideologically armed and made capable of resisting all the provocative attempts at exploiting the processes which are taking place in our country for anti-Soviet action or for active hostile action against the people's rule and the interests of the nation." We must be "primarily animated by one aim—the consolidation of the power and unity of the Party," etc.

We must stop all this from going any further: this is the motif.

DON'T WAIT FOR THE BUS

He is speaking, by the way, on the very day (Nov. 4) when the Russian butchers have launched their second treacherous assault on the Hungarian people. He refers to it glancingly as "the situation in which Hungary found herself today." The next words that follow are:

"We must closely and ruthlessly carry out the directives of the Party and the People's Government. (Prolonged applause.)"

And then he inveighs against hot-heads, irresponsible people, adventurers and rabble-rousers.

His speech of November 29 was devoted primarily to the coming elections, as we will see, but of course in this connection he also polemizes against any genuine democratization. As usual—as has been done by every Stalinist from Stalin to Tito—he does this under the cover of attacking "bourgeois parties."

Here is a clear passage:

"Those politicians who have no program may say to us that 'your program does not contain our postulate of freedom for all parties.' Indeed our program does not contain this. Its omission is explained by a very simple reason. Freedom for all political parties also means freedom for the bourgeois parties. Here again we ask the question: what pro-

gram is offered by those bourgeois parties for which our political opponents demand freedom? Do they think we should believe them when they tell us that the bourgeois parties want to build socialism in Poland? (Applause.) This is only a skirt-chaser discovered in a closet explaining that he is waiting there for a bus. (Laughter and prolonged applause.)"

He is saying: even if a "bourgeois party" says it's for participating in political life within the framework of the "socialist" system, we must not permit them to do so, because they are liars. . . .

But what is he afraid of? That the "bourgeois parties" will win the people, in spite of all propaganda handicaps, etc., and that the "Communists" will lose the people if they permit a free choice? On this basis they will build only the kind of "socialism" that Russia already has—none.

But of course the "bourgeois parties" are not the real problem for Gomulka—only the bogey. Why not permit freedom for other socialist or workers' parties, at least? (Given half a chance, a mass Social-Democratic Party would spring to birth in Poland in 24 hours.) Gomulka does not say. But this unanswered question is part of the reason why Gomulka has emphasized the rehabilitation of former Social-Democrats and their integration into the ruling party.

THEORY OF DEMOCRACY

In his speech Gomulka continues on to stress that only the one ruling party can exist. "In short," he adds immediately after the crushing political point about the skirt-chaser, "our program can be opposed only by a program for the restoration of capitalism," and "Those who favor the restoration of capitalism in Poland derive their inspiration from the alien imperialist centers." Thus Gomulka starts talking like the Kadars of Hungary.

He repeats in a few minutes: "For another Poland, that is, for a program different from that advanced by our Party, there is no room." But as a matter of fact, he is wrong in spite of himself, because a "different program" does have room in Poland, namely, room in the streets where masses demonstrate for a new course, against the regime, even though with loyalist slogans.

He even launches into an amazing passage where he works out a historical rejection of any and every perspective of "broad democracy." The context is the fact that the Polish press is widely saying that, even if "full" democracy can't be granted right now, some time in the future it will be possible. Gomulka also concedes this, that "the time will come when socialism will have no framework whatsoever which might restrict the free activities of any man."

So he immediately follows this up by pointing out that this, however, refers to that pie-in-the-sky classless society which is the Never-neverland of Stalinism.

"History teaches us that in conditions of class communities, broad democracy and freedom for the most retrogressive social forces gives birth to the gravediggers of democracy and freedom, to fascist dictatorship. An example of this is Italian Fascism and German Nazism."

One must savor this theory to get its full Stalinist flavor of anti-Marxism, ignorance and simple fraud. So fascism is born out of capitalist democracy because it is too democratic, too broad in its freedom. . . . that's the trouble!

NOT FOR USE

This is followed by another general formulation about democratization which goes to the roots of Stalinism:

"The framework of democratization proclaimed by the 8th Plenum of our Party can become ever wider on the condition that democratization will not be used for the purpose of undermining and weakening the foundations of socialism and the people's rule by bourgeois and reactionary forces and tendencies" (italics added)—which means, as long as this "democratization" is not used by opponents to carry on any opposition.

But democracy has no meaning without the right of political opposition and organization, which provides a choice.

The concept of a choice is also the key to the way in which the Gomulka regime is engaged in rigging the January election.

The gimmick is essentially the same as
(Continued on page 7)

Revolutionary Students Unmask Rigging of Election in Poland

Confirmation of the Gomulka regime's election-rigging has come fast, and with it another earnest of the Polish revolution. On Dec. 18, a mass meeting of Warsaw students threatened to boycott the scheduled election because of its rigged character.

In a heated rally of 2000 at the Polytechnic School, "speaker after speaker" attacked the "secret methods" used to choose the candidates for the National Front list. "They charged that candidates had been 'imposed,' that persons with no popular support had been selected, and that the way was being prepared for election results to meet the party's dictates rather than the nation's will." (N. Y. Times, Gruson from Warsaw, Dec. 19.)

A "roar of support" greeted one speaker who said that "the election preparations hardly varied from those during the last 10 years when the Communists gave the people no voice at all in the selection of Parliament."

The people were called on to agitate against acceptance of the rigged list. The following plan was proposed for a political demonstration at the polls: since a candidate needed 50 per cent of the vote for election, voters were asked not to vote for a full slate but only for those they "had confidence in"; this could reject the others and force a second election to fill vacancies.

Warsaw students were in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement during the "October days." The probabilities are that the regime will now have to make further concessions at least in form or by replacing individual candidates who are particularly disliked.

This came a day after an announcement which, no doubt, the regime hoped would quiet discontent: a new military agreement with Russia whereby Warsaw is given more control, at least on paper, over the movement of Russian troops which are "temporarily" in Poland. This concession by Moscow came after days of mounting demonstrations and disaffection in various cities of Poland, culminating in the action of the Poznan workers which we reported last week. The new agreement was also designed to be the best kind of election propaganda for the regime, in anticipation of the vote.

But it is obviously not enough to quiet the Polish revolution.

The action of the Warsaw students, tearing the mask off the election-rigging, also offers an ironic commentary on the value of certain reports on the "democratization" of the Gomulka regime. For example, the Nation has carried dispatches from Warsaw by Claude Bourdet, the French neutralist and long-time Stalinoid, painting the scheduled Polish election as very very democratic. On the crucial point of how the candidates were to be selected for the single list, Bourdet explained that the method was equivalent to that of the American primary!

All this happened before, of course, in the erection of myths about Yugoslav Titoism, often by the same people; but now things are different. The Polish revolution is gathering forces; its voices are able to speak out against the myth-makers, apologists, whitewashers, and plain mushheads who can't tell a revolutionary democrat from an alarmed totalitarian making concessions.

Wales: Nationalism and Labor

We received the contribution in the lefthand column with the suggestion that LA readers might be interested in this Welsh group. We know our readers will also be interested in the opinion of the Welsh Labor movement, which condemns the Nationalists as socially and politically reactionary. Here they are both.—Ed.

Nationalist View

By DOUGLAS STUCKEY

London

I should like to draw the attention of your readers to the resurgence of national feeling in Great Britain, in Wales and Scotland, and particularly to the rise of the socialist-nationalist Welsh Party, *Plaid Cymru*. In spite of the sometimes naive and antiquarian antics of a fringe of these nationalists, the radical program of the Welsh Party deserves equal attention with national movements in Africa and Asia.

The Welsh Party aim at dominion status within the British Commonwealth and the construction of a cooperative commonwealth. Workers' control of industry has been adopted as part of the official programme. Many of the leaders of *Y Blaid* are former Labor Party members and the growing numbers of youth attracted to the *Blaid* are alarming Transport House [Labor Party headquarters]. Tories and Labor have combined to ban broadcasting time for these nationalists but nevertheless they are contesting every Welsh seat at the next general election. (Last time eleven seats were fought.) Two WP members serve on the International Committee of the European Third Way.

One million Welsh people still speak the ancient Welsh language and because their ruling class tended to migrate to England, a more united and classless community has arisen west of Offa's Dyke.

Wales used to vote solidly Liberal; today it is largely Labor. In the days of its youth the Labor Party favored "Home Rule" for Wales and Scotland but the present bureaucratic machine needs the big Welsh vote to achieve power at Westminster, so it stamps hard on those MPs (five) who have supported the "Parliament for Wales" campaign. Recent conservative economic reports by the Welsh universities suggest that self-government is certainly a practical proposition.

To many libertarian socialists over here it seems that freedom for Wales will mean freedom for a great experiment in economic democracy, something far more genuinely socialist than the state ownership of the social-democratic parties. The Welsh are people nonconformist in religion and politics.

The Welsh Party may or may not deserve your support; it does merit your consideration.

N. B.: There is a respectable history of socialist nationalism in Scotland and Wales: Keir Hardie, Cunningham Graham, R. C. Muirhead (founder of *Forward*), to mention but three good names.

Labor's View

By NESS EDWARDS

Newport, Wales

Even in Britain there is a degree of "double-think" and "double-talk." The small nationalist movements in Britain seem past masters in their technique. Invariably they are anti-labor in action and pro-labor in words.

The article of Douglas Stuckey is quite typical. His attacks are all on the British Labor Party.

His "million" Welsh-speaking are less than 750,000, and these mainly in the non-industrial areas—certainly not the more progressive areas either industrially or politically.

It is all nonsense to talk about a more unified and classless community in Wales "because the ruling class tend to migrate to England." The class structure in Wales is precisely that of the rest of Britain, resting upon the same economic basis, with the same economic and political conflict.

As for the alleged dictatorship of the Westminster bureaucracy, it is sufficient for a candidate to be sponsored from Transport House to ensure that candidate failing to get a seat.

The Welsh Nationalist Party with its membership of 12,500 makes a lot of noise, but has never yet won a seat in the House of Commons. For the most part its membership is confined to the professional classes—teachers, preachers, and lecturers.

It has no following in any of the trade unions. Nor has it ever engaged in any of the class struggles that Wales has been famous for.

The "Nats" talk loosely about dominion status with a Parliament for Wales with its own judicial, financial and economic arrangements. Much of its inspiration is from the past, including the erection of a statue to a feudal prince of a pretty bloody reputation. The world is full of constitution-mongers and the "Nats" can be numbered among them. Indeed "Nationalism" seems to be an alibi for not taking sides in the classic struggle between capital and labor.

The fragmentation of Britain back to a semi-tribal basis is not the way of economic salvation. It is the road back to a lower standard of living and a flight from Wales of all the new economic projects which the Labor Government injected into Wales.

The economic and political isolation of Wales can only lead to economic and political disintegration, and laying the basis for a migration from Wales reminiscent of the migration from England.

Readers of Labor Action Take the Floor

The Accused

To the Editor:

The nation has been shocked by the kidnap-murder of month-old Peter Weinberger, by Angelo LaMarca.

LaMarca's own testimony on November 27 is an irrefutable indictment of this vicious capitalist system.

"Threatening debtors," said the defendant, "were wrecking my health . . . and I was afraid for my family, because they were the most precious things in my life." He went on to describe his childhood in a Brooklyn tenement, and how poverty had twice driven him to attempts on his life. He recounted a dozen business ventures after his army service in World War II, that had ended in failure. "Finally," he related, "debts started to accumulate after my purchase of a new house last May. . . . A 'sharp' salesman sold me a \$900 food freezer and \$500 worth of storm windows I

thought I was getting for \$250. . . . The builder advanced me money for part of the down payment and closing fees on the house." To satisfy debtors, LaMarca had to borrow \$400 from a Brooklyn loan shark at \$100 interest. "By last July," he said, "the builder was threatening eviction, and the loan shark had implied that my family would be harmed unless I paid my debt. . . . On the day of the kidnapping, I went to Brooklyn in an unsuccessful attempt to contact another loan shark, and visited acquaintances in an effort to get small loans to buy food for my family."

It was debtors, landlords, and loan sharks who killed little Peter Weinberger, as surely as did the hand of Angelo LaMarca. We cannot excuse nor exculpate this man for the role he played, but we can understand the necessities and pressure that drove him to this baneful act. Society will demand a harsh requital from LaMarca, but from this same society a thousand new transgressors will emerge to foster new atrocities.

CYNTHIA SPEARE

YOU and SCIENCE

REVOLUTION AND MODERN TECHNOLOGY

By GENE LISTER

The recent uprisings against the Russian army in Eastern Europe, particularly Hungary, once again bring up the question of the role of modern weapons in a revolution.

From our archives we have dug up an article entitled "Modern Weapons and Revolution" by T. H. Wintringham, published in the early thirties in the British *Labour Monthly*. This was long before today's weapons of "total destruction."

The article was written during polemics against the Independent Labor Party whose position on the futility of forceful resistance against a ruling class possessing such weapons is given in the following quotations:

"The people who talk of insurrection and violence as a road of escape from poverty are still thinking in terms of barricades and stone throwing."

"And they must learn that the old proverb now reads that those who take to the bow and arrow will perish by the tank."

And again: "Should a revolutionary situation arise today the wealthy classes would fight . . . and they would certainly win. Modern science, applied to military technique, concentrates effective power in fewer and fewer hands. At the moment power rests with the air force. The air force could bomb a camp of unemployed, a concentration of strikers, or marching revolutionaries, out of existence in ten minutes."

In answer to this Wintringham points out that, as military technique and technology grow more complex, there is a greater dependence of the armed forces on industry and transport in the whole economic structure. Complex technology also promotes the growth of class differentiation within the armed forces and con-

ditions, the normal operation of their arbitrary discipline. The weapons in question, no matter how powerful, are in the hands of people from the lower classes more often with sympathy for those threatening revolt.

Wintringham also stated that the then ultimate in "horror" weapons, poison gas, could not be used because of its effect on the users as well as the rebels. This remark is even more pointed when applied to the use of atomic weapons today.

In fact, in the twenty-five years since the above article was written, the dependence of ruling classes, in pursuing their imperialist aims, on weapons of total destruction limits ever more their use in domestic crises. Their goal is obviously not eliminating the people essential to the continuing function of the war machine but rather quelling them into submissive cooperation.

Wintringham closes his article with the statement:

"The development of modern military technique is necessary to each capitalist power in its effort to outstrip its rivals . . . [however] look at these weapons through the eyes of men who know how they are made and serviced and supplied and handled, and you will see that every advance in the technique of warfare is a new danger to capitalism in the present period of history, the period of new wars and new revolutions."

This thought can be brought up to date by adding "and the Stalinist bureaucracy" after "capitalism" above.

It is more than a footnote to history that Wintringham was a Stalinist writing in a British Stalinist mouthpiece. As always, the encouragement to revolutionary socialism is that "truth will out" and is a double-edged sword which eventually prevails no matter by whom spoken.

Labor Action FORUM

New York City

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27

A Guest Speaker, just returned from abroad, discusses

A FIRSTHAND IMPRESSION OF BRITAIN

Activities and Perspectives of the Labor Party

8:30 p.m. — Labor Action Hall, 114 West 14 Street, N. Y. C.

The talk by Hal Draper on "Behind Israel's Preventive War" originally scheduled for Dec. 27 will be given at a later date to be announced.

The New York ISL and the Young Socialist League

invite you to our joint

New Year's Eve Party

which by definition is on the non-blue Monday of December 31 and will start at 9 to go on and on into the night . . .

DANCING . . . REFRESHMENTS . . . SOCIALIZING

Labor Action Hall, 114 West 14 Street, N. Y. C.

Frankness

Forbes Magazine of Business, in an extraordinary onset of frankness, gave "BOSSES DELIGHT" as the title of the following item:

"Dr. H. Azima of the Allen Memorial Institute in Montreal has found a substance which, when injected into mice, keeps them running for the rest of their lives, stopping only to eat and sleep."

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Editor: HAL DRAPER. Business Mgr: L. G. SMITH. Associate Editors: GORDON HASKELL, BEN HALL.

Order ALL your books from Labor Action Book Service, 114 West 14 Street, N. Y. C.

Anvil Features 'Who Rules America?'

The latest issue of *Anvil and Student Partisan*, dated Winter 1957, has just rolled off the press and is ready for circulation on college campuses throughout the country. The current number of the country's only student socialist magazine is a highly interesting and attractive one, and will undoubtedly enjoy a brisk sale and widespread popularity.

The issue contains many articles and editorials on current political developments: the American political and social scene (including an analysis of the 1956 elections), the Hungarian revolution, the imperialist attack on Egypt, the French war against Algeria, and the relationship of sociology to Marxism. In the cultural sphere it includes discussions of the French novelist Balzac, "Three Penny Opera," and Elvis Presley, as well as poetry.

One of the most attractive features of the Winter 1957 *Anvil* consists of the striking cover and profuse illustrations which are to be found throughout the magazine. Artist Paul Cowles deserves a great deal of the credit for the over-all effect of the magazine.

Featured in this issue is a trio of articles on the American scene collectively entitled "Who Rules In America?" The first of the three is an analysis of the election campaigns and results, discussing the reasons for the Eisenhower victory and examining the prospects for American politics.

The second, by *Anvil* editor George Rawick, examines C. Wright Mills' book, *The Power Elite*, and discusses Mills' treatment of the social power of the ruling class. In the last of the three, Christopher Marks deals with the "Myth of the New Deal," contrasting the realities of the Roosevelt regime and the myths

commonly propagated about it in liberal circles.

Two editorials, one on Hungary and one on Egypt, take up the most significant international events of the last two months. The editors assess the world-shaking importance of the Hungarian Revolution for the socialist future of mankind, treating specifically the signal role of the students in the Hungarian events. The editorial on Egypt analyzes the imperialist nature of the attack on that country.

In "The 'Dirty War' on Algeria," A. Giacometti discusses the views of various segments of French society on France's imperialist subjugation of Algeria. He describes the activities of both North African and French students in relation to the Algerian struggle for national independence.

Novelist Harvey Swados contributes a perceptive analysis of the contrast between play and audience in "Three Penny Opera—Three Dollar Seats." Michael Harrington discusses the strands of romanticism and realism in the works of Balzac in an article on that writer.

"What's Wrong with Elvis the Pelvis?" by Martha Curti examines rock-and-roll music, both from the musical and sociological standpoints. Don Thomas, in "Sociology and Marxism," treats of the relations between academic and Marxist sociology.

Anvil sells for 25 cents per copy. Bundle orders can be obtained at the rate of 20 cents per copy in orders of five or more. *Challenge* readers are urged to become *Anvil* salesmen on their campuses and in their communities. The magazine, either singly or in bundles, can be ordered from *Anvil*, 36 East 10 Street, New York, N. Y.

Socialist, Communist Debate Hungary's Fight at CCNY

By R. D.

New York, Dec. 15

For the first time in many years, students at City College had the opportunity of hearing the ideas of democratic socialism and those of the Communist Party and its supporters on the same platform.

On December 13 over 50 students heard Gordon Haskell, associate editor of *LABOR ACTION*; Seymour Gerson, a leader of the New York State Communist Party; and William Mandel, author and contributor to such magazines as the *American Socialist*, currently teaching courses at the Jefferson School. They discussed the recent events in Hungary and Poland.

Gerson, tracing the history of "the tragedy in Hungary," discussed the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU and the processes of "democratization, liberalization," etc. which were supposedly set in motion at that time. The events of Poland and Hungary were caused by resistance to this policy, resistance which the Polish CP finally overcame.

Supporting the first uprising of the Hungarian workers (which on October 24 the Russian troops met with bullets) as a democratic upsurge of the masses and not fascist, Gerson stated that this was the "considered and collective judgment of the Communist Party."

Speaking of the November 4 massacre, however, he somehow shifted the ground to talk of the "damaged prestige of the USSR" and quoted from an interview in the *Reporter* with Bela Kovacs, a leader of the Hungarian Smallholders Party, referring to the possibility that there

might be some elements of white terror.

Of course Gerson failed to mention (as did the *Daily Worker* in its report of the interview) the context in which this appeared, namely a statement by Kovacs that this was a democratic revolution, that nobody wants the old regime reinstated, and that "had there been any attempt to put them in power, all Hungary would have instantly risen."

Gerson's solution would have been to seal the borders of Hungary to prevent the alleged influx of fascists, arm the workers, form joint patrols in the streets and then have the government negotiate with the armed workers. (The same workers who rose up against the government?)

Gordon Haskell pointed to the fact that the present Kadar regime in Hungary can rally no popular support in the entire country, and to the efforts by some to "smear the Hungarian revolution with the brush of fascism" despite the fact that the regime has not been able to produce any fascists for public display. Haskell posed the question of who was leading the revolution as the key to the entire situation.

Exposing the whole "fascist" argument and referring to Joseph Clark's article in the *Daily Worker* in which he practically admits how the whole fairy tale was concocted, Haskell went on to describe the Revolutionary Workers Councils as the organs of the revolution and as virtually identical with the soviets of 1917 in Russia.

Hitting at Gerson's implication that any opposition to Russia put one in the camp of American imperialism, Haskell spelled out his own socialist criticism of the Communist regimes. We can get together and denounce the U. S. State Department and capitalism in general anytime, he said, but that doesn't mean we must apologize for the brutalities of Stalinism as exemplified in this massacre of Hungarian workers.

"UNDERSTANDING"

Mandel dealt mainly with Poland, declaring that there were sweeping changes in the direction of democracy while retaining the "socialistic" framework of the economy. In dealing with Hungary, however, Mandel—while not defending the Russian slaughter—dealt with it primarily in the context of "understanding" how the Russians felt about the Hungarians who fought so bitterly against them during the war. And since the Hungarian workers did not rise up against fascism but fought and died for it, according to Mandel, this presumably cast some doubts on the genuine democratic nature of the revolution or at least on the ability of the Hungarians to create any democratic institutions.

In this regard, both Gerson and Mandel emphasized how much they could "appreciate" and "understand" the Russian hostility to the Hungarians, particularly in view of capitalist encirclement with American bomber bases.

Haskell pointed out that the Russians weren't attacking these bomber bases, however. They were shooting down Hungarian workers in the streets, for wanting to publish their own newspaper.

While sociological and psychological reasons were interesting, he explained, "understanding" them can nevertheless be accompanied with the most intense hostility to their political implications. Too often such arguments are used as apologies for reactionary political events.

He suggested that a Marxist class analysis of the Stalinist system would be far more fruitful for an understanding of these momentous events in Eastern Europe.

Report on YSL Tour: A Political 'Thaw' in Sight

By DON HARRIS

The tour of the Midwest units of the YSL which I have just completed was an extremely heartening and encouraging experience. In almost every place visited, there was evidence that a "thaw" in political life has begun to set in.

There is a new atmosphere, a new interest in politics, a tremendous interest in the Hungarian Revolution, a feeling that a new beginning can be made in building a socialist movement. These sentiments are not confined to members of the YSL but are widespread among other groups of socialists, independent radicals and even unaffiliated students.

Wherever the YSL exists, whether as an official unit or an organizing committee of a few members, it is active in whatever way is possible. In Philadelphia it participates in a discussion group which has drawn over 50 students to its biweekly meetings. The latter group cooperated with the local YSL in sponsoring the first public meeting of this tour on the Hungarian Revolution. Although it was one of the smallest of all, this meeting produced a lively and interesting discussion.

In Pittsburgh I had the opportunity of meeting several new members of the YSL, as well as speaking at a public meeting on Hungary. The Pittsburgh unit of the YSL, although initially small, is showing a steady rate of growth and carries on a wide range of activity which continually brings it new friends and sympathizers.

More than anywhere else, it succeeds in presenting the ideas of the YSL to the general public through the letter columns of the local press. In addition, it participates in numerous youth and

students activities. Pittsburgh is one of the brightest spots in the YSL picture.

Yellow Springs, O., was next, for a meeting on the Antioch campus sponsored by a student socialist discussion club. The meeting was small, but I was assured that one of the reasons was that the entire campus was engaged in activity on behalf of Hungarian relief. A number of members of the club showed agreement with the YSL's advocacy of the desirability of a labor party, and in general indicated a high degree of interest in socialism and in various proposals for socialist unification in particular.

In Chicago the YSL has just finished a quarter of intensive activity, which included two picket lines, several public meetings, and a regular program of educational meetings. In addition to their own meetings, YSL members participate in the NAACP, in a joint socialist forum with the local SP branch, and are interested in various proposals now being advanced for other types of joint socialist discussion and activity. The public meeting on the Hungarian Revolution was well attended, and was followed by a general discussion not only on that topic but on the significance of all the discussions and debates being arranged between different organizations. The existence in Chicago of a relatively substantial group of SP members produces a strong feeling for the desirability of socialist unity.

PROSPECTS AHEAD

The meeting in Cleveland was organized by the local YSL, but students from Western Reserve University attended; following the meeting there was a discussion on how to organize some kind

of socialist student group at that school. Although this university has a reputation for being "uninterested in politics," there is a good chance that YSLers in cooperation with other socialists will soon be able to organize some kind of group.

The YSL unity which existed at Oberlin College two years ago ceased to exist when its members graduated and moved to other areas. As a result I went to Oberlin with no idea of the campus situation. Only two weeks earlier, however, 1000 students had traveled to Cleveland to participate in a demonstration on behalf of the Hungarian Revolution; so it was not surprising to find that the campus also has a loose discussion group which was engaged in studying books and pamphlets about socialism and Marxism. Its program chairman extended an invitation to the YSL to send any future speakers on tour to address it, in the same way that other socialist organizations have been invited in the past. Thus an interest in the ideas and program of socialism still remains very much alive at Oberlin.

At the end of this tour, I was left with the feeling of the vigor, political level and morale of almost every member and unit of the YSL visited. Even where there are only a few members, they work with the greatest determination and under difficult circumstances.

Another impression I received was of the unique position of the YSL. In most places it is the only socialist group on campus. Nowhere was there any sizable group of Stalinist members or sympathizers. Other socialists whom I met were almost entirely in favor of the need to make a new start.

Coolie Labor Under the American Flag:

GUAM

ISLAND ON YOUR CONSCIENCE

By HAL DRAPER

The coolie-wage issue which we have described for American Samoa also applies to Guam, but there the situation is worse and more complex. For one thing it is not so much a question of the native Guamanians, who have their own problems, as of a specially imported coolie labor force—Filipinos.

Here too the dollar minimum wage of the States is supposed to apply. But the law has not been enforced, and the government has no intention to enforce it.

Instead, bills were presented in the last Congress to cover up the violation of the law, by (1) giving the secretary of Labor power to supersede the Fair Labor Standards Act with his own setting of the minimum-wage scale; and (2) exempting employers retroactively from their liability for the back wages that they should have been paying in accordance with the law.

1

Coolie System for Filipinos

Here the coolie-labor system is on a much bigger scale than in Samoa. Guam is an important navy base, with considerable navy construction and other work going on, much of it through private contractors (U. S. companies).

There are over 10,000 Filipino workers that have been brought over to Guam (Philippine Ambassador Romulo gives the figure of 13,000 for both Guam and Wake Island). Over 7000 are working on navy contracts; the air force employs about 1500 more; and 2000 work for private employers.

In 1947 Washington and Manila exchanged notes agreeing on terms by which U. S. contracting firms could recruit Filipino workers for Guam. The attraction is that a Filipino can earn more on Guam than he can from the wages available in the depressed conditions of his own country.

But this "more"—counting in allowance for benefits—is only from 53 to 57 cents an hour! A Filipino may get 75 cents an hour in a job that would pay an American craftsman at his elbow \$3 an hour for the same work.

But, as we have explained in the case of Samoa, it is flatly illegal to pay this pittance to workers in American territory.

Everybody including the government admits it is illegal. In fact, the employers, government representatives and investigating congressmen are all equally afraid that "some bright lawyer" might sue on behalf of the workers—and collect millions.

Moreover, at this last session of Congress Guam (unlike Samoa) was not exempted from the minimum wage. So it still legally applies. But there is no more intention of enforcing it than before, as far as the eye can see.

On Guam, moreover, it is the government itself that would have to pay up if the contractors are found by a court to be liable for the back wages which they have been keeping from their coolies (estimated at \$3 million). This is so because of a provision in the contracts. So the contractors are sitting pretty, but the Defense Department is in a sweat to get out from under by pushing the proposed legislation through Congress.

THE IDEA NEVER CAME UP

Of the proposal for retroactive exemption from the minimum wage, the AFL-CIO's legislative representative Walter J. Mason told the congressional committee last February 28:

"[This provision] which would give retroactive immunity to past violators of the law could establish an extremely dangerous precedent. Congress should not now deprive workers of the wages which they were entitled to receive at a time when the Fair Labor Standards Act fully applied to them. Any employer who failed to comply with the law did so in full knowledge that the law applied to him."

Now there is no doubt that this is true. It was openly put on the record of the hearing committee.

A Defense Department lawyer pointed out that in some other cases the government might get off the hook by telling a court there was a mixup in "good faith," but in the case of Guam—"In my opinion, gentlemen, it would be extremely difficult to establish a 'good-faith' defense that would get us out of that retroactive liability. . . . Because of the obvious geographic application of the act by its own terms, it would be very difficult to argue that there was no knowledge that the act did apply."

Incredible as it may seem, this is not pointed out by the government lawyer to show that the violation of the law must stop—this thought literally never came up from any government quarter at any of the sessions!—but only to show why the law has to be changed.

The Labor Department admitted that it had never even set up the most elementary machinery to check labor conditions in Guam, let alone enforce the law. Its repre-

sentative Lundquist told of his ignorance as to the wages paid.

CONGRESSMAN ELLIOTT: "The truth is the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor does not have any facilities by which to enforce the application of this act in most of the areas that you mentioned here [U. S. possessions]. And, furthermore, it does not even have the facilities to learn whether or not the local people are paying the 75-cent minimum [now \$1], or, as a matter of fact, it does not know what is being paid in most of these areas. Is that not true when you get right down to the administration of the act?"

LUNDQUIST: "We have no field offices, no investigators in those areas. That is correct."

Guam is an excellent example of how labor laws on the books mean little unless there is an organized labor movement to enforce them. The passage of social legislation does not supersede the class struggle.

NO GRATITUDE!

A procession of administration officers appeared before the committee to plead against the minimum wage for Guam: from State, Interior, Labor and Defense; and in the latter case from all three arms, navy, army and air force. All kinds of pretexts were given for keeping wages at the coolie level.

Prominent was the one we discussed in the case of Samoa: one should not "disrupt" the economies of neighboring areas that are affected by developments in the U. S. territory. Admiral Parks for the navy even directly cited the case of Morocco, where French capital bitterly opposed the paying of high U. S. wages because this "spoils" the natives for the lower-paying French exploiters.

Making this argument in the case of Guam, however, can only have reference to the Philippines, the home of the coolie labor supply. But as we shall see, the Philippine government and that whole country squarely backed the dollar wage for its citizens.

The tender solicitude which the American officials expressed lest they "disrupt" Guam or the Philippines with higher wages awakes no answering echo of gratitude in the Guamanians or Filipinos who are being saved from the appalling danger of being paid a dollar an hour.

THE ANTI-SEAT-PINCHER

The military gentlemen had a second and more honest motivation to explain: the workers must continue to get coolie wages in order to save money for the Defense Department budget. As Admiral Parks said, "we are principally interested in the Department of Defense in stretching the defense dollars as far as they will go."

This motivation we can believe, but then two questions arise: (1) Why all the twaddle about rescuing the natives from the horrors of a dollar wage that would "disrupt" their economy? (2) Wouldn't this motivation also justify wage-cutting in the U. S. itself, if they could get away with it?

The following colloquy took place:

REP. LANDRUM (D-Ga.): "So, by the use of the amount of Guamanian labor that you can employ and by the use of these Filipinos which [sic] you have brought in there, you are . . . saving the American taxpayers at least \$30 million per year?"

ADMIRAL PARKS: "Yes, sir."

LANDRUM: "Now, then, the only reason being advanced presently for increasing the expenditure of the American taxpayers in order to maintain this is to quiet the alleged propaganda from some of our enemies that we are failing to pay standard wages for labor being done on American soil. Is that right?"

PARKS: "That is as I understand it, sir."

LANDRUM: "My own opinion is that I am getting tired of spending money every time somebody pinches me in the seat to turn around and give them another dollar."

PHILIPPINE PROTEST

This Southern intellect might have continued in this statesmanlike vein, but James Roosevelt interrupted to say, "I am well persuaded by your argument" but would the Defense Department object if the wage restrictions were lifted only on "defense work"?

Parks said that would be all right with the Defense Department. But it was pointed out that the bills as drawn make no such distinction, and could establish Guam as a haven for runaway sweatshops.

In any case (unlike the French in the case of Morocco) it was precisely the Philippine government that has fought against the proposed bills to continue the coolie status of Filipino workers and others on Guam. This may have been the main reason why Guam was not finally included in the bills when they were passed by Congress.

The Philippine ambassador Carlos P. Romulo wrote in a letter that the exemption of the Filipino workers on the islands from the minimum-wage law "will be an act of discrimination against them," and he added ominously: "the implications that will be drawn by the peoples of Asia from such legislation are of such far-

Earlier this year a subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor held hearings (Feb. 15 to April 18) on a group of bills designed to kill the application of the Minimum Wage Act to American possessions, particularly Samoa and Guam. For more on this background, see last week's article "Who Cares About Samoa?"

The present article on the situation on Guam is based on the two volumes of testimony and documents which came out of these hearings.

reaching significance" that one had to understand it: In an official protest to Dulles, Romulo stressed that "what we are really asking for in their [Filipino workers'] behalf is but the righting of an injustice simply by enforcing an already existing law."

And he said diplomatically: "We must not give the enemies of democracy and freedom an opportunity to distort America's motives and magnify the amendment as a desire of the United States to perpetuate what they will undoubtedly brand as coolie labor."

EMBARRASSED DIPLOMATS

It was this kind of talk that Landrum regarded as a pinch in the seat. To counter Romulo, some State Department troops were brought into the hearing.

One striped-pants commando was Daniel Goott, the department's specialist on international labor affairs, who blandly testified that passage of the bills could not cause any "adverse repercussions abroad" for the simple reason that they do not change "what is already in existence, that is, from a practical standpoint." In other words, since the wage law is violated anyway, passing a law to kill it should not bother anybody.

A second State Department man, Philip Sullivan (Far Eastern Affairs), at least admitted there was a problem, if only because of "the publicity which the papers in the Philippines are giving" to the issue ("the press was full of it"). His contribution was to argue that the bill was not discriminatory as charged because it applied to everybody, not only Filipinos—that is, it permitted Americans also to be paid coolie wages—as if any American would sign up for labor in Guam at 57 cents an hour!

Admiral Parks let slip one reason why the government was so anxious to get Guam removed from minimum-wage coverage. The Philippine government, he explained, has asked for negotiations to revise the 1947 agreements; he wanted Congress to act on the bill urgently "because, frankly, it will strengthen our hands in negotiations with the Philippine government."

Right now, wouldn't it be embarrassing for State Department negotiators to try to argue Philippine negotiators into an agreement which constituted an open and admitted flouting of the U. S. law?

Yet it is important for Washington to beat down Manila's demands. As the Chief of Naval Operations put it bluntly, in a letter in the record on the forthcoming Philippine negotiations: "A departure from the practice of setting wages based upon those prevailing in an overseas area, for which the Philippine government appears to be pressing, could cause a chain reaction affecting other departments which employ non-U. S. citizens in overseas areas."

That is, the coolie-wage system must not be cracked at any point, lest it all be swept away by a "chain reaction" of workers' discontent.

'CLASS LEGISLATION'

The Philippine Trade Union Council also protested "this class legislation" and asked the AFL-CIO "to counteract the reactionary and discriminatory measure."

The AFL-CIO representative Mason followed up with vigorous opposition to the bill. It was "discriminatory . . . class legislation which would establish wage discrimination based on color, race or creed." It was "disappointing" that the first concern of the congressional committee was not to extend the coverage of the wage act to more workers, but was rather to remove workers from its protection. It "would simply feed grist to the mills of the Communist propaganda machine . . . blemish our record as a trustee of people in an underdeveloped area."

He also proposed that if the islands were to be exempted from the wage act, then the setting of the local minimum wage should not be left simply to the secretary of Labor's say-so but should be done, as in the Virgin Islands, by a tripartite commission (industry, labor, government).

In the midst of the congressional hearings, the Guam legislature itself adopted a resolution protesting the exclusion of Guam from the dollar minimum-wage coverage. This leads us into the second part of this situation—the interest of the Guamanians themselves in the matter as distinct from the interest of, or on behalf of, the imported Filipinos.

2

The BPM Way of Life

The population of Guam is over 35,000, of whom 30,803 are local citizens (Guamanians proper). There are over 2700 statesiders resident on the island. (In addition, there are the 10-11,000 Filipinos whom we have discussed.)

In the Guamanians we have a people who have been far more thoroughly assimilated into Western culture than the Samoans. This process was accomplished in

Militarism and Colonialism Distort the Lives of Subject Peoples . . .

large part by the mailed fist, under Spanish rule. It is a very interesting history which we cannot go into here; suffice to say Guam presents a classic case of conversion to civilization through the combined compulsions of cannon and cross. The native Chamorro culture was stamped out with gunpowder and holy water.

But from the massacres and suffering of the past, the Guamanian people have emerged as a people widely respected for ability, intelligence, skills and modernity in outlook. They are no Pacific primitives but well-qualified American citizens. Their economic, social and political problems are eminently modern ones too.

In the background is a high-cost economy based on important necessities, because any other means of subsistence has been destroyed by the civilizers and nothing put in place except a highly militarized economy. This is no South Seas island where the natives can live on coconuts. The cost of living in Guam is higher than in the States, because practically all food, clothing, building materials, household stuff and commercial mechanical equipment have to be brought in by ocean shipment.

Guam legislator Cynthia Torres, testifying in Washington, told the congressional committee:

"If the present way of life in Guam is to continue, the annual cash income of the head of the family must be \$3000 and this is difficult of attainment even should the minimum wage provided by the Fair Labor Standards Act be continued and enforced." She quoted the last cost-of-living survey in Guam: "The estimated total value of purchases of the average family in Guam . . . is \$2970.37. . ."

Now it developed at the hearings that the majority of the Guamanians are already getting the U. S. minimum wage, unlike the Filipinos. What then were the Guamanian representatives, Cynthia Torres and Won Pat, complaining about? They ably explained why the mass of coolie labor in the island depressed the conditions of the Guamanians too.

For one thing, a minor point, if the Filipino laborers on the island got higher wages, they would have more to spend, the extra amounts going to fatten the Guamanian economy, which needed it badly.

For another, Cynthia Torres pointed out, if the wages of one group (the Filipinos) working for the federal government were set by the secretary of Labor at a low level, this would give Guamanian businessmen a lever to push down their own workers' wages.

The Guamanian representatives argued that Guamanians, as U. S. citizens who pay taxes according to the laws of the U. S., should receive all the benefits of other laws free from discrimination.

FORD Q. SQUIRMS

But most important was the fact that the use of cheap Filipino labor was causing unemployment for the more expensive Guamanian labor. The resolution of the Guam legislature referred to "over 3000 American citizens over 18 years of age who are not now gainfully employed." Every year another 500 were added to the potential labor supply.

One reason why these Guamanians were not employed by the navy or other government agencies was simply that the Filipinos were cheaper. The government preferred to train Filipino workers than Guamanian. (Then it cited the Guamanians' lack of training as a reason for not hiring them!)

On this question of Guamanian unemployment, the testimony of the Hon. Ford Q. Elvidge, governor of Guam, presented the honorable governor as a broken-field runner of no mean dodging ability.

He began with the claim that "as a matter of fact, almost everybody on Guam who is employable today can get or has a job." A well-paying job? He didn't say. Are there no unemployed? Under questioning he said first, "I do not know what is meant by the word unemployed," but in the same breath he asserted there are "very few." Pressed further, he admitted he had no

figures. Could he even estimate? "I would not be able to estimate that number." Then he retreated to the formulation that "unemployment on Guam is today at a minimum. . . ." After some more squirming he protested, "I just would not be able to put a number on it."

The same Hon. Ford Q. Elvidge was much more definite when it came to explaining why he was so anxious to save the Guamanian people from the operation of the dollar minimum wage.

Why would this be bad for Guam? "To require employers to pay a minimum of \$1 per hour might cause employers to recruit more expensive but higher skilled labor from Hawaii or the mainland, rather than pay a higher wage to less skilled local labor." This sort of argument may convince some Guamanians that if the U. S. government cannot protect their interests they need a sufficient degree of autonomy to take their own fate in their hands.

As Won Pat said, "Since in federal areas the Legislature of Guam has no jurisdiction over wages or conditions of work, we are not able to protect our people. . . ."

RACIST OPEN-SHOPPERS

Besides, it developed, the leading government contractor on the island followed racist employment practices in refusing to hire Guamanians!

This was the Brown-Pacific-Maxon Construction Company, which reputedly handles about 90 per cent of the military construction jobs on the island.

A Guamanian legislator, J. T. Sablan, was the first to refer to this at the hearings.

"The BPM Construction Co. is a company somewhat owned or controlled by Southerners, and they do not want to hire people other than Caucasians, and the reason why they have Filipinos is because they give them a slave or low salary. Now as proof of that, I don't think there is a single Negro in that unit," he said on the record.

The governor, the Hon. Ford Q. himself, admitted that "it is my understanding they do not hire Guamanians" but "almost exclusively Filipinos" (outside of the better-paying job reserved for white statesiders).

Won Pat of the Guam legislature affirmed that BPM not only refused to hire Guamanians but also would not hire statesiders "who happen to marry a Guamanian."

"Well, it is easy to understand," he added, in answer to a question. "These aliens [Filipinos] are paid what we call in common terminology coolie wages or slave wages . . . and in addition I will say that since they are aliens they will be more submissive to the employer's wishes."

BPM, said Cynthia Torres, has steadfastly refused even to answer letters from the Guam Legislature addressed to them on this matter. (But that Southern statesman, Rep. Landrum, objected to using the word discrimination to describe BPM's policy: "they want to employ some other labor instead of the Guamanians," that's all, he explained.)

It should be added that BPM, it was testified, is an open-shop outfit—as is also a second big contracting firm, Vinnell. There are no labor unions on Guam, Won Pat told the committee; "It is difficult to organize labor on Guam because most of them are working for the government."

Racism, open-shoppism, discrimination, anti-unionism, coolie wages and unemployment—here are some of the distinctive features of an economy forced on the Guamanian people by the American military government's policies.

3

Gun-Molded Economy

But the Guam Legislature's representatives also raised more basic questions about what the U. S. has done to the island's economy and the longer-range in-

terests of the people. Here is the gist of it, in Won Pat's exposition:

"Guam has a payroll economy. It is based on expenditures, largely military, made necessary by maintaining Guam as a military base. Guam has little valuable mineral resources and therefore no mining industry. Its manufacturing industry is very limited. There is no lumber industry and no exports except a small amount, of copra and scrap metal. Only about 700 people make their living in whole or in part from agriculture. With the exception of some poultry-raising and egg-producing enterprises, as well as truck farming, we have no commercial agriculture in Guam. There are no food canneries or food processing plants. The military and residents depend largely on imported food. In addition we import all our clothes, all our home furnishings and appliances, and most of our building material from the mainland . . . paid for at mainland prices plus transportation and other costs."

Now what this describes is an economy that has been completely distorted for the benefit of the master and regardless of the long-range interests of the Guamanian people.

Guam is being made unviable except as a military camp-follower.

The land has been taken away by the military, even more than in Okinawa. Before the war Guam's economy was traditionally agricultural; money economy was minor. But this changed with the reoccupation of the island in 1944.

The U. S. government owns 32.78 per cent of all land in Guam, and holds another 3.73 per cent under leasehold control—over 36 per cent. The Government of Guam owns 22.94 per cent. It is understandable, explained Won Pat, why we have a payroll-military economy and no commercial agriculture, "for included in the 36 per cent of lands owned or controlled by the military is a majority of the finest of pre-war farms."

TWISTED BY IMPERIALISM

As Congressman Fjare of the committee said musingly, "if defense construction stopped immediately, Guam would be in a bad fix." The outbreak of peace in the world, for example, could be a catastrophe for the Guamanian people, as a result of the mold into which the U. S. has forced its life.

And the Guam Legislature has its hands tied as far as doing anything about it is concerned. Since 1941 Guam has been designated as an "A and C defense area," and any going-in or out has to be cleared by the navy. This is still in effect, even for American citizens, including Guamanians.

This is a hardship and hinders us from developing the island, said Won Pat; "it is difficult for us to create some kind of economy other than the military because everything there is controlled largely by the military. We feel as leaders of the community that we must provide something for a cushion in case the military activities there fluctuate, and we recognize that the economy of the island is superficial or artificial."

Now this cramping of the economy into a mold to suit a foreign occupation is one of the reasons why today the Philippines, although independent, has such economic difficulties. (The same has gone on in Puerto Rico under more than 50 years of American control.) The U. S. can get Filipinos as coolie laborers in Guam today for the same reason, in part, as leads the Guamanians to complain of the economic fate that threatens them.

One of the things that imperialist domination does—even the least brutal imperialism—is to prevent a people from developing in their own image, in accordance with their own needs, and in fulfillment of their own culture, economic paths and interests. Imperialism twists and distorts their life in every way.

That is shown in the comparatively small-scale cases of Guam and Samoa as well as, or better than, in the bigger cases of India or Algeria.

The Gomulka Regime Versus Democratization — —

(Continued from page 3)

that employed by the Yugoslav Titoists in their time, or the Stalinist regime in Czechoslovakia, when at certain points they set out to create a simulacrum of "democratization." It is to maintain the single-list character of the election, with all candidates guaranteed kosher, but with the concession that there will be more candidates listed than seats to be filled.

The voter is given a choice between individuals all of whom are preselected by the ruling apparatus.

The Yugoslav Titoists in their time (as we explained in LA at the time) found that this concession has its dangers and they dumped it after one try. Let us see both the advantages and the dangers.

The first advantage is the obvious one: in Poland, as in every genuine revolutionary situation, the rulers cannot continue ruling in the old way. Even as they strive to reconsolidate the totalitarian framework, indeed in order to do so, they must bulge that framework. Gomulka's course requires him to make at least a show of democratization.

But, as was true also in Yugoslavia, democratic demagoguery is not the only motive for this particular type of concession. These Stalinisms are all bedeviled by bureaucratic deformations, which the tops of the regime want desperately to combat in order to prevent the bureaucracy from foundering in its own ruts. The single-list-with-surplus-candidates permits a controlled expression of rank-and-file anger against especially bad bureaucrats, a form of check from below.

WHERE DANGER LIES

But the danger is also obvious: the choice may be intended to be meaningless politically, but it can become the focal point of a political demonstration.

This is exactly what happened in Yugoslavia. The regime was dismayed when, in place after place, "bullet-voting" displayed a pattern where the voters were seeking out for endorsement those candidates least tied up with the party. Announcement of the results was greeted as if an electoral victory had been scored against the regime, even

though the non-party candidates thus favored were in every case entirely "safe" stooges who were as frightened as their masters by the way they were being used!

A consequence like this is made entirely possible by the setup in Poland, in spite of any further rigging which the regime may do.

There is to be a single list of candidates, which is to be gotten up by agreement of representatives of three parties: the ruling CP, the Peasant Party and the Democratic Party. The latter two, of course, are controlled stooge-parties like their similars in the other satellites, but this is irrelevant to the present point, that is, to the possible use of the election for a political demonstration.

What this problem illustrates, of course—what it illustrated in Yugoslavia—is how dangerous it is for a totalitarianism to permit the slightest crack, the slightest wedge, through which popular discontent can seep or pour.

But in Poland the totalitarian framework is already cracking under the buf-

feting of the Polish revolution, which is striving to break out on its way. The role of the regime is to hold this framework together, with whatever means at its disposal.

It is part of the classic pattern of revolution that, as the revolutionary wave develops, the desperate recourse with which the regime tries to save itself can themselves become, in turn, weapons to be turned against it by the revolution. This is another way of putting the danger which the election rigging represents—quite apart from any direct or indirect duress in the voting.

Gomulka personally is, according to all accounts, still immensely popular as the defender of Poland against the Russians. He is spending these credits of popularity in order to reconcile the people to continued Russian occupation, no aid to Hungary, no real democratization. The further development of the Polish revolution depends on how long he can thus hold back or channelize the tidal surge of the Polish people toward socialist democracy.

Deal with Moscow? — —

(Continued from page 1)

imagination. Walter Lippmann, who has been writing on this theme ever since the Hungarian Revolution broke out, is much clearer in the way he put it in his column for December 12:

"... For if what has happened in Hungary were to happen in East Germany, we would be nearer than we ever have been since 1945 to being sucked into a great war.

"No one now need predict that there will be an outbreak in East Germany. Much can be done to avert one. But there could be an outbreak. And so great would be the danger that we may say, quite coolly and soberly, that the Western Alliance should be prepared to avert it by taking big measures in the near future. It should be attempting to negotiate with the Russians some kind of working settlement, perhaps only partial and intermediate, about the security of the middle of Europe."

There was a day when, in the capitalist camp, a phrase like "the security of the middle of Europe" meant only one thing: its security from armed aggression from Russia. But the Hungarian Revolution and the rumblings and stirrings from Poland and East Germany have changed that. It is clear from Lippmann's context (and even clearer from other columns by him) that what he is concerned about is nothing less than the security of the middle of Europe from the socialist revolution, for which he uses the old standard term: "chaos."

PROPOSING A DEAL

And what he is proposing, in his cool and sober way, is only a little bit ambiguous. It is left unclear, one may assume, to spare a Republican administration—which up till yesterday was shouting about "liberation" and "rolling back" the Iron Curtain—from the uncertain public reception of the idea that America's reaction to a real live revolution should be to make a new Yalta-Potsdam deal with the Russians which would guarantee to each side a sphere of influence in which both would cooperate to maintain "control" and "order."

What else could Lippmann, or the *Times*, or the other thinkers for or mouthpieces of the administration mean by their talk of the dangers of an extension of the revolution?

So far, it appears that the administration has not gone much beyond its instinc-

tive fear of popular revolutions in Eastern Europe in thinking through a policy. Lippmann is ahead of the parade.

This is indicated by a section of the *Times* article which follows the part quoted earlier:

"There have been some recent intimations," the article continues, "that Moscow may be willing to make a beginning on a staged thinning-out of forces on both sides. In his Nov. 17 disarmament letter to President Eisenhower, Premier Bulganin . . . spoke of effecting in 1957 a 'considerable reduction' of Anglo-French-American forces in the NATO countries and of Soviet troops in the Warsaw Pact countries.

"It was reported last week that the State Department believes this . . . language intentional and possibly significant. At any rate the Administration will explore the Soviet proposal."

The Hungarians have not been particularly impressed by the "thinning out" of Russian forces in their country. In Poland, one of the chief brakes on the revolution has been the claim of the Gomulka government that as long as Russia has to maintain forces in East Germany to face the NATO forces in West Germany, she will not agree to a withdrawal of her forces from Poland. As long as the satellites are in a revolutionary mood, it is safe to predict that the Russians will only "thin out" their troops if they are forced to use so many of them to put out fires all over their empire that they cannot keep them as thick as they would like at any one spot.

U. S. CAN'T PUSH

An American government could "explore" the Russian proposal in a way which would give the Russian empire another big shake. This would be to announce that the peoples of Hungary, Poland and East Germany have shown such a sturdy devotion to peace and freedom that the United States no longer feels its troops are needed to protect Western Europe from a Russian invasion, and was therefore withdrawing them at once.

The last vestige of a justification for the Russian occupation of Eastern Europe would vanish. Hungary already gives ample evidence that the Russian troops are none too anxious for their hangman's duties. Such an action would fire the demand for their withdrawal throughout Eastern Europe, and would

gravely impair what will they still have to resist it.

But would the Russian rulers simply recognize that their position had become untenable and withdraw? That does not seem likely. Bulganin's letter to Eisenhower was a bluff which the rulers in the Kremlin have good reason to believe, on the whole record, would not be called. They were simply seeking to be able to say once again to their subjects at home and colonials abroad: "See, we are ready to start a gradual withdrawal, but the NATO forces will not let us. We must stay to defend you."

The Russians will not give up Eastern Europe voluntarily. They will have to be pushed. The only push which is capable of ousting them is revolution. But the American government fears revolution as much, or even more, than it fears the Russian power.

FULL CIRCLE

Thus we come full circle. If events are to follow the logic of the positions of both ruling groups, Walter Lippmann's plea for a Russian-American "working settlement . . . about the security of the middle of Europe" would become a reality. Instead of a cold war against each other, they would seek to join forces to freeze the peoples of Europe under their rule. That is what "peaceful coexistence" really means in our time.

But events have shown themselves stubbornly resistive to the plans of both war blocs. That is just another way of saying that there is no reason to believe the peoples of Eastern Europe are going to settle down under the Russian yoke, or even under one of Russo-American making. And then the peoples of America, and of the rest of the world are not quite the malleable putty their rulers would like them to be, either.

For socialists in the capitalist world, the course to follow should be clear. And even here in the United States, their role need no longer be one primarily of keeping alive the democratic conscience of the liberal and labor movements.

For longer than it is pleasant to remember, the bulk of the American liberal-labor movement has supported the main lines of the Truman-Eisenhower foreign policy which was predicated on the idea that the main danger was Russian military aggression and subjugation of Europe and Asia, and that the chief defense against this danger was military might and alliances with anyone who was willing to fight on the American side in the struggle.

As long as the Stalinist empire gave every appearance of impregnable solidity and showed an expansive drive, it was difficult to make a dent in the labor-

liberal support for the policy of "containment." As long as the peoples under Stalinism appeared to be utterly cowed or even to support the new slavery, those who talked about reliance on political warfare designed to rally and mobilize the forces of a Third Camp of mass, popular, democratic resistance to both war camps could be discounted as impractical "idealists."

But the Hungarian revolution has shown that the "idealists" had their feet planted solidly on the ground of political reality. The idea of a political defeat of world Stalinism by support to and reliance on the democratic revolutionary will now make its way.

In America, its chief rallying-cry today must be: withdraw American troops from Europe! Oppose any Russo-American deal to stifle the European revolution!

Election in Philly NAACP Stirs Up Lively Contest

Philadelphia, Dec. 15

Elections in the local branch of the NAACP on Dec. 11 saw the present leadership returned to office by a small margin out of about 150 votes. Despite the relatively few votes the election provoked more interest than any held since the pro-Communist Party elements were voted out of branch leadership more than 6 years ago.

Harry J. Greene, now almost perennial president, and George Morris, first vice-president, stood on their record of having built the branch membership to a post-war high of almost 10,000 members and maintaining a numerically adequately staffed local office. The branch also can rightfully boast a firm financial basis and regular monthly meetings of executive board and membership.

On the debit side: the membership figure is small for a metropolis of two million with about 400,000 colored people. Branch committees have in general functioned poorly; membership meetings have been poorly attended and until recently without attractive programs; mass meetings have been few; few newcomers have become activists; and most important, the branch has not been able to reach the people in the communities.

Criticism of the Greene-Morris program came from socialists in the membership and from the North Philadelphia Neighborhood Committee of the NAACP. The latter organization, indicative of the way in which the NAACP can reach out into the community, has felt itself somewhat hindered and discouraged by the local leadership and office, but it was defeated in the election.

One of its members, Nellie Peggues, failed re-election as branch secretary. The past committee chairman, Joseph Cronin, the present chairman Mrs. Henderson, and two others were among the five candidates who lost out for the executive board.

The opposition candidates for president and vice-president, James Baker and Dr. Carleton Richards, failed to wage an aggressive campaign. Had they shown any programmatic interest or displayed concern over the internal situation in the branch, they would have been assured of enthusiastic support particularly of the North Philly group. Instead they preferred to view the election as a popularity contest.

No doubt their enthusiasm was also dampened by the whispering campaign of personal slander conducted by some Greene-Morris supporters. Cries of "Communists," "office seekers," and "wreckers" took their toll especially since the opposition forces had no stated program.

Only one candidate, Joseph Davidson, ran on a program which he distributed to the voters. He was re-elected.

His program included: Push year-round neighborhood groups; more mass action, like public meetings, house-to-house campaigns, distribution of leaflets, etc.; more cooperation with the labor movement; thorough democratization of the branch; better functioning of branch committees.

It is to be hoped that the North Philly Committee will go on and that the defeated candidates will continue in the branch. There is little basis for hoping that the Greene-Morris leadership will turn outward to the people; only groups like the North Philly committee will be able to accomplish this important task.

Socialist Symposium — —

(Continued from page 2)

erts' defense was so feeble as well as stereotyped that Stone could chide him that his remarks sounded more like an apology rather than a description of the "golden age" of democracy.

Turning to Braverman, Stone picked up his analogy of the "machine running wild" and asked him to detail how and why this could happen. Braverman contented himself with a descriptive picture of what took place—an uncontrolled bureaucracy reared its ugly head.

Stone then asked Draper why he thought Russia was not a "workers state" or socialist state when, after all, private ownership of industry had been abolished and a collective economy prevailed. In reply Draper dissected the notion that socialism equals nationalization, and emphasized that in Russia and the satellites the democratic rights of the workers are non-existent. He pointed out that the working class, by its very nature, cannot own property individually, but can do so only collectively—through their effective control of the government. Russia represented a new and hitherto unanticipated society, a new system exploiting the working class and the enemy of both the working class and capitalism.

For Muste, Stone questioned the proposition that "all men are created equal," and Muste discussed some aspects of the problem at his invitation.

The floor was then thrown open to questions and discussions, with Stone suggesting that he be the first target since he had done his best to put everybody else on the spot. An early question

directed at Stone asked if he could reconcile a one-party system with democracy. He replied that he didn't, and through the evening vigorously attacked the Russian regime's flouting of democracy.

In the course of further lively questioning from the floor, Roberts was asked about the statement appearing in the SWP magazine, excluding the ISL from a socialist realignment because of its opposition to the "defense of the Soviet Union." Did he prefer to unite with those suppressors of democracy?

Roberts evaded the question by asserting that he was not for "destroying" the ISL because of disagreements, but that a socialist organization did not have to be "all-inclusive."

Draper took the floor immediately after to push the point home. The question was not simply about all-inclusiveness; the SWP was saying that they preferred to be under the same party roof only with those who "defended the Soviet Union"—this was the line of demarcation they proposed. How did this square with words about socialism and democracy? Were the Hungarian workers "defending the Soviet Union?" It meant the death of socialism if socialists were told they had to choose up between American imperialism or Russian imperialism. . . .

Later, asked to comment on the preceding discussion about the 1917-1923 period in Russia, Draper also got a chance to explain why the Bolshevik period could not be understood either as a "golden age of democracy" nor through any "devil theory of Lenin or Bolshevism."

Down with

the

old year

at

the New York

ISL & YSL's

NEW YEAR'S

EVE PARTY

See

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