# Mainstream

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# "The Stalin Era" — Two Views

## I: WORLD CHANGER

*W. E. B. DU BOIS*

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THE STALIN ERA,* by Anna Louise Strong, just published by Mainstream Publishers, ought to be required reading for all confused and frustrated commentators on socialism in this day, and especially for editors of newspapers. These passages from the foreword deserve committing to memory:

"Tens of millions of people built the world's first socialist state, but he [Stalin] was the engineer."

". . . all the evils endured through the socialist building led by Stalin, whether these came by necessity, error or crime, were far, far less than the evils they suffered by deliberate will of the Western world in the wars of intervention and the Hitler invasion, less even than they suffered through America's delay in the promised 'second front.'"

I stress these passages because they are voiced by one of the few Americans who have the authority to speak. Most current commentators on Communism, Russia, Stalin, and Hungary talk without real knowledge. The *New York Times* says frankly that we do not know just what has happened in Hungary; yet in editorials and news, it talks definitely and without restraint.

In contrast to this, Anna Louise Strong is an American from birth and tradition, whose father showed her the paths of integrity. She lived in the Soviet Union during most of the Stalin era; she speaks the Russian language, married a Russian citizen and has visited almost every part of this vast empire and its allied states. She knew Stalin personally and many of his co-workers; she sat in the court-room and heard the celebrated trials of 1936 and listened while the accused confessed.

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* *The Stalin Era,* by Anna Louise Strong. Published by Today's Press, Altadena, Calif. and Mainstream Publishers, N. Y. Cloth $2.25; paper $1.00.

"Was the story credible? Most of the press outside the USSR called it a frame-up. Most people who sat in the court-room, including the foreign correspondents, thought the story true."

Miss Strong helped edit an English language newspaper in Moscow; she saw the five-year plans develop; she knew of the Hitler invasion and debacle, at first hand. There is no person better equipped by training and experience to judge the Stalin era than this author. Most modern writers on Russia have been hopelessly prejudiced for or against Russia. Anna Louise Strong had reason for prejudice, for the Soviet Union, after her long services, treated her with crass injustice and abruptly expelled her from the country. But Miss Strong was broader than prejudice. She knew that the builders of this new nation and new economy were neither angels nor devils, but striving people who, despite ages of injustice and oppression, despite the organized and united attacks of the chief civilized nations of the modern world, including the United States, suffered, toiled, and persisted until they built the world's first socialistic state. That many innocent persons, including herself, suffered in this process, was regrettable and even in cases terrible, but the total result was a glorious victory in the uplift of mankind.

WRITING then with authority, knowledge, and restraint, this author follows clearly in less than 150 printed pages of simple, concise English, the attempt to establish socialism in one country instead of espousing world revolution. "It was Joseph Stalin who formulated in August, 1924, the idea of building socialism in Russia without any outside help." In this effort Stalin went counter to the thought of the dead Lenin and of the living Trotsky; and even to his own former belief. Russia was a land of ignorant peasants; it had but a small class of trained artisans. Yet this half-educated son of a western Asiatic serf became head of the Russian Communists, despite Lenin's doubts and Trotsky's bitter enmity. He became the leader of a new Russia. "He rose, I think, through two characteristics that all men who are leaders, and a third characteristic that only the greatest have. He had a deep sense of what I can only call the 'will of the people'; he had matchless technique in releasing that will in action. Lastly, he had the conviction, and was able to give it to others, that his actions carried mankind forward to a better day." When Anna Louise Strong wanted a better paper to work on her complaint went to Stalin himself.

"I was thunderstruck to find myself at a table with Stalin, Kaganovich and Voroshilov, as well as the persons against whom I complained. The small Politburo, steering-committee for the USSR, was taking up my complaint. I was ashamed. . . .

"From that time, I regarded Stalin as the best committee man I had ever met, a man who could bring diverse views into harmony with a speed amounting to genius, and awaken and encourage the will to act by indicating, out of many views, a correct path."

Miss Strong takes up the first Five-Year Plan, which she saw as it developed in toil, trouble, and repeated failure, until in 1933, Stalin could report that the Soviet Union had become the second industrial nation of the world. This result was accomplished in sacrifice and suffering. "But never before in history was so great an advance so swift. Had the pace been less swift, the Soviet people believed that not only their socialism would have been postponed but their existence as a nation would have been in danger." Stalin did not pause, but rushed into a second Five-Year Plan, which revolutionized agriculture in Russia. "I saw collectivization break like a storm on the Lower Volga in autumn of 1929. It was a revolution that made deeper changes than did the revolution of 1917, of which it was the ripened fruit. . . . Kulaks fought the movement bitterly by all means up to arson and murder. The middle peasantry, the real backbone of farming, had been split between hope of becoming kulaks and the wish for machinery from the state. But now that the Five-Year Plan promised tractors, this great mass of peasants began moving by villages, townships and counties, into the collective farms." By 1935, the new farming had won with crop rotation, irrigation, and vastly increased crops. The peasants learned to read and write. They went in for science and art. Farms had their own theaters.

A new people was born; national cultures developed; women emerged from subjection; the power of the church was overthrown; the Stakhanov rivalry in progress of work in factories arose. The youth went east and north to open up the bare provinces. A girl won the world record in parachute jumping and cried: "The sky of our country is the highest sky in the world!" In December 1936 a new Constitution was adopted which echoed the words of Stalin: "Neither language nor color of skin nor cultural backwardness nor the stage of political development can justify national and race inequality." Miss Strong quotes Romain Rolland, who spoke from the placid Lake of Geneva: 'This gives life to the great slogans that until now were but dreams of mankind—liberty, equality, fraternity.' "

THEN came reaction; Miss Strong calls the excesses of 1936 to 1938 "The Great Madness." She says: "I do not think anyone anywhere knows the full story of the excesses that occurred in the USSR in 1936-38, or can yet assess properly the blame." The enemies of socialism called this a failure of the Communist effort. Khrushchev laid the blame

on personal dictatorship, but Miss Strong regards it as only the Russian phase of a world-wide sickness: the Spanish war; the capitalist depression; the Hitler "Fifth Column"; Chamberlain and Daladier; American Big Business selling scrap iron to Japan; Quislings and Lavals—the cult of "subversion." Russia had suffered and was afraid. From 1918 to 1922, she had been repelling the attacks of foreign nations and ferreting out her own traitors. In her first Five-Year Plan she met sabotage among foreign merchants and Russian workers; coal mines were wrecked; machines deliberately ruined; but the Soviets saw the great harvests of 1933 and were confident.

Then in 1934, Kirov, a high Communist official and close friend of Stalin, was murdered by a Communist. Investigation involved a number of Communist leaders; agents and plotters from neighboring states were involved. "A sense of insecurity spread among the Soviet people, replacing that exultant sense of progress they had felt in 1934. It was not due alone, and not even primarily, to personal fear of arrest or to concern for friends. It was due to the knowledge that the enemy had penetrated high into the citadel of leadership, that nobody knew who was loyal." Perhaps the last word on this era was written by Howard K. Smith, who, as the Second World War opened, said: "Had Russia not liquidated a few thousand bureaucrats and officers, there is little doubt that the Red Army would have collapsed in two months."

The author's story of the Soviet Union and the Second World War is gripping. Hitler turned on the state headed by Stalin "the mightiest assault in human history." Nine million men fought from Murmansk to Odessa. Europe and America predicted that the Soviet Union would collapse within a month. Cynics like Harry Truman hoped both Nazi and Bolsheviks would be killed off. Churchill and Roosevelt held off the Second Front, the allied attack on the German rear, for three awful years until Stalingrad heralded Russian victory. Stalin saved Europe and turned to join hands of friendship and alliance with his tardy allies. The cost had been tremendous—25 million people homeless; 28,000 towns and villages wholly or partially destroyed; 38,500 miles of railway torn up; 20 million Russians dead in war or want. Their losses were a hundred times as great as those of the Americans. Stalin at Yalta was uplifted. "Churchill, in his history of the war, tells of the almost naive toast that Stalin drank at Yalta 'to the firmness of our Three Power Alliance saying 'May it be strong and stable. May we be as frank as possible. . . Allies should not deceive each other. . . . In the history of diplomacy I know of no such close alliance of three great powers as this.'

"'I had never expected that he could be so expansive,' comments Churchill, the hard-boiled imperialist."

Then came the rivalry of victorious America: we killed 250,000 apanese by a new weapon; Russia was frozen out of the Far Eastern eace-making; Chiang Kai-shek was brought into the treaty-making at cost of 300 millions; Russia was refused the six billion dollar loan he was expecting from the United States for her desperately needed econstruction. "Then Roosevelt died, and Truman stopped even Lend-ease aid so suddenly that Russia-bound shipments were taken off ships n New York harbor. When Russia, listing her losses, asked for 'the irst billion' of that loan, the State Department 'lost' the letter for nearly year. Many Russians died of hunger in that victory year, for lack of hat loan."

The dream of alliance and peaceful cooperation died in the Cold War. The Korean War began the new policy of "containing" Commu-ism by force. Stalin continued to beg for peace but his offers were coffed at. When he died, President Eisenhower was officially announced s "preparing an aggressive effort to exploit the Soviet's situation—to use ll tools of propaganda, and more, to encourage strife within Russia and plit off its satellites."

Whether Stalin deteriorated in his later years or not may be argued; ut Miss Strong says: "I do not think anyone can read his last work on *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR,* and think that Stalin's ntellect had grown senile."

Again she quotes Howard K. Smith: "Stalin did more to change the orld in the first half of this century than any other man who lived in it." he adds: "Let that stand as his worldwide epitaph."

## Note to Readers

*We are pleased to welcome back to our Board of Contributors Shirley Graham, author of biographical studies of Frederick Douglass, Benjamin Banneker, George Washington Carver, Booker T. Washington, and Paul Robeson.*

# II: APOLOGIA, NOT HISTORY

*WILLIAM MANDEL*

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IF ANNA LOUISE STRONG, physically and morally courageous beyond words, were to write the memoirs of a life incredibly rich, the world would be the gainer. But when she puts an international reputation and a vivid pen squarely on one side of a great ideological struggle, she must know that a reviewer is compelled to treat her book in terms of whether it advances or retards the cause of socialism in this country.

Were there reason to believe that this book would be read primarily by non-socialists, it would be a contribution. It re-tells, as only a tireless eyewitness can tell, the epic story of the First 5-Year-Plan, and the 40-year effort of the capitalist world to destroy the USSR.

But today this book will be read, both here and abroad, primarily by advocates of socialism. Among them, the issue that must be resolved before further progress is possible is that put squarely in Tito's Pula speech on Hungary: for or against Stalinism.

Had the author limited herself to a laudatory review of the Stalin Era, that alone would strengthen those who believe, as do some Soviet leaders, that that is the one true road to socialism. But when she delivers judgments on the events in Poland and Hungary, the book is no longer an attempt to write history: it is a polemic on current affairs.

On the problems of sovereignty and equality posed by these governments, she asserts, with utmost finality: "Khrushchev has not solved it; for the moment he has made it worse. His apologies to Tito, his attacks on Stalin, have released all the separatist tendencies in East Europe."

How, then, would she explain the East Berlin demonstration of June 17, 1953, when Stalin was still in Heaven and Tito in outer darkness? If that was merely Project X, why did the USSR instantly ship in foodstuffs and consumer goods, return reparations enterprises to German nationalized ownership, and announce an end to all reparations for the

year's end? Why was the East German government reshuffled, and two billion marks diverted from heavy industry to raise the living standard? Why did every East European government follow suit, and the USSR, in August adopt Malenkov's crash program to raise living standards sharply in two to three years?

In view of the present workers' protests over living standards, could not the error have been the abandonment of the Malenkov program in January, 1955, with a return to Stalinist heavy-industry austerity throughout the Soviet bloc, accompanied by the ouster at that time of Premier Nagy in Hungary and his counterparts elsewhere?

Miss Strong chooses simply to ignore such facts revealing uniform Moscow control. She asks, with passionate nostalgia for the days of the strong arm: "What Planning Board exists for the Soviet Bloc? What Supreme Soviet? What Communist International since the Cominform dissolved? Are bilateral pacts between a 'sovereign' Poland and an 'equal' USSR enough? Has the Warsaw Pact the necessary teeth?"

Both Kadar and the Hungarian rebels would agree that it has.

But the absence of uniformly centralized control means that Poland, for the first time in the history of socialism, gives us an example that can be sold to Americans. It has a questioning Parliament, an outspoken press, fair trials, independent trade unions, academic freedom, intellectual liberty, independence in foreign policy, and co-existence between Church and State in a Catholic country. These are combined with principled denunciation of anti-Semitism, friendship with the USSR, socialization of the basic means of production, and national unity behind the head of a united Socialist party who is himself an industrial worker to boot.

NOT ONLY in connection with these events occurring before our eyes, but at vital points throughout the book, the author treats history in a manner for which the term "wishful" is the most generous that the reviewer can find. Consider the following, dealing with the last years of Stalin's life:

"The disease of anti-cosmopolitanism passed, and anti-Semitism with it. . . In 1950, the USSR reached . . . comparative abundance of goods. . . . And, also, in 1950, the Chinese People's Republic . . . made alliance with the USSR. The sick, excessive patriotism bred by the cold war could not survive close contact with an eastern, equal ally. . . .

"The doctrine that each nation would find its own road to socialism, which had been briefly announced in the first postwar years for East Europe, and then buried under the nationalism of the cold war, again appeared, this time to stay. The thirty-year nightmare of 'capitalist encirclement,' which Stalin had hoped

to escape by alliance with Roosevelt and Churchill, was ended by alliance with Peking.

". . . in 1950 . . . Washington dragged the United Nations into a war in Korea which all Asia saw as an attempt to intervene in the New China. From that war, American world leadership began to decline. . . . The Soviet people glimpsed at last, not only prosperity but peace . . . based not on alliance with Washington and London but on the great hunger for peace and prosperity among the ex-colonial and newly independent peoples. . . ."

Miss Strong thus places in Stalin's lifetime, and credits to his leadership, the very changes that mark the improvements since the days of Stalin, as far as they have gone. She essentially credits the political conclusions of the 20th Congress, in 1956, to the 19th, in 1952, which drew no such conclusions whatever.

Consider the facts. Anti-Semitism, dramatized by the "Doctors' Plot," with specific mention of the Joint Distribution Committee and Zionism, was at its worst in Stalin's last months, early 1953. Read the passage in Ehrenbourg's post-Stalin *Thaw* describing how Jews were cut by their "friends" during this nightmarish tperiod. Elsewhere Miss Strong says Stalin "gave credence" to the "Doctors' Plot," thus taking the main onus from him. By this she indicates, as she does throughout the book, simple disregard of the data presented by Khrushchev when it differs with her views. He said, in the speech of February 25, 1956: "This ignominious 'case' was set up by Stalin . . . Stalin told (the former Minister of State Security): 'If you do not obtain confessions from the doctors we will shorten you by a head.'"

During the same period, anti-cosmopolitanism was revived in the form of a "vigilance" campaign. It reached most shameful forms in the distortions of the history of science and culture in volumes of that compendium of learning, the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia,* published in Stalin's last years.

Despite the Chinese alliance, the doctrine that each nation would find its own road to socialism was still buried in the unmarked graves of Rajk and others. As to Yugoslavia, *Pravda* was still publishing routine articles referring to "Titoite fascists. . . . The fascist Belgrade clique is whipping up brutal nationalism, is persecuting national minorities in Yugoslavia." (Sept. 12, 1952).

With regard to the "ex-colonial and newly independent peoples of the world," Stalin refused to believe there were such things as neutrals, and failed to regard India and Indonesia as such.

There is evidence meriting serious consideration that, in the economic and other fields, Stalin tried to impose on China relations such as existed with Eastern Europe, and did not because he could not: China was too strong.

THIS is a basic fault of the book. It is not history. It ignores not only evidence contrary to the author's thesis, but "unpleasant" aspects of history in their entirety.

Miss Strong writes that Stalin's "days were spent in the careful removal of obstacles that hindered the valid dreams of workers, peasants, engineers." Apparently, then, he reserved his nights for crushing the dreams of writers, critics, film makers, librettists, economists, historians, philosophers and statesmen. Miss Strong is a journalist some of whose work has attained the level of high art. It is striking therefore that she has not a word to say of the creative arts, and of their degeneration or stagnation during the last dozen years of Stalin's life. When was the last Soviet movie worth remembering? Play? Novel? Opera? Ballet on a theme more controversial than Shakespeare?

Stalin made himself arbiter of art and science, except when he delegated this to Zhdanov and Lysenko, with the shadow of Beria in the background. This is not worthy, apparently, of the author's notice.

To return to politics, one of the most extraordinary things in the book is the attempt to whitewash Stalin of full responsibility for the execution of 70% of the members of the 1934 Central Committee (pages 66-68) and the arrest as counter-revolutionaries of a *majority* of the delegates to the 1934 Party Congress (1,108 of 1,966). Miss Strong tries to distribute the blame by saying the Central Committee was "convinced" by Stalin's and Yezhov's reports. This is flatly contradicted by Khrushchev: "The majority of the Central Committee members and candidates elected at the XVII Congress and arrested in 1937-38 were expelled from the Party illegally through the brutal abuse of the Party Statute, because the question of their expulsion was never studied at the Central Committee Plenum."

Miss Strong offers her own, speculative explanation of these murders: "The Soviet investigators . . . will find the key, most probably, in actual, extensive penetration of the GPU by a Nazi fifth-column." The simple fact is that no such fifth-column was heard from during the war.

MISS Strong argues, contrary to Khrushchev's detailed evidence, that Stalin was prepared for the Nazi attack. He took no action on the warnings both from Churchill, Soviet military attaches abroad, and Soviet generals in command of frontier areas. She says this was because he did not wish to provoke Hitler. Aside from the fact that Hitler required no provocation, the author herself states that Hitler regarded as provocation the Soviet action in pushing its frontiers westward in Poland, Finland and Bessarabia. In addition, there is public, objective

data indicating that Stalin believed, in 1941, that Hitler would not wage war on the Soviet Union.

In 1939, Molotov had stated there would be no further industrial expansion in Leningrad, clearly because of the war danger. But the report on the 1941 Plan at the 18th Party Conference in February stated that: "considerable amounts of capital" will be invested "in the industry of Leningrad and the Leningrad region in 1941 . . . now that the frontier of the Soviet Union in the vicinity of Leningrad has been rectified and the security of Leningrad greatly enhanced." Similar expansion was announced for the Baltic states, and the rest of the border areas. Hitler struck four months later. The USSR lost that entire area, and Leningrad was surrounded in a matter of weeks, and besieged, bombed and shelled for 18 months.

Another matter. Take the whole series of Moscow Trials. Years later, Miss Strong herself was added to the list of those falsely accused, and the present reviewer admits, with shame and humility, that he believed that accusation, partly on the basis of Miss Strong's own eyewitness reports of the Moscow Trials. There is no humility, however, no charity or open-mindedness in her present attitude toward the heroes of the Revolution convicted in these trials. She saw some of them confess and corroborate each others' evidence in open court. But other reporters saw Rajk and others confess in Eastern Europe a dozen years later. Yet we know that those confessions, made by men in apparent good health and of easy appearance, were false, and it was veteran Soviet stage-managers who rigged the proceedings. We now have the statements of men who only got prison sentences in those trials, such as London of Czechoslovakia, that they confessed out of loyalty to the good name of the very Party they were accused of foully betraying! Score one for Koestler!

Is there no significance for her in Khrushchev's blanket statement that persons guilty only of being seriously wrong on politics were falsely labeled "enemies of the people," or that many Trotskyites were honest revolutionaries?* Or in his reference to Lenin's remarkable injunction to treat such leaders with a form of therapy, using as examples some of the men later executed under Stalin? And the absence of any indication that failure to use Lenin's methods led these individuals later to treason? There is no re-affirmation of the guilt of one single individual in Khrushchev's entire speech! Moreover, Khrushchev, contrary to the reasoning that terror was needed to eliminate a 5th Column, states

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* *The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism,* Columbia University, p. 16.

unequivocally: "It is clear that in the situation of socialist victory there was no basis for mass terror in the country."

Miss Strong is entitled to an opposite opinion, but she is not entitled to refrain from informing her readers of the opinion of the leader of the Communist Party. Of course, she considers Khrushchev's speech an "outburst of emotion." How could one mass the amount of documentary material used by Khrushchev in that speech without very long preparation and organized assistance? Nor could it be presented in a time of collective leadership, without approval from his fellows. Rather do the calmer public presentations of Mikoyan and others on the preceding days seem to have had the purpose of preparing the audience for the bombshell, and the public for its later, more gradual dissemination. Nor is the Soviet Communist Party in the habit of distributing "outbursts of emotion" to many Communist parties throughout the world, with the danger that it reach the non-Communist public.

PARTICULARLY disturbing is the book's failure to discuss those early criticisms of Stalin which underlay the political errors of later years. Miss Strong apparently believes, and it is certainly her privilege, that the strong men around Stalin, held in line by his terror, see him subjectively. But what of Lenin?

She describes Stalin's early life in an effort to shed light on the shaping of his character, and reports that he attended "the Theological Seminary in Tiflis, which was maintained to Russianize bright young Georgians." Neither there nor elsewhere does she report Lenin's view that Stalin actually was Russianized to a degree that made him more chauvinist than many native Russian Communists. The world only saw this in the last dozen years of Stalin's life. By that time even those who fought for the freedom of Stalin's native Caucasus against Russian conquest were being described in Soviet texts as nationalist reactionaries. But Lenin saw Stalin's chauvinism when Stalin and two of his associates, also Russified in Lenin's opinion, Ordzhonikidze, of Georgian, and Dzerjinski, of Polish birth, suppressed Georgian national aspirations in an incident in which Miss Strong sees significance only in Stalin's use of a political police.

This goes to another of the roots of the book's shortcomings. It is vastly oversimplified. The ability to present matters in such broad strokes is a great asset to a journalist, but has no place in serious history. Today, the Stalin Era is very serious history indeed.

Miss Strong sees the "good" and the "bad" in Stalin in terms of just one issue: the ability of the USSR to survive in a hostile world. As a result, she is led to the same viewpoint held, in Tito's opinion, by

Stalin and the present Soviet leaders: "Military strength decides everything."

This also leads her to accept Stalin's own view of himself (she quotes someone else) as the greatest figure of the first half of this century, a conclusion of no small significance in the present struggle over Stalinism. She carries this to the point of noting that, while Lenin's testament characterized individuals, that which she chooses to regard as Stalin's testament, "Economic Problems of Socialism," characterized the world scene. She leaves out of account Lenin's long illness, making it impossible for him to undertake major works toward the end of his life. The fact is, however, that certain of the brief works he did write at the end ("On Cooperation") provided the guideposts by which major aspects of Soviet development went in later years.

Lenin led the Revolution. We know now that, during crucial periods in 1917, Stalin did not agree with his view of the direction in which events should be steered. Lenin saw that "police" matters were not pure and simple police matters at all, but were related to such vastly important problems as the national question, and the future cooperation or hostility of influential Communists. Stalin failed to understand this at all.

It seems to the reviewer that Miss Strong saw the Khrushchev report as an attack on socialism under Stalin. She felt it necessary to right an injustice, to redress the balance. She fails to realize the significance of the opening paragraphs of Khrushchev's speech. Here he tells his audience that it is not his purpose to present a balanced evaluation, in view of the fact that Stalin's contributions had been so widely described, but to offer that side of his activity which would explain the difficulties of the heritage he left.

She clearly does not realize that, for her particular audience, passionately engrossed in debating the course of American and world socialism after Stalin, the problem is not that of reminding them of his contributions. The problem is to rid them of the Stalin hypnosis, so as to break down the barriers to the acceptance of socialism which his dictatorship has erected in the minds of millions.

That hypnosis can only be eliminated if her audience gets rid of the cult of the individual in its own thinking: the concept that a leader can change the direction of history, rather than merely its pace. The conclusion is drawn, therefore, that, overall, Stalin was "good," although he did "bad" things. That is idealism, philosophically speaking, and it was propagated by Stalin's tremendous ego, although he called himself a materialist. Hitler did not change the forward course of history, nor Churchill, who failed either to "strangle Bolshevism in its cradle" or

to prevent himself from "presiding over the dissolution of the Empire," as he himself stated his objectives. Roosevelt never brought the U.S. living standard up to the level it had achieved under Republican nobodies.

Roosevelt was great because he recognized, yielded to, encouraged and in some respects led the initiative of the mass of the people, always and everyone the only maker of history. Stalin was great as long as he did likewise. But, as Khrushchev put it, "making a hero and miracle worker of a particular leader . . . belittles the role of the party and the masses and *tends to reduce their creative efforts*" (my emphasis—W.M.). This was true of Stalin from about 1935 onward. By that date socialism had been established in both industry and agriculture, and the society *had* to progress, because of its nature. It would have progressed even more rapidly if people in every walk of life had not had to look for approval to those stationed above them before undertaking any action, and they in turn ultimately to Stalin. This is why his role in history must be regarded as negative from the time he became absolute monarch, despite the execllence of many of his later judgments and writings, just as his role was positive prior to that date, despite certain errors.

The cult of the individual also has roots. Khrushchev revealed them when he said: "After the complete political liquidation of the Trotskyites, Zinovievites and Bukharinites (in 1934) . . . Stalin ceased to an ever greater degree to consider the members of the Party's Central Committee and the members of the Political Bureau."

The key to the trouble was abolition of the right of dissent. It may prove historically tragic that Khrushchev and his associates have failed to draw that conclusion, and apply it within the USSR.

The writing of this review has been most painful. Even more so is the conclusion that the person in search of enlightenment on the Stalin Era would do better to go to the Columbia University Russian Institute's Selection of Documents, *The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism,* with the speeches and articles of Khrushchev, Togliatti, Nenni, Dennis, editorials from *Pravda,* the *Daily Worker,* etc., and resolutions by the Soviet and other Communist parties. Although it might be better still to read that book and *The Stalin Era* in immediate succession, so as to have the cases both of the prosecution and the defense.

# IS A PUZZLEMENT

*By YOLI TANNEN*

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WHEN Martha Foley publishes the best short stories of the year, it's always possible to quarrel with one or all of her choices. Miss Foley is, however, an ardent, long-time partisan and student of the short story, as well as a woman of high esthetic purpose; and her annual selections at best—and at worst—reflect with considerable accuracy the current condition of that form. This year's selection* will not cause any dancing in the streets or other writers' hangouts. Out of twenty-one well-written and sometimes moving stories there isn't one that really sends the reader, even for a short distance; and the collection as a whole. . . .

. . . Well, let's just say, I could put it down. Let's say, the poor American short story; I knew it when. . . .

Of course, we didn't need this collection to break the news; almost everyone admits that short fiction is in trouble. There are accusations and counter-accusations from editors, agents and writers; each year the fiction pages of the big magazines shrink as the article pages expand; publishers grow shifty-eyed and change color at the very thought of bringing out a volume of short stories.

Take the list at the back of the book: Distinctive Volumes of Short Stories Published in the United States During 1955. Miss Foley has counted seventeen. Not bad? But in 1925 Edward J. O'Brien, founder of the series, listed forty distinctive volumes, out of a total number of volumes about four times as long.

Mr. O'Brien also lists the articles on the short story published in American magazines during the previous year; the list alone covers 34

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* *The Best American Short Stories* of 1956, edited by Martha Foley, Houghton Mifflin Company, $4.00.

pages. Miss Foley doesn't print a comparable list, but we can hazard a pretty shrewd guess as to its probable length if she did.

Thirty years ago the short story was perhaps the leading American literary form. Oh, there are a lot of short stories published today; but the field breaks right down the middle. The serious stories, the ones Miss Foley calls "distinctive," are in the little magazines that hardly anybody sees. The big magazines run the others; the non-distinctive, common or garden.

This cleavage didn't always exist. O'Brien has figures on the percentages of distinctive stories published by magazines, back in 1925. Here are some of them:

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|---|---|
| *Saturday Evening Post* | 16% |
| *Collier's* | 34 |
| *Good Housekeeping* | 35 |
| *Ladies' Home Journal* | 33 |
| *Red Book* | 24 |
| *Women's Home Companion* | 43 |

How about that?

Whereas the biggest magazines represented in the current Best are the *New Yorker, The Atlantic, Harper's* and *Mademoiselle,* which you can hardly call mass organs. But O'Brien printed two stories from *Colliers* in 1925, and a highly popular little story from *Liberty*: "Haircut," by Lardner. Among his other authors were Sherwood Anderson, Nathan Asch, Konrad Bercovici, Manuel Komroff, Wilbur Daniel Steele, Glenway Wescott and Elinor Wylie. The most widely known authors in Miss Foley's collection are Robert M. Coates, Shirley Jackson, Flannery O'Connor and Christine Weston. No disrespect to the latter group intended and none taken, I hope! they're excellent writers. But still. . . .

WHY beat around the bush? And anyhow, what bush is there to beat around? If Hemingway and Faulkner aren't writing short stories, if even Irwin Shaw isn't turning them out, they have a right. They have a right to turn out whatever they feel like and whatever pays the best. But it's a shame that short stories pay so little compared to movies, or novels; it has been estimated that fewer than twenty writers today are making really good money out of short stories. It's a shame that the short story has become the nursery school of literature.

And there's no use looking around for a villain; the editors blame the writers and it's mutual, but of course that's no answer. The short story isn't the only art form suffering from acute polarization; they're all

split, all separated, with the cream on one side and the blue skim milk on the other. An awkward metaphor, to say the least; what's so creamy about the attenuated, self-conscious, unintelligible "pure art" of today? What's creamy is the money paid by the big commercial media.

The disease is epidemic; but the unfortunate short story seems to have a few of its very own symptoms. For one thing, the competition of television and the movies. Another problem stems indirectly from the scramble for the advertising dollar. The magazine field is trying desperately to push its graying head through the same Madison Avenue yoke that was custom-fitted to the neck of the infant television industry at birth. The magazines are growing increasingly shrill. Their original boast, "We have more readers than other magazines!" became, "But our readers are better heeled! Easier with a buck!" And then, "Ours read more slowly! Re-read more often!" We may shortly expect the claim that their readers lip-read, or mutter out loud while reading, or that a higher percentage of their subscribers never finished eighth grade.

Once made, the claims must be substantiated; the women's magazines, for example, must attract a readership specially receptive to the more expensive appliances. Working on the principle of reader-identification, they require a more and more specialized heroine. Old ladies and children, who seldom, if ever, buy washing machines, are out; adolescents and the middle-aged are fairly non grata. They figure if you haven't bought a dish washer by thirty-five you're not going to. At this moment, the really desirable heroine is between twenty and thirty, yearly income circa ten thousand, likes nice things and does her laundry at home.

Naturally, as his literary horizon draws in, the magazine writer becomes sullen and unstable; his income dwindles and his work suffers; and the fiction editor sighs wearily and pillows his head on his shaking hands, feeling the hot grasp of the article editor on another five of his pages.

BUT what of the "literary" writer, who has a rich family or a full-time job on campus, and can follow his fancy's dictates? What's the dictation like?

Without trying to knock the contributor to the quarterlies, who has it hard enough as it is, it seems only reasonable that, feeling himself rejected by the big markets, the general reading public, he may mutter as he retreats toward the quarterlies, "Yah, yah! Don't want to be in your big clumsy magazine, don't want to be read by your horde of oafs! They wouldn't even *understand* what *I* write!"

But you're so wrong! moans the fiction editor. We have no taboos! We *want* stories that deal with real life. But with adult real life,, we're

fed up with sensitive *children!* And, judging by the 56 Best, they have a point. Six stories out of the twenty-one are about children; quite a high proportion. In her foreword to the 55 Best Miss Foley writes that she was about to mail her list to the publisher when she noticed that almost every story she had selected was about a child or an aged person. "The magazines in the past year," she says, "have overflowed with such stories. One magazine, for instance, published five stories in an issue, four of which were about children. . . . The only conclusion I can come to is that the modern adult exhibits a frightening complexity of traits caught in a web of appalling circumstances. The very young and the very old are usually harmless. Writers and editors both would like to avoid the kind of adult we have today."

Is this it—that writers would like to avoid today's adult? Or is it partly that they don't quite know how to take hold of him? Perhaps they turn to the child because his problem is clear and simple; he is transgressed against by his parents, grown-ups, the world; the transgression is obvious and one-sided.

Nine of the stories in the current collection deal with minorities or inter-racial relations; almost half. By and large, they are the most successful; particularly those by William Eastlake, Flannery O'Connor and Christine Weston. The inclusion of such a high percentage of stories on a single theme might be explained on the basis of Miss Foley's taste or interests; but their comparative superiority as a group cannot be explained away.

Perhaps it's because minority and racial problems, though complex, are relatively clear and sharp; they're knobby, they have elbows that a writer can take hold of. The oppression of the Negro character, for example, is such an elbow. Whereas the average white middle-class Protestant is a slippery character; slippery with good living and all the right Freudian answers. What's his direction? What's his goal? He has a comfortable life, healthy children who can go to college; if he should lose his job it won't be too hard for him to find another. Still, he's a miserable man, guilty for not enjoying his bountiful comforts, uneasy in his profound belief that his unhappiness must be due to his own craziness. "I ought to be happy." This is his phrase; this is the theme of today's hero, a passive, bewildered character who cannot solve his problem; who doesn't even know what it is.

Only one story in the book, "In a Foreign City," by Robert M. Coates, really attempts to meet this hero head on; a couple of others make a pass at him. It's a good story; still, its impact is blunted to some extent by its unforeseen, unwilled, nightmare quality.

Perhaps this very quality is what makes the story real. What else is

the writer to do with such a hero? Shakespeare never had to cope with him; nobody ever did, not even Dostoievsky. Shall the writer move into his conscious and subconscious and just paddle about in there? Or shall he, as the Left has too often advocated, turn his back on the real world of today, with its smooth, gleaming surface, its vast underground caverns of anxiety, panic, confusion, and write about some other world; the world of the Thirties, perhaps?

Writing in the Thirties was vigorous and full of energy. But this vigor and energy came from the sharp, vital conflict that characterized the period. People were in motion; and motion, conflict, direction, make for a powerful literature even when, as then, the newness and strangeness of the subject matter give rise to naivete and sentimentality.

Today there is no clear and simple conflict, no urgent objective necessity which might set the American people in motion. Therefore they are passive, static; what motion there is seems spasmodic, individual, and largely without direction. The deep and awful conflicts which do actually exist are overshadowed by our gigantic, all-encompassing productivity; blurred and distorted by the skillful, incessant chorus of Madison Avenue.

What's the answer? Where does the writer go from here? Into the psyche, with gun or camera? Off to the races? Up to the nursery? Back to the Thirties?

To quote Hammerstein's King: Is a puzzlement.

# THE REHEARSAL

*ETTORE RELLA*

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1

Evening is the unknown coast
where somebody's dog (whose dog?: no houses are visible)
barks down the coruscating path of light.

(What system of light does this lamppost belong to?)

The surviving idea of the day
stands at last in the lamplight at the end of the path,
water streaming from its shoulders—unconscious now
of its bleeding feet
cut by the broken bottles, the corroded cans
tossed from old Roman picnics into the tide.

All day in the mind the rockets go up,
weaving a maze of trajectories—

but only how many, how many,
manage to stand upon the sky
to shine in the mind at dusk like stars?

The doomed ideas
flare out to smoky plummets of black char
hissing with the last of their heat at the surface of the sea,
then down, down through the grasping twilight
among the sunken coffers of unspent gold.

(Or are they the wardrobe trunks of the Wall Street magician
whose sins against reality went down with the luxury liner?)

Everywhere, the land, like the bottom of the sea, is littered with death:
there has never been a tabula rasa for contemporary architecture—
after all, why haul death down if it can still be rented?

Clear of the tide, in the evening,
the living dead who hate life
stare at the resurrected man walking up from the sea.
Hastily they reconstruct
these ruins. Through hell and high water
the dimly-figured architraves
rise on the broken pillars of empire: a mirage
to trap the traveler.

2

The essential structure of the warehouse on the wharf functions in steel.

Nevertheless, across the facade,
the Doric bones of the Parthenon
have been deployed in a useless file
of enslaved magnificence,—caryatid
whores, gleaming and ghostly, former
queens brought to their knees to uplift
the inferiority complex of the barbarian landlord.

In the basement of the warehouse,
the cone of light from a green-shaded bulb
spots a committee of the U. S. Senate
working a man over—

drawing blood and getting nowhere.

The chewed butts of cigars,
aimed at the water closet,

smolder in the dark where the Bill of Rights
hangs from a nail, a pad
of adequate scraps—

while the man,
black and blue and numb and bloody,
staggers backward into his mind,
swings about and disappears.

Great feet of silence,
inward, inward—
incorruptible giant,
with one last magical gaze
back at his city of consciousness,
he conjures the whole construction away—
tremulous girders of neon, faces and places,
dogs and all,—
into the small and dark and separate cells—
packing boxes, nondescript,
heaped helter-skelter (or so it seems)
throughout the grey ravines.

Inward—he moves inward—and down—
down where the land begins to give way
and the feverish distillations
of childhood day and childhood night
raise their phantom fires from the slick of time—
and now the land HAS given way
and this is the very bottom of the world,—
the submarine air where an octopus walks
down the broken stair, into the deep ruin.

The senators lift the unconscious man
to the mattress in the corner—they turn away—

but the captured flesh weighs down their retreat,
adding to their own mortality, while the man
is safe, now, beyond the gates
of sense, like a grain, unassailable,
husked of its death,
flowering in the dark (the senators are sure), indestructibly
—a crystal tree.

They wash their hands and turn off the light—

five minutes ago, riding high,
bound by transfiguration in the cloud of blood,
now their low and separate fires
flicker coldly—

they observe the man in the light from the window—
he begins to stir—

his face is the face of their own fate,
bright eyes of a cat—
the darkness in the room as they make for the door
is heavy at their knees as snow—

"Let's get out of here—"

thrilled by greed, chilled by fear,
the senators go down to the corner for a beer.

3

With a tide of light,
a resurrection of life in life,
of a face from a mask,
of a few steps forward from many steps back,
up from the secret caves of the body
the blood returns to the brain—

high lanterns of search,
deep eyes of anger,
and a song, even here,
here where the cities lie level and black:

the imaginary girl
like a bird in a cloud
lightly, already
pauses on the air and creates a doorway,
laughs through a square of space for a window
and picks geraniums from beyond the clock.

The mutilated man steps forward in the room—
from the forefront of time he steps forward
in full sculpture:
more impelled towards life,
less withheld by death,
than any design since time began—

the man in the room
and the room in the mind of the man—
two stages, two sets of actors,
play of fact and play of image—but the same play—
fact, from the very beginning, preceding image—
image, thereafter, foreseeing new fact—
foresight and fact when looked at together in a
slow time,
spilling a blur—
but now that the time is just right, come to a head as it has,
fact in the room simultaneous with the image in the mind,
no blur whatsoever!,—
standing so sharply in a space so deep,
moving forward with so much purpose,
it's livelier than life—or so it seems—

a frame of extremely timely light
from the outmost star
to this lamplight on the trees—
no escape, a perfect perspective,
where the actors must enter by life and must go by death,
caught in the groove of ecstatic performance,
the senators with terror, the man with joy,
knowing that this is at last the time
when the play is for keeps.

# SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY: II*

*EDWARD KARDELJ*

## *THE MECHANISM OF SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY*

PERMIT me to describe in brief how we have realized this principle in practice. The first question to decide was how to secure the free interplay of economic forces. This resolved itself into how best to ensure that the working men employing the socialized instruments of production should be free as workers and as regards the expression of their initiative. In other words, within an environment of freedom we must reconcile the economic self interest of the individual with maximization of the productivity of labor and further expansion of the forces of production. Responsibility for bringing about this reconciliation lies mainly in the *workers' councils.*

Within the framework of the general direction of our society and our national economic planning, each of our enterprises is a self-controlled operation. After deducting the costs of production—including the basic wages fund—the net income of these enterprises is regarded as a social income, i.e., it is regarded as both the individual net income of the enterprise and as part of the collective net income of the economy. In accordance with the provisions of the federal law and the federal plan, this net income is distributed in stated shares to the state, the commune, the enterprise concerned and to its workers and employees. That part of the net income which accrues to the individual enterprise is in part subject to distribution among the workers and employees to supplement their pay and in proportion to their output, the remainder being allocated to the capital funds at the free disposal of the enterprise. The enterprise invests this portion in expansion of and improvements upon its capital

* This is the concluding section of Dr. Kardelj's article on socialist democracy in Yugoslavia which began in the December issue.

equipment, and in such social uses as housing and other purposes regarding which the workers' council is competent to decide independently.

*Within this framework, the enterprise is wholly free in its activity. No administrative organ is competent to determine its policies. It engages in free competition on the open market, pursues its own independent development and arranges the degrees and forms of the cooperation in which it engages with other equally independent enterprises.*

Our enterprises are managed by working collectives through the workers' councils and managing boards. The collectives elect the workers' councils for a one year term. Since this period is actually too short to produce effective results, it is probable that it will be extended to two years in the near future, with the provision that only one half of the members of the workers' councils would be subject to election each year.

Election is by secret ballot. In enterprises having fewer than 500 workers and employees, candidates for the workers' councils are nominated either by the union or by a group of workers and employees representing at least one tenth of the whole collectives' numerical strength. In enterprises of 500 or more workers and employees, the sponsoring group may be not less than the number of the workers' council's membership due for election. In enterprises with less than 30 workers and employees, the workers' council consists of the whole collective.

The workers' councils elect managing boards which carry out the decisions of the workers' councils in between their sessions and perform the current tasks of economic management of the enterprise. No member of the managing board may hold office for more than one year. Professional managers are appointed by a competitive method. Applications are invited for the post. Selection from among the candidates is made by a special mixed commission one third of whose members consists of representatives of the workers' council, the remainder of representatives of professional associations and other persons as nominated by the people's committee or, in the case of larger or specialized enterprises, by the government of the respective republic or federation.

Thus, as regards Yugoslav socialism there exist no special state administrative boards within the state apparatus to which the individual enterprises or workers' councils are subordinated. However, enterprises are free to unite themselves within the framework of the chambers of industry and other economic chambers in order to enhance cooperation between them or to advance production. They may also create common economic and technical services and similar organizations leading to the same end.

The economic policy of the enterprises is determined by the workers' councils. Technical implementation of such policy is the responsibility of

the manager and the body of technicians of the enterprise. The workers' council may not interfere directly in these areas of jurisdiction of the manager and the technicians. Thus, for example, although it is the workers' council which decides that production of stated items shall be undertaken, it is the manager and his technical staff who organizes the actual process of the production and assigns workers independently. The workers' council may not change his decision. The manager, of course, may also advance proposals regarding the economic policy of the enterprise. Equally, the workers' council and the managing board may each offer observations and suggestions concerning the organization of labor in production.

In the majority of cases, the proposals of the manager, providing they are warranted economically, are adopted by the workers' council. In advancing such proposals, or in organizing production, the manager also takes into account the opinion of the workers' council. If the workers' council should reject a proposal made by the manager, the latter may refer the issue to the people's committee of the commune. In practice, it very rarely happens that the manager has to invoke assistance from the commune. If the decisions of the council or the managing board contravene existing regulations, the manager is bound to indicate this fact to them. Should they persist in their decision, he must advise the people's committee of the commune accordingly. If he fails to do this, he is held personally responsible for the consequence.

On the other hand, it is within the power of the worker's council to demand the dismissal of the manager if it should consider him unsatisfactory and to invite new applications for this post. Final decision, however, rests within the people's committee of the communes of the territory within which the enterprise is situated. The people's committee must be able to justify whatever decision is arrived at, whether favorable or adverse.

Yugoslavia has a free market within which enterprises compete one with another. Market success is determined by quality and price. The beneficial influence of competition upon pricing and quality, combined with considerable dependence of the material welfare of the whole working collective and even of the community upon the market success of the enterprise, provide a more potent stimulus towards quality and volume of production than could any form of administrative control.

## *WAGES IN OUR ECONOMY*

BECAUSE of this, the wages system, which previously had been subject to the exclusive decision of the central authorities, has gradually

been decentralized. In accordance with the social plan for 1955, it is integrally centered on the relationship between the enterprises and the commune. Under the terms of the regulations which are coming into effect in 1955, salaries will be subject to determination by wage and salary regulations. The draft regulations are worked out by the managing boards of the enterprises and will have to be referred to the working collectives for study and comment. The draft must then be approved by the workers' council of the enterprise, the union organization, and the people's committee (commune). If there should be unanimous agreement by these bodies, the regulation then takes effect. If agreement is not reached, however, the issue is referred to an arbitration committee made up of the representatives of the trade union, of the commune, and of an ex officio member of the executive council of the republic serving as chairman. It is in the interest of the commune that salaries shall not be raised above some general average, since exaggerated pay raises would be at the direct expense of the capital funds available to the commune. On the other hand, to protect the personal interests of the worker, supported by the actions of the trade unions, wages are not permitted to fall below the determined minimum.

FROM OUR experience, it is always possible to resolve any resulting contradiction of interests through agreement between the workers' councils and the commune, with the cooperation of the union, since the interweaving of mutual interests is such that contradiction between individual and collective interests is easily straightened out. It is only in exceptional cases that intervention by the arbitration commission proves necessary. The workers' council and the commune are each the organs of the same working men, the sole difference lying in the fact that through the commune their individual interests come face to face with their common interests. It follows logically that agreement is usually reached. Conversant with the problems of their enterprises, the workers will not be interested in harming the enterprise by levying unreal demands.

It is upon the success and developments of these self same enterprises that their individual and material status depends. Because of this, the need for state intervention in this field has been very slight and even the workers themselves, whose destiny is in their own hands expressed through the workers' councils and the commune, have neither need nor desire to resort to strike or to other similar forms of struggle.

The workers are concerned to raise the productivity of labor since they are paid in proportion to the results achieved. They are interested in the overall financial success of the enterprise since they share in its net

income either directly as a supplement to their wages or indirectly through the allocation of that income to housing construction, health institutions, education, and the raising of the social standards of the local community, i.e., the commune.

Strong incentive is thus provided not only for the direct performance of labor but for active participation in the management of the enterprise and the government of the commune. The joint efforts of a democratic action by the workers' councils and free market competition make it possible for the working collectives to strive for maximum success subject to the limitations imposed by the prevailing material conditions. Our experience proves abundantly that the working collectives in the management of our enterprises can cope effectively with whatever tasks arise in the social management of production.

THE economic backwardness and the relative underdevelopment which we inherited are nevertheless causing us some serious difficulties. Mainly, among them is the need for the most intense effort to raise the general economic and technological levels of the working class. This difficulty is aggravated by the fact that the rapid development of industry draws into the factories large numbers of workers coming immediately from the backward conditions of the villages. Advancement of the education of such workers and their training for improved and more effective handling of the economy is effected through lectures, classes, schools, and other means. Perhaps the most effective school of all is the every-day practice of the direct management of enterprises, a school through which tens of thousands of workers' councils and managing boards members, changed and supplemented every year, are passing without interruption, gaining new and rich experience.

## *CHANGED ROLE OF THE UNIONS*

THE transformation of the role of the trade unions is an actual consequence of this change in conditions. Once the workers' councils had begun to function in the enterprises, and the councils of producers in the communes, the unions began to lose their previous role of unique representative of the working class as a whole. There came about a similar change in their function as a working class factor in the control of production and as the standard bearer of the initiative of the working class in the social aspects of production. The new circumstances are such that the working class, for the solution of such problems, turns naturally to the workers' councils and the councils of producers as the organs which

represent their individual and collective interests and which, in fact, are the only organs competent to determine their solution.

The workers as a whole are not now confronted by an employing class, either in the person of the capitalist or the centralized state apparatus, in conflict with whose demands they must defend their basic economic interests. It is they themselves who decide all questions regarding the production and distribution of wealth.

This decision is of course made within the framework of the ratios of the economic plan and the general social regulations. These, however, are designed to secure the unity of the economic system, to determine the direction of economic development, and to ensure the common social interest, as decided by the people's assemblies of the Federation and the republics. These same people's assemblies include councils of producers as a legislative house equal with the other political house in all economic and social issues. The councils of producers are elected by and composed of the direct producers in the enterprises, workshops, and producers in the villages exclusively.

In such a system, it is understandable that the trade unions *as the instruments of economic struggle of the working class* have in the main become unnecessary to the workers.

Nevertheless, the unions have retained significant social functions.

*First,* the unions still retain a certain protective function. The agreement of the union, like that of the commune, is sought regarding the fundamental provisions of the basic wage regulations, so that the wage regulations assume some of the aspects of a collective contract. Through this participation in the enactment of basic wage regulations, the unions of the individual industrial branches are instrumental in securing a unified level of basic pay for identical work. In the implementation of the basic wage regulations, the unions also attend to the protection of the rights of the individual worker in relation to the organs of the enterprises or to other local factors. They strive for improved labor protection, for appropriate health and other measures, and so on.

*Second,* the unions contribute towards coordinating the direct economic interests of all workers with those of the individual working collectives. They do this by striving to secure uniformity of the means whereby the material and other rights of the workers are secured. Wherever individual working collectives show signs of pursuing possibly selfish ends at the expense of other collectives, the unions combat this.

*Third,* a primary function of the unions is the economic, vocational and other training of workers as well as their cultural development. The unions thus assist the workers to carry out their daily tasks, to participate

in the organs of self-management of production and in the communes, and to reach full understanding of both their rights and their role in these spheres.

*Fourth,* the unions organize or foster the organization of canteens, social institutions, rest centers, hospitals, holiday resorts, physical culture establishments, etc.

The function of the unions therefore remains of great importance. In essence, however, they are gradually transforming themselves from militant organizations of working class and economic struggle into associations of workers and employees serving only certain of their social needs. In this sense, they are, in effect, developing into a specific function within the system of direct self-government by the producers.

## *SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE ECONOMY*

THIS is the general role and the organizational form of the basic organs of democracy in the fields of production, transport, trade and the economy in general. This system has been built on the basis of two fundamental concepts. The first is that no central leadership, however wise it may be, is capable of directing unaided economic and social development whether in general or in detail.

Attempts to create a central leadership entrusted with that task are bound to end in bureaucratic despotism. We consider the task of centrally organized conscious socialist action in economic and social development to be the ensuring of the free development of the socialist and economic forces and relationships and performance of the planning role necessary for the maximization of the creative energies of the society. In other words, we believe it to be the objective of conscious socialist action not to abolish the material elemental impulses of socialist development nor even to replace them, but to impart to them such a direction that the factors of socialist development reach their full maturity.

It goes without saying that economic planning should so coordinate and channel the general economic development that the most beneficial overall social effects are achieved. Its primary function in accomplishing this should be to harmonize the factors of economic development rather than to direct them. Most emphatically it must not operate as an instrument for turning the direct producer into a hireling of the state deprived of even the possibility of the self-expression of economic initiative. Its purpose shall be to facilitate harmonious economic development by precluding disturbances and imbalance within the economy and the evolving economic relationships.

The second basic premise is that the effort and initiative of the individual is not increased in proportion to the rigor of the directives, controls, and checks exercised upon him. We are aware that in specific fields of work and particular stage of development these factors may play an important role. Fundamentally, however, maximization of the efforts and initiative of the individual depends upon the personal economic and social, cultural and material interests of the man who is doing the work, who is creating freely.

The pursuit of these interests of the individuals, and not the bureaucratic central state authority, which leads to monopoly and power over human beings, should be the main stimulant of socialist progress. The pursuit of these interests should be that motive social force which will replace the capitalist free initiative of individual capitalists.

Under the conditions of classical capitalistic private ownership man's initiative in the development of the productive forces is virtually confined to the owner of capital. Opposed to this, the social ownership of the means of production makes it possible for such initiative to become the substance of every man engaged in labor, provided that there exists the corresponding democratic mechanism of self-management by the producers.

## *INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL INTERESTS*

THE most vital problem of the new political system is how to coordinate the individual's interest of the working man with the collective interests of society in the system of social ownership of the means of production. Upon the solution of this problem also depends that of the requisite democratic political forms in the transitional phase of society's movement towards socialism.

We are not visionaries. We do not ascribe to human social consciousness greater qualities than it is capable of possessing in the given material conditions. Men, of course, often demand more from society than it is able to provide in the light of its economic development. Such demands, under a system of bureaucratic despotism, are met with political pressures, increased centralism, and the imposition of sanctions which ultimately contribute to an evermore acute antagonism between the state as the owner of the means of production and the workers who fight for their economic interests, in elemental fashion, blindly, consciously or unconsciously, using whatever means are available to them. This may take many forms, from unconscious passive resistance and deterioration

in the quality of workmanship down to the various forms of active resistance.

The socialist way to solve this potential antagonism between individual and collective interests is of an altogether different quality. In the final sense, this potential clash of interests can be obviated only by placing the working man in a position of full control over the production relationships and their economic effects upon the material status of individuals. He does not possess and is unable to exercise such control unless he is able to contribute equally and directly to deciding the essential questions pertinent to such relationships. It is only under these conditions that he will fight for his material interests consciously and directly through the relationships in production—through conscious socialist action —rather than by elemental pressure brought to bear by him upon the state. Moreover, it is under these very conditions that his socialist social consciousness is schooled and, particularly, his grasp of the unity and interdependence of individual and social interests.

To us, therefore, *the principle of self-government by the producers is the starting point of all democratic socialist policy, of every form of socialist democracy.* The revolution which does not open the door to such development must, inevitably, and for a longer or shorter time, stagnate in state-capitalistic forms, in bureaucratic despotism.

It follows that the means of democratic self-government must be so devised as to place the producer in a position to influence the social organs of decision. This form of organization, moreover, must be such that the producer is able to attain a complete sense of responsibility towards society. It must enable the producer to get insight into the economic and social relationships so that he can make decisions in compliance with real possibilities. It must be such, in short, that by *his consciousness and his material and other interests,* the working man grows capable of exercising an influence governed by his growing recognition of his individual and the social welfare.

It is to accomplish these ends that the social mechanism of a nation embarked on the building of socialism, and the democratic methods employed within that mechanism, should be adapted. In socialist Yugoslavia, this role is performed mainly by the commune which constitutes the foundation of our social edifice.

## *THE LEADING SOCIAL POWERS*

IT MUST not be thought that the central organs of government in Yugoslavia retain no important functions. On the contrary, it is

relative to the decisions of the central social and state organs as regards the distribution of the national net income or surplus labor that the effective and direct influence of the producer must be secured. The central organs of government serve to coordinate and canalize the entire economic development of the nation. Their functions are primarily those of allocating the national income to the different social funds and of securing the harmonious working of the system to a common end. It is in the central organs that there are enacted regulations for the implementation of social planning, etc.

In the system of classical European democracy, functions of this description—if they are performed at all as state functions in the system of private ownership—are exercised by parliament. By far the greater part of the regulative functions performed by the communes in socialist Yugoslavia are performed by parliaments in the classical European type democracies. As a result, the scope of function of the central organs of government in classical democracy is infinitely greater than that of the central organs in the system of democracy which we are developing. The mechanism of the classical European democracy is adapted to the social role and structure of private capitalism. The combined factors of state centralism and private ownership of the means of production bar the working man from gaining direct insight into economic and social relationships. They leave him totally dependent upon his political party for this insight. Under the most liberal of conditions, and even through the medium of his political party, his individual influence upon the government and management of society remains restricted since it is essentially indirect and invariably sporadic. But without a party, he represents nothing.

I do not wish this to be interpreted as an assertion that bourgeois democracy is a political institution which socialists should discard mechanically. On the contrary, within the framework of capitalism it affords the greatest opportunities for the development of the forces of production and the assertion of progressive social trends. Much of the groundwork towards the building of socialist relationships can be accomplished through its instrumentality.

What I wish to assert is something quite different, namely, that bourgeois democracy cannot be an ideal to socialism. At best, it is a mere starting point. Moreover, with the further consolidation and development of the socialist factors, it itself must begin to change in consonance with them.

The decisive first step in the establishment of socialist democracy is the leap from the political monopoly of parties towards direct partici-

pation in decisions by each individual member of society. Such a democratic mechanism of social management must be decentralized in one direction in order gradually to replace the principle of "government of people" by the principle of their self-government in all spheres of social life and, primarily, in the economic field.

ON THE other hand, it will be appropriately centralized so as to secure the most effective social *administration of things*, i.e., of the common means of production and the material forces of society in general. Only a parallel and simultaneous development of both these processes, which is the antithesis of man's conversion into a slave of a centralized bureaucratic apparatus, can ever lead to that point at which the "administration of things" will cease to be a *social relationship* and will gradually transform itself into a *public social service* serving all free men.

Thus, we are not rejecting all centralization of social functions. It is essential that this be understood since our decentralization of the state and economic apparatus is frequently misrepresented abroad. On the contrary, it is our judgment that the social developments of our time call for a centralization of specific social functions not merely within individual nations but, in fact, in the international sphere as mankind is urged incessantly towards cooperation and a universal solution to the world's problems.

Our point of view, however, is that the point of departure of such a development must be the free producer engaged in the social means of production, i.e., the self-management of people brought together by common interest and not by the coercive power of the state. It is only in such a process that there can come about the withering away of the state as an instrument of coercion. This is not something we shall accomplish overnight but may prove to be a task even of generations.

## *THE COMMUNE, BASIC UNIT OF SOCIETY*

IN YUGOSLAVIA, as I have already commented, the commune, headed by its people's committee, is the basis of such a mechanism of social democracy. It is supplemented by workers' councils and other direct organs of producer's self-government. In the first stages of our development, the function of the commune was primarily performed by districts, since the local communities were too small to be able to discharge this task. We shall proceed with a general policy of enlarging the territorial scope of local communities so as to enable them to comprehend certain economic unities.

At the same time a number of the functions previously performed by the earlier districts are being transferred to the communes while the new, considerably enlarged districts are to represent the community of a number of communes. Among the tasks of districts of this type is the performance of certain common duties, coordination of the development of the local communes, and securing assistance to the more backward and undeveloped ones. Although grants to local budgets will be part of the functions performed by such a district, this assistance is not to assume the character of social relief nor is the making of such grants to be its primary concern. The primary purpose of the district of the new type is to achieve economic and social development and progress of the communes. The people's republics act in a similar manner toward the more backward districts while the Federation acts similarly toward the less developed regions and republics.

The enormous social role and power of the commune lies, first of all, in its freedom of independent action in the field of economic development and, in the second place, in its organic connection with the workers councils and with other democratic organs of self-government of the producers. Thus, the commune is not only a political but is first and foremost a social-economic organism with its political function destined gradually to grow weaker as its social-economic function gains in strength. In effect, it is through the commune that there will be effected distribution of the surpluses from labor appropriate to its territory. In this way the commune becomes directly concerned with the constant expansion of the productive forces of its area.

The principal political and social-economic organs of the commune and the district are people's committees which are organized in such a way as to be able to discharge the above mentioned tasks. The people's committees of the communes are, ordinarily, unicameral bodies, election to them being by secret ballot by all adult citizens in the territory of the commune.

## *MEETINGS OF ELECTORS*

CANDIDATES for election to the people's committees are nominated by citizens at meetings of electors. They are not the nominees of any political party, not even of the League of Communists or the Socialist Alliance of the Working People. A meeting of electors is made up of the voters from the territory which is entitled to elect one councilor to the people's committee. In addition to their specific part in the nomi-

nation of candidates, the meetings also serve as a permanent link between the electors and the organs whose members have been elected by them. Regardless of political affiliation, all voters have an equal right to participate in the decisions reached by the meetings of electors.

These meetings of electors are conducted by chairmen chosen from their own midst by electors present. Each elector present may propose one candidate for election to the council. Once nominations have been closed, the commission on candidates, elected by the voters from their midst, prepares the list of candidates and submits it to the meeting of electors. However, the commission may list only persons nominated by the electors directly at the meeting itself. Each candidate is voted upon separately. A citizen who receives the majority vote of the electors present is considered the nominee of the meeting of electors. If the meeting does not adopt the list of the nominating commission in its entirety, the Commission loses its mandate and a new nominating Commission is elected at the same meeting. The nomination procedure is then repeated. If all the legal requirements have been met, the elections' commission must confirm the nomination. In addition to the meeting of electors, any group of citizens may nominate its candidate on the condition that the nomination is backed by at least 50 signatures of sponsors. For one and the same electoral unit of the commune there can be several candidates but never less than two.

THIS method of nominating candidates for the people's committees of the communes has already played a very important part in the creation of the new social consciousness.

The effect is to induce electors to discriminate between candidates according to their personal worth in the light of the tasks they will be called upon to perform as councilors on the people's committees and not to take sides mechanically according to some general party allegiance. The people are thus brought together by common social interest and not by mere allegiance or even by ideological concepts. Naturally, the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia each take an active part in the pre-election campaign. However, they enjoy no special privileges whatever in the nomination of candidates.

The same principle generally applies to the election of representatives to the assemblies of the constituent republics and the Federal People's Assembly. I should add, however, that the positive role of the system of nomination to which I have referred is not sufficiently manifested. Our development will certainly have to bring new solutions in this matter more in keeping with the needs of the continued progress of the

specific democratic mechanism based upon self-government in production and in the communes.

The people's committees of districts are bicameral in nature, consisting of the district council and the council of producers which, on a basis of equality, decide all issues of an economic or social character. All other issues are decided by the district council alone.

## *COUNCILS OF PRODUCERS*

IT IS necessary that I enlarge somewhat upon the role played by the councils of producers in our system. These councils are elected by the direct producers alone, i.e., the workers and employees engaged in production, the working peasants, independent craftsmen and so on. These direct producers alone are eligible for election to them. Election is by producer groups under the system of secret balloting. The numerical representation of a producer group upon the council of producers is in proportion to its share in creating the gross product on the territory of the given district.

The central function of the councils is to correct the negative influence of old and outworn social relationships upon the new democratic organs of self-government and *to do so in a democratic manner. This makes for progressive diminution of the need for administrative interference by the state in such relationships.*

Thus, the significance of the role of the councils of producers springs from the fact that, despite the present numerical inferiority of the working class, it confers a leading position on the working class within the whole social system. At the same time, it ensures that latent bureaucratic tendencies shall not, under the guise of the dictatorship of the proletariat, win a victory over the proletariat itself and over its authority. *Again it accomplishes this through the mechanism of democracy.*

It is important, therefore, to realize that the councils of producers do not represent some indispensable element of socialist democracy, no matter what the circumstances in which they exist. In more highly developed countries, as soon as the means of production have become social property, the leading role of the working class will assume its primacy directly in every democratic system of organization. In a comparatively backward country such as ours, however, it has proved necessary that this role be performed by specific social organs complementing the unified democratic system of the commune and the higher organs of the state authority.

Within this system, incidentally, the working class assumes leadership not because of numerical superiority but because of its real eco-

nomic and social role. Such, then, is the key task of our councils of producers. It is a natural result that the councils of producers enjoy the most direct insight into the problems of production and of the national economy. This enables them to exercise a most beneficent influence upon all the practical decisions of the people's committees and people's assemblies having to do with economic issues.

THIS system of ours is not without its critics. It has been alleged against us by some that, because the workers are granted greater rights than other people, we are guilty of political discrimination among our citizens. It is not accident that this sort of criticism usually stems from the self same people who see no discrimination whatever in the fact that the role discharged in our country by the councils of producers is discharged under capitalism by the private owners exclusively. It seems to such people quite natural that capitalists should enjoy almost unrestrained mastery in the field of the economy. They nevertheless brand as discriminatory our system of councils of producers wherein the working class, as well as all the other working people, are represented in the settling of economic questions in proportion to their contribution to the national income, i.e., to the surpluses produced and given by them to the social community.

When the matter is given even a single glance from this angle, it becomes utterly absurd to impute discrimination to us for implementing what is actually a basic principle of socialism—the principle that those responsible for the creation of surplus values should also have a voice in their distribution.

This system is fully warranted in the conditions under which we find ourselves today. It is a most effective barrier against bureaucracy. It enables the working class to gain ascendency in its historical role of leader and to do so as a class rather than through some bureaucratic apparatus. In short, this system is an effective barrier to any Stalinist attempt at identifying the will of the working class with the will of the state, with the will of the political party in power.

Nomination of candidates for the council of producers follows the same pattern as for the people's committee of the commune save that, in the former case, the meetings of electors are constituted of producer groups and within the appropriate economic organizations.

Election to the district councils is now direct and its governing principles are the same as those which govern the election to the people's committees of the communes. However, it begins to appear that it would be better if the district council were composed of delegates from the

communes. In this way, the people's committee of the district would consist of the district council, to which delegates would be sent by self-governing communes, and of the council of producers, to which the self-governing organs of economic organizations (workers' councils, agricultural cooperatives, arts and crafts organizations and others) would send their delegates. This method would make for the most intimate contact of the district leadership with the problems of the communes and of production. At the moment this issue is under public discussion in Yugoslavia.

## *THE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEES*

AT THE head of the various administrative departments of the people's committees are councils which the people's committees elect from among citizens whose professional knowledge or other qualifications single them out as uniquely suited to contribute to the sound functioning of the administrative apparatus. These are not salaried officials, but unpaid citizens who offer their services voluntarily. The councils render decisions over matters of principle and over the more important aspects of the field of administration as regards the economy, education, health, internal policies and so on. It is also the responsibility of these councils to supervise the work of the staff. The decisions are effectuated through the secretaries of such councils and the specialized apparatus of the people's committee.

The nature of this organizational mechanism and the broad powers of the communes and districts *present to each citizen the possibility of exercising great and direct influence upon the activity of the commune and the development of the whole social life.* As the system grows in internal strength, this possibility is bound to be enhanced even further.

Moreover, the very fact that this mechanism exists and that the commune plays this role within it is causing the commune to become the most suitable form by which to integrate the collective social interests to the individual interests of the working man. The same worker who, in the factory, participates in decisions regarding wages and the social standards of the individual is also enabled to participate in decisions reached by the commune on the other social needs of the community in which he resides. His voice is heard on the question of the further development of the productive forces requisite to increasing the commune's revenue, on the financing of education and sanitary improvements, and on all other questions. These are matters of as direct concern to the individual as is the question of his wages. Each and every unwarranted increase of personal consumption must necessarily be at the expense of the de-

velopment of the forces of production and result in decreasing investment in other sectors vital to raising the general social standard.

This is a fact which every person living in the system of the commune has to think through for himself. Recognition of this collective interest of the commune, which is very close to the day-to-day thinking of the average working man, is thus becoming the most important corrective for blind pressures for increased individual income which otherwise might imperil the entire system of social self-government.

To us in Yugoslavia, therefore, the commune is the decisive factor and the organizing form through which the forces of socialism will be enabled gradually to cope with what is classically termed as "government business," in other words, the functioning of the state as an instrument of class rule.

Through the agency of the commune, furthermore, economic functions which previously had been a privilege of the bourgeois class or of a special civil service apparatus are becoming increasingly socialized. They are ceasing to be a function of the state apparatus and, in increasing measure, are being delegated straight to the direct producer or his local self-governing organs, namely, workers councils, the communes and the autonomous vertically linked associations.

With increasing force, therefore, the commune is becoming the political mechanism through which is being achieved the conversion of society from a system of classes rife with internal antagonism and developing on the very basis of such antagonism into the community of producers of which Karl Marx had foreseen, a community developing on the basis of the common interests of producers or, rather, on the conscious solution of contradictions between collective interests and the interests of the individual.

## *SOCIAL SELF-GOVERNMENT*

ALONGSIDE the developments I have described it was also necessary for us to solve the question of social management in such non-economic domains as education, culture, science and health. The principle we applied to this problem was, again, that intervention by the state should gradually be reduced to a minimum, the focus of our activity being shifted to the creation of a corresponding mechanism of self-government.

In our universities, schools, scientific institutes, cultural and similar establishments, a beginning has been made in creating collective management organs whose composition is accomplished partly by representation

of the people's assemblies or people's committees, and partly by representation of the social institutions concerned. These organs of management (councils or committees) render independent decisions in principle based on law, while implementation of decisions or leadership in current activities is through boards and directors or the specialized leaderships of such institutions. Upon this foundation there is being evolved a system of self-governing administrative organs for these specific spheres of social life on a vertical or federal scale.

Beyond doubt, within such a system of decentralization and local self-management the most momentous question is how to secure unity of the system and realization of those social functions which are of common interest. The fact that we are moving towards progressive decentralization must not be interpreted as meaning that we think it possible for mankind in our day to live within the confines of local communities. Our communes are not a world apart. They are merely instruments for the carrying out of specific social functions having a direct impact on the interests of the individual citizen. All other social functions of the common interest belong primarily to the Federation and republics.

## *THE ORGANIZATION OF THE STATE*

IT SHOULD be noted, in addition, that the commune is not an organ for the "management of people" which is essentially what the state represents. The commune very little resembles a state instrument. It is a form of organization through which men employing socialized means of production participate collectively in the "management of things" in conformity with their individual and their collective interests. However, the state still functions among us. It will continue to do so just so long as the objective conditions under which the working men of our country are living require it to. These state functions are exercised mainly by the republics and the Federation.

The principal instruments of the Federation and the republics include the laws and bylaws which generally determine the framework within which the self-governing organs operate, the social-economic plan which coordinates the actions of the autonomous collectives and organs in production and the economy in general, the ratios required for the harmonious development of the economy, and the forms of guidance regarding the development of the forces of production.

The leading organs of the Federation and the republics are their people's assemblies which, like the people's committees, are bicameral in nature. These assemblies operate through specialized committees. Their

executive function is concentrated in the hands of the executive councils. The role of the councils is not unlike that of a cabinet or council of ministers in the system of classical parliamentary democracy with this difference, however, that the council is not split into departments but is a collective organ which renders decisions only over matters of principle and supervises the administration. The direct execution and supervision are in the hands of secretaries of state who are directly accountable to the executive council.

In the fields of education, health, and welfare, the functions of the state secretaries in the republics are performed by the councils as collective organs, members being nominated by the appropriate people's assembly at the instance of the educational, social and other organizations concerned. These forms, therefore, again display the tendency of socialism in Yugoslavia to place even the centralized social functions under the intensive and direct influence of the citizenry.

I must confess, however, that here the new forms are making slower progress than in the economic enterprises, communes, and districts. This becomes understandable once one remembers that our revolution is still fighting for survival and that momentary political difficulties tend to retard the forward movement and occasionally succeed in doing so. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in this field of our socialist activity great results have also been achieved.

*Furthermore, it is not possible to jump over whole stages of development. Only the further development of our communes and other organs of self-government can exercise decisive counter-influence on the further evolution of the entire state mechanism.*

## *CHAIN OF SELF-GOVERNING ORGANS: MECHANISM OF DIRECT DEMOCRACY*

IN THE further evolution of the organizational forms of our centralized social functions, an important part will fall to the special vertically united autonomous systems in individual fields of our social activity. I refer here to such forms as arise from the nation-wide association of enterprises, institutions, communes, and citizens in pursuit of common aims. Such organizations are represented by our economic chambers, economic associations, social insurance offices, professional associations, etc. These organizations will gradually take over an increasing number of functions now currently discharged by the centralized state organs. Through them, the principle of social self-government will assert itself in the field of common functions of nationwide significance. Consequently,

the development of communes and of such vertically linked self-governing organisms is the process by which, in the final analysis, we shall alter the physiognomy of the central state organs and the mode of their formation. It will be unwise of us today to venture further into the realm of prophesy.

SUCH, then, are the premises upon which our political and economic system is developing. It is a system which makes actually possible the direct participation of every citizen in management, promotes the contest of views, stimulates individual initiative, and fosters the free development of the forces of Socialism. While accomplishing this, it is capable, as a unified system of socialist democracy, of defending itself against attacks from anti-socialist positions. *It is precisely this fact which explains why it is also the form best fitted for carrying out the process of the gradual withering away of the different forms of political monopoly.*

Herein, indeed, lies the essential difference between classical bourgeois and direct socialist democracy. The first is a *state form.* The second, in essence, is a *form of the withering away of the state.*

It is upon objective factors, of course, that the pace at which the process of the change or withering away of the state proceeds must ultimately depend, rather than upon the system. These objective factors include the level of development of the productive forces, the state of social consciousness, and international conditions.

*It is nonetheless incontestable that we have found the organizational forms wherein every step forward in the development of the forces of production or in the development of the socialist social consciousness will at the same time constitute an automatic step forward in the development of democracy and of socialist relationships.*

Under the conditions which prevail in Yugoslavia, it is only in this way that socialism can become the conscious and voluntary endeavor of the majority of working men. Only by such a process can it grow in internal political strength, rendering intervention by the state less and less necessary, and, ipso facto, accelerating the growth of ever freer democratic forms. At the same time, the freedom and breadth of social democracy will grow to the extent that men trained in the school of social self-government rise in ability to consciously coordinate their individual with the collective interest of the whole.

## *THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS AND THE SOCIALIST ALLIANCE*

AS CONCEIVED in Yugoslavia, socialist democracy by no means leaves social development to the elemental impulses of social forces.

Consciousness and elemental impulses in social life are two different but inseparable aspects of the same process. Under the conditions which prevail in our country, if the progressive social consciousness should fail to dominate, the conservative and reactionary tendencies would prove victorious over us. Working men must set concrete goals for themselves and must fight for their realization. The greater the degree to which their conscious endeavors conform to the objective laws of social development, the more successful will their efforts prove.

Such organizations as the League of Communists and the Socialist Alliance of the Working People are, for the same reasons, an indispensable factor in the struggle for socialism in our country. They represent *the organized socialist consciousness* without which it is impossible for us even to think of realizing the transition from capitalism to socialism.

In the stabilized system of bourgeois democracy, this purpose is served by the struggle waged by the labor parties and socialist movements to influence state politics. In a country such as ours which has passed through a revolution, the organized socialist movements which had been the bearers of the revolution can secure that transitional development only through defending the achievements of the revolution and through constantly strengthening the economic and political position of the socialist forces. Otherwise they must capitulate to internal and external reaction or to bureaucratism, either of which would represent a long step backwards.

Any attempt to weaken the force and role of such movements before they have accomplished their historic mission must, therefore, and especially in a country with a backward social-economic structure, lead inevitably to a sharpening of internal antagonisms. If such should eventuate, the outcome would be the liquidation, or at least a great weakening, of socialism and socialist democracy.

The League of Communists of Yugoslavia is not a political party. It is, to be sure, the political instrument of the labor movement. *It is nonetheless not a party in the classic sense of the term.* What is involved, indeed, is an association of ideologically united people who base their social, political and social-economic actions upon the principle of Marx's scientific revelations and the subsequent development of scientific socialism in general. *They do this without seeking for themselves a monopoly of the state apparatus but by fighting for the realization of socialist principles in the practice of the working masses and their self-governing organs.*

In like manner, the Socialist Alliance of the Working People is not some party organization designed to transmit the privilege of social

management from the masses of the people to the higher political levels. On the contrary, it was established as an organization precisely to render such a position of privilege unnecessary and to put the functions of social management as directly as possible into the hands of the masses. The Socialist Alliance of the Working People is not a politically centralized party of the old type. *It is a broad nation-wide parliament in which every socialist tendency is permitted expression.*

In this way, an active contest between opinions is carried on regarding all urgent issues effecting socialist development and the status of the working men. This activity has a vital influence on the decisions of the self-governing organs of enterprises, upon the communes, and upon the central social and state organs. In addition, this practice of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People exerts an active influence in connection with the promotion of the socialist consciousness of the masses, the political, ideological and vocational preparation in training of peoples for socialist social management. Thereby there is brought about a continuous increase in strength of the conscious socialist influences upon the entire social life.

THESE organizations offer no encouragement to the growth of bureaucratism. Bureaucratic tendencies have their genesis not in the fact of the existence of such political organizations but in their specific social status. *Specifically, they are encouraged if such political organizations are merged into a system of an omnipotent centralized state apparatus.* If, however, these political organizations are linked with the mechanism of direct democracy and self-government, if they act primarily through the masses and not through the administrative apparatus, they are certain to be an active factor in the struggle against bureaucracy and to be the standard bearers of conscious action for the advancement of socialist democracy.

Let me make it quite clear that I am not trying to suggest that a certain measure of political monopoly by the League of Communists and the Socialist Alliance of the Working People respectively represents some lasting necessity to socialist development in our country. Nor am I stating that our political system is necessarily oriented towards perpetual debarring of tendencies towards the creation of political parties.

*On the contrary, as socialist economic relations grow stronger and more stabilized, which in practical terms would make the economic return to capitalism impossible, there is no doubt that there will occur a gradual abolition of administrative restrictions upon political activity by the people. Furthermore, I do not even exclude the theoretical pos-*

*sibility that in such a situation, for a time there might also appear tendencies towards the establishment of political associations of the classical bourgeois democracy type of party, i.e., tendencies which even today exist in the anti-socialist circles within our country. However, I am equally convinced that these could manifest nothing more than a retrograde political consciousness devoid of any real prospect of survival.*

Progressive development and perfection of the mechanism of direct democracy and social self-government will render such forms of political life unnecessary. Debating will develop directly—as it is already developing in our organs of social self-management—that is, people will organize themselves in accordance with the need to solve concrete problems and according to their concrete outlook on current social tasks. *They will not organize themselves into static and immovable forms of political parties corresponding only to the period of class struggle when people organized themselves as their class interest dictated rather than according to the common social problems of their time.*

With the passage of time of course, and for the same reasons, the role of the League of Communists and of every political organization whose objective is ideological and political struggle for socialism will likewise change. A high level of consciousness of the masses and stability of our internal socialist relationships, based on complete impossibility of a return to the forms of capitalist exploitation, *will create a situation under which socialist relationships will become an indisputable everyday practice* while the struggle for socialist ideas will be rendered just as superfluous as, in nineteenth-century England, would have been the struggle of capitalist concepts over feudalism after capitalism had already become the dominant factor of English social life.

This will either render altogether unnecessary or will change the essential character of every political organization whose basic tenet is the struggle to secure the fundamental concepts of socialism.

## *PRACTICE AND PERSPECTIVE*

IN Yugoslavia, however, which with prodigious effort has only begun to free itself from backwardness, this task is as yet far from accomplished today. We are not mere visionaries who mistake wishful-thinking for objective reality. We need no urging to take stock of the actual interconnection of all the processes and developments of the material forces of our society. Our everyday practice is fairly accurately circumscribed by our material limitations. This means that the pace of development of our socialist democracy is also determined materially.

Accordingly, we are under no illusion that we can bypass necessary stages through which our society must evolve, even though we open to ourselves the longer vistas of our further progress. On the contrary, it is these very perspectives which emphasize our conscious need to mobilize and organize those material factors capable today of bearing the burden at the present stage of our socialist development. This mission has to be performed by both the political organizations of the working class and its state. To renounce this mission would be tantamount to repudiating the revolution and socialism itself.

In presenting this survey, I have neither dwelled on the difficulties which we have met in our socialist efforts nor with our weaknesses and failures. This is not because I wish to evade criticism not to represent things in a more favorable light than they deserve. It should be self-evident that many forces are at work often exercising a negative effect and retarding developments. I could give you volumes in illustrations of this. The fact remains, however, that these are but passing phenomena which though they may hamper us and even cause us occasionally to halt, actually amount to no more than the passing and unessential incidents.

The essence of the matter is that, in Yugoslavia, in addition to our objective relationships and the mechanism of social self-management, there also exist subjective social forces capable of carrying on the task of socialist development. The heart of the question is whether there is clarity of direction in the movement forward of the whole political mechanism, whether the transition to socialism is being encouraged or retarded by the leading political forces. What is important to determine is whether the results of our everyday political and economic activity are bringing us nearer to our goal.

In order that it shall not lose itself in blind worship of "practical ends," which in our conditions must inevitably lead to bureaucracy, conscious socialist action requires clarity as regards both its immediate goal and its more distant objectives. The analysis I have endeavored to present of our internal development has been of the affirmative steps we have taken to overcome these difficulties and obviate these dangers. It is for this reason that I have preferred to dwell on what is of lasting value in the tendencies of our internal development rather than of what is of a fleeting moment.

I BELIEVE that the outline I have drawn of the problems and tendencies internal to Yugoslavia's social life gives clear evidence that although, beyond doubt, we are still in a state of flux, of transition and

of the coordination of forms with substance, the direction of our development is nonetheless unmistakeable. "Economic democracy," which is still as it has for years been the subject of so much discourse in international socialist circles as the factor of transition from the classical bourgeois political democracy towards socialism is, to us, already becoming a reality and is yielding its first results. It is the point of departure of our socialist democracy. Return to the bourgeois multi-party system of indirect democracy has been made impossible by the revolution. For revolution tolerates no class compromises in the system of state authority. Simultaneously, however, it has opened the way towards *the direct democracy of socialism* in which every individual is able to find his place if he but accepts and grasps these socialist bases of the system.

As I have stated at length, the basic forms of this direct socialist democracy include the self-management of the producers, the councils of producers, the local communes, the forms of social self-government, and the self-governing associations. From the very moment such factors begin to live and act, they also begin to transform the whole face of the political system. Therein, in our view, lies the true significance of these democratic forms.

*They have thus become the key to the further social progress of our country. Their safeguarding and their expansion is equivalent to securing the unhindered advance of our society towards socialism and socialist democracy.* Any other policy would represent retreat.

As part of world socialist experience, what we have been able to attain is of no less importance to the socialist movements of other countries. True it is that we by no means regard the socialist and democratic forms we have evolved in Yugoslavia as automatically suited for all and sundry. These experience of ours, however, can be disregarded by no one in the world fighting for socialism and socialist democracy.

# RiGhT FaCe

## *The Free World Marches On*

Generalissimo Francisco Franco held a reception for the diplomatic colony and high Spanish officials today to mark the twentieth anniversary of his appointment as Chief of State.

The Government observed the anniversary by announcing plans for basic constitutional changes, including appointment of future chiefs of state for definite periods of time.—The *New York Times.*

## *Twisting Our Wrists*

The Chinese Communist Government seems determined to find something to which it can force the United States to agree.—The *New York Times.*

## *Contradiction*

It has been an anomaly in hemispheric affairs that the strongest dictators are among the best "friends" of the United States.—The *New York Times.*

## *Coral Gables?*

The Nationalist Chinese government is giving each member of its armed forces a certificate entitling him to a plot of land in mainland China "when we return."—The *New York Herald-Tribune.*

## *Cultural Crisis*

Hollywood.—There just aren't enough girls in Hollywood who "can interpret cheap sex" believably on the screen, says MGM's producer, Charles Schnee. "What has happened to sex in Hollywood?" he asked. —The *New York Post.*

## *Social Crisis*

Parents must decide just how big a "splash" their girl makes during her season. Just as they can choose to outfit their maturing offspring with a few $50 ball gowns or several of the $1,000 variety, they can decide that her presentation will be made as a member of a group at an organized debutante ball, which can be done for less than $100, or at the more traditional private party, which these days can run as high as $50,000. Or at both, or several.—The *New York Times.*

# books in review

## Trial and Triumph

THE GREAT ROAD, THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CHU TEH, by Agnes Smedley. Monthly Review Press, $6.75.

AS THE "father of the Red Army," the late Agnes Smedley writes in her biography of the commander in chief of the People's Liberation Army of China, Chu Teh is "the living embodiment of its exhausting struggles and patient educational development." Miss Smedley had the skill, the knowledge of China and the identification with its people to make the most of this circumstance. Hence this book is more than a competent biography of a fascinating man. It is a social and historical document, a priceless authoritative source of information, suggestions and ideas to all who are interested in the political development of China and its Communist Party, and to all progressives.

The appearance of *The Great Road* in this country is particularly opportune at this time when many persons are sorely troubled by recent international events. For it reminds us in the first place that the Great Road of China's anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution, now nearing its socialist end, was also a long, indescribably hard and bloody road. Its course is lined with millions of graves, marked only in the memory of the Chinese people, of the fighters of the Taiping Revolution a hundred years ago, the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, the protracted struggle to save the Republic from warlords and imperialism following the Revolution of 1911, of the victims of Chiang Kai-shek's counter-revolution in 1927 and his subsequent "Red Extermination Campaigns" to wipe out the Chinese Soviets, of the casualties of the Long March, the Sino-Japanese War, and finally the war of liberation.

As a reminder of such endurance and sacrifice, *The Great Road* is a testament of the faith—in more recent years specifically of the *socialist* faith—of countless peasants, workers and intellectuals. It is an epic of communism, for while the Red Army inherited much more than its red banners from the Taipings, it was the Communist Party that led the Chinese people over the long stretch to final triumph.

The character of this leadership has been attested by such observers as Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell and Gen. Evans F. Carlson of the United States, and V. K. Krishna Menon of India. Only the other day, Mr. Krishna Menon in the United Nations General Assembly contrasted "the days of the decadence of the Kuomintang, when the country was steeped in corruption, in civil war, in

fratricide and in subjugation of everything that was decent" with the present, when the Chinese people "are making a heroic effort not only for their economic reconstruction but in the service of the world community." It is also useful for American progressives to remember that ever since the Taiping Revolution the United States has forcefully opposed this accomplishment and in particular bears a unique responsibility for the bloodshed of the civil war.

CHRONICLED in this book are some of the many trials, disappointments and costly mistakes through which the Chinese Communist Party reached its maturity. The Chinese party, Chu Teh explained in 1943, arose out of "the growth of the workers' movement and the people's democratic movement, and the association of these two developments with scientific socialism." It "inherited the best traditions of thousands of years of Chinese culture"—hard labor, endurance and respect for learning. It "enriched itself with experiences during the Great Revolution, the agrarian revolution, and the Anti-Japanese War." By this "incomparably tense forging, our party has Sinicized Marxism-Leninism and adapted our historical heritage to the present needs of our society."

But this is no didactic tome. It couldn't be with Chu Teh in it. On the basis of her conversations with him, Agnes Smedley has masterfully drawn the portrait of an extraordinary man—the son of poor peasants, who became commander-in-chief of great armies and an outstanding political leader, and as such led his troops on foot, wrote poetry, lectured women on the culinary uses of the soya bean, and spent long evenings talking to an American correspondent.

This book is also a monument to Agnes Smedley. It is the manuscript she left at her death in England in 1950. She had planned to return to China to resume her conversations with Chu Teh which were interrupted by the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. After years of getting to know China as a correspondent, Agnes Smedley spent two years with the Red Army on the battlefield in that war as a member of the Chinese Red Cross Medical Corps. Her splendid service to China helped to make this book.

Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy deserve thanks for a useful explanatory foreword, apart from the service they have rendered as the publishers.

Only one thing troubles me: the price of the book. I hope that ways will be found to reduce this obstacle to the widest possible distribution of *The Great Road.*

CHARLES WISLEY

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## For Men of Feeling

INTO CHINA, by Claude Roy. Robert M. McBride Company, New York. 407 pp. 16 photographs. $4.95.

YEARS ago, when the liberation of China had not yet become a reality, Mao Tse-tung wrote a poem:

*So great is the charm of our*
*mountains and rivers*
*that a thousand heroes have been*
*tempted*
*to strive for its conquest.*

However, to this he added:

*The Emperors Wu Ti and Ch'in Shih Huang Ti were hardly cultured.*
*The Emperors T'ai Tsung and T'ai Tsu were ruthless men.*
*And Genghis Khan knew nought but to bend his bow against the eagles.*
*These are men of the past*
*The present is for men of feeling.*

*Into China* by Claude Roy is an account of China old and new by a man of feeling. A prominent figure in the French literary world as poet and critic, Roy brings into perspective the tremendous forward surge of the people of China out of his own wealth of knowledge of China's history, language, literature and art.

Even as China's new society evolves it cannot be separated from much of its 4,000-year-old heritage. Of this Claude Roy is aware; *Into China* is no mere travelogue of a Westerner's visit to China. It is the product of a cultivated and brilliant writer who brings forth the full flavor of China today. Through the author's many-faceted explorations into the past as well as the present the reader is made fully aware that what is happening in new China cannot be separated from much that has ingrained itself into Chinese civilization and culture down through the ages, whether it be poetry and painting or the approach to everyday life. The result is by far the most comprehensive and moving story yet told of present day China by a writer from the West. Translated from the French by Mervyn Savill, the appearance of an American edition of this book may suggest the hopeful possibility of something new on the horizon in American publishing with regard to China.

It is not difficult to see that the Chinese, in common with people throughout the colonial world, learned well the lessons of decades of foreign domination. "The white man came to China," Roy tells us, "to make a fortune and to do business. . . . He was delighted to be in China because silk shirts were as cheap as mud and shoes better polished than anywhere else in the world. He administered himself and was tried in cases of litigation or fraud by his own people. He walked in gardens 'forbidden to dogs and Chinese.' "

Among the most moving sections of Roy's book are those in which he describes what the liberation has meant to the peasant women. His report is no accumulation of superlatives. In a country where 16 centuries ago the poet Fu Hsuan wrote:

*It is sad to be born in the body of a girl,*
*Nothing on earth is of so little account.*
*No one rejoices when a girl is born,*
*She brings nothing to the hearth,*

the misery of age-old oppression does not vanish overnight. The author recalls the thirty-year struggle of Chinese women intellectuals for emancipation —they wanted the right to happiness, professed free love, read Freud, had their hair waved and wanted sexual freedom. Today, he notes, "the cadres of modern China make less noise and do not shout so loudly. They are less clumsy, too. Their ambition is to forge laws for men, not to conjure up men who will conform to their laws. This needs a great deal of wisdom, patience and humanity."

The entire socialist world can learn from China. Although Claude Roy wrote his book before the historic events of the past months took place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it is my belief that Roy's answer to the inevitable "can this happen in China, too?" would be no. It would be no because of all the revolutions in history the Chinese revolution had its roots in the greatest number of people.

For more than two decades before its ultimate victory the Chinese Communist Party continued to gain the support of more and more people through actions which met their deepest needs. Throughout this period—and the road had its detours—the communists in China learned how to live and work with those often far removed on the political spectrum.

The People's Republic of China, since its inception, has been a united front led by the Communist Party. And this was not merely a slogan of Chinese characters written on a sheet of paper. Minority parties are no shadow entities. The watchword in China, by and large, has been that of the old Chinese saying, "Let a hundred schools of thought contend." The transition to socialism in China is proceeding at a steady pace. To build the road, the nation fought and took measures essential to her security. As China travels the road to socialism the policy toward persons of all classes is that they are welcome to work with everyone else. It is interesting to recall that from the beginning, for example, children of counter-revolutionaries and landlords were never penalized for their parents' actions or status. Today, even those who engaged in counter-revolution in the past are able to look about, note progress already made and turn over a new leaf. The basic attitude toward all people in China is that by and large people, if given the opportunity, own up to reality and are able to see good from bad.

For the purveyors of falsehoods as well as their victims, Claude Roy poses the question: "Are we watching a terrible surgical operation, the ablation of the personality?"

"If the wall of private life be conceived as the moral equivalent of the money wall; if the inner life be defined as a delicious avarice of the soul, entrenched in its conscience like a bundle of shares in a safe; if one is only oneself when in opposition to others; if it is the essentials that one hides and not what one is, then, agreed, the moral technique employed by China in order that men may recover their humanity is a consummate evil. But if we only realize ourselves in, by and through others, if the human being is characterized by what makes him present to his fellows and not by what cuts him off from them all; if man instead of preying upon man is merely at the same time his mirror and his brother, his witnesses and his like, then the New China is perfectly right in banking on the possibility that human beings can help and better one another."

ANTHONY LEE

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## Report of a Revolution

ASSIGNMENT CHINA, by Julian Schuman. Whittier Books, Inc. $4.00.

ASSIGNMENT CHINA, the report of what an American journalist saw with his own eyes and heard with his own ears during six years in China

is a unique book in a number of ways. Written with a light, even gay hand, it succeeds in conveying a great deal of solid information without the turgid, ponderous prose which has so often weighed down and made forbidding descriptions of the new world of socialism. It is in the first place a thoroughly enjoyable book. There is no doubt that Mr. Schuman sees with an American eye and reports with an American wit. From an early chapter entitled "The Way of an Army With a Man," depicting the horrendous "snafu," known to every current and ex-G.I., wherein a long suffering private subjected to a series of written and oral French exams winds up studying Chinese, to the lingering delay in making that slow boat to China in order to "catch the Yankee-Dodger world series game," there is evident a delightful humor which has nothing in common with arrogance or superiority. If the book reflects Mr. Schuman's unmistakably American origin and background it just as unmistakably reflects his warm feeling for and extraordinary rapport with the Chinese. He has, in fact, learned much from them. Though there is no doubt that *Assignment China* is a positive report of the new regime he does not seek to bludgeon his readers into agreement but prefers, as the Chinese themselves put it, "patiently to explain." It is not a one-sided paradise we find here but a many-toned picture. While there is feeling and conviction it is tempered by the bright steady flame of reason not the searing and often alienating fire of rigidly held preconceptions and prejudices. In this reviewer's opinion this book on China could be read by Americans of the most varied political persuasions (if they had access to it) with pleasure, profit and a greater degree of "sweet reasonableness" than is usually generated by books on this so-called "untouchable" subject.

Mr. Schuman has a number of 'firsts" to his credit. While much has been written about China in the last six years he is the first American newsman who was on the spot during the whole period of the final disintegration of the Kuomintang to the establishment and consolidation of the People's Republic. He is, to my knowledge, also the first American reporting these epochal events who speaks Chinese and whose keen and reflective observations are derived from years of daily shared living experience and contact with Chinese of every social stratum. Those historic changes in Chinese society which come to us as cold news in our daily papers are warmed and made understandable in human terms. The curious phenomenon of the capitalist enthusiastically supporting a government which goes to great pains to make it explicitly clear that it looks forward and is working energetically toward the day when he is no more (as a capitalist, of course), is not quite so strange and unbelievable when Mr. Pang Yung-gang, manager and Director of the Ching Hwa Battery Factory, looking for all the world like the "prosperous big-little businessman anywhere with his starched collar and regimental striped necktie, his gold-banded wrist watch and his flat straw hat," explains it. Fu Ma, the old Chinese housekeeper who finds the new Marriage Law scandalous but the one which makes compulsory severance pay to Chinese workers much to her liking is typical of those who cling stubbornly to old social patterns until they personally have need of the new liberating ones.

The undoubted loyalty of the great majority of Chinese towards their new government ranged in intensity all the way from the actively partisan, to tentative, to those who were "uncertain as to what they were going to get; but knew what they were rid of and considered that ample cause for rejoicing." To the Chinese people the men and leaders of the new society were no Johnny-come-latelys on the revolutionary scene. Their claim upon the people's loyalty was earned over decades. For the Chinese Revolution was over one hundred years in the making and could never have succeeded if millions had not rallied to it, supported it and laid down their lives for it. China's leaders today are those who in the past 25 years mapped out China's road to socialism and in one of the most protracted struggles in human history proved their patriotism and selfless devotion to the people.

Of particular interest are two chapters in *Assignment China* called "Fruits of Demonology" and "News From Nowhere." Recalling that classic dissection of news coverage of events in post-revolutionary Russia of 1917-1920 performed by those two then young and intrepid journalists, Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz, and their conclusion that "the reporting of the Russian Revolution is nothing short of disaster . . . on essential questions the net effect was almost always misleading, and misleading news is almost worse than none at all. . . .", Mr. Schuman undertakes to show that this has been no less true of China events since 1949. Here, again, invective and empty rhetoric are by-passed. The argument is not strident nor does it fail to take into account those brief moments when, as in the early spring of 1949, the American public was getting fairly accurate press coverage. When the change came, however, it was total. Mr. Schuman effectively musters fact, analysis of sources and interpretation of information, personal observation as well as the sharp edge of humor to show that what was being reported in the United States had nothing to do with what was actually happening in China.

There is a brief but compelling section debunking that newest, highly publicized, modern brand of witchcraft known as "brainwashing." This term carefully injected into the consciousness of the American public with all its overtones and undertones of oriental cunning and duplicity is exposed for the fraud it is.

A final chapter called "What They Ask Me About China" is a departure from the main line of the book which stays fairly close to observations based on personal experience. Acting on the assumption that questions which recurred constantly in his conversations with people and talks he had made since returning from China reflected what most Americans wanted to know, Mr. Schuman makes some remarks on Russian domination, Americans, especially American prisoners in China, Chinese "aggressions," slave labor, trade and the complex question of personal freedom. The approach is modest, the arguments well-reasoned and bolstered by observation. In at least one instance while discussing personal freedom in China, Mr. Schuman finds the omission of such American constitutional guarantees as trial by jury and confrontation of accusers from the new Chinese Constitution to be serious defects. While well aware of American abuse of these rights, their embodiment in law is seen as an advantage which can be used

against the usurpation of power by individuals.

*Assignment China* is frankly a journalist's report. The author does not engage in ideological polemics or even major political ones. He saw and heard much in China but in a country one-third larger than continental U.S., with a population of 600,000,000 he did not see or hear everything. With Shanghai as a base he observed and reported more on China's urban than peasant and rural life. What he did see and report has the unmistakable ring of authenticity and honesty. His book is valuable in bringing the Chinese people closer to us and to speed the friendship between both peoples which surely must come.

SUSAN WARREN

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## A Measure of Reality

PERMIT ME REFUGE, by Edwin Rolfe. *The California Quarterly.* $3.00.

THE POEMS of the late Edwin Rolfe, once a volunteer in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, are evidence contrary to Stephen Spender's thesis that a commitment to human progress, identified by him with the scientific, the coldly functional, cannot show the way to liberate the poetic imagination. For Rolfe's work is fresh and incisive as well as relevant to the domain outside "the cage" where, according to Spender, the contemporary imagination is incarcerated.

At their best, Rolfe's lines are resilient with belief, unmystical belief in reality (his own person, other people, and that nature which is outside of mankind, surrounding him), in the reality of the thing and of the life spirit without which no great poetry is possible. The real, the conscious, against the abstract philosophical truth, is this not the bread and wine of the Muse? From "Poem":

*"Consciousness is a disease.* The philosophic
cart pulls the nag, destroys the moving beast,
brings death where life was. It is as if
the stranger, lost in the gaunt hills
of a gray uncharted country, heard a wild
amplified shriek upon the air, and then himself
in pain cried out, the echo evoking the cry."

But Rolfe was not a great poet. Perhaps this was because he died too young (45); perhaps he did not possess the requisite genius. At any rate, it was not because he believed as he did, for in the small poem of the particular incident, the concise mood, he uses tenderness, paradox, irony, with great skill and effect. He is weakest when he himself tampers with the abstract, the general view, seeming to lack a set of symbols that could be applied surprisingly, feelingly, universally, to the situation. When he uses the big Band Leader or the Umpire to symbolize the prime mover, an artificiality creeps into the poems, which, revolving about these symbols, become strained and passionless; it is as if he were pulling every last bit or irony from the symbols instead of allowing whatever irony they possessed to come forth naturally. Even so, in a piece like "A Poem to Delight My Friends Who Laugh at Science-Fiction," he succeeds in establishing a scene of utter horror, a world in which everyone has committed suicide, everyone except the soldiers

. . . and what more apropos symbol could have been found?

the soldiers wandered eternally
in their dazed, early-Chirico landscape. . . .
Like forsaken chessmen abandoned
by paralyzed players,
they may still be there,
may still be there.

TO THOSE who say with Eliot that "not our feelings, but the pattern which we make of our feelings is the centre of value," the poems of Rolfe's last volume offer more than, say, his earlier *First Love,* whose individual pieces form more of a unified theme, dealing as a good proportion of them do with the poet's experiences in the Spanish War. In *Permit Me Refuge,* the poems, on diverse situations and in varying forms, tell us more about what Rolfe has made of the world and what the world has made of him than anything he had done previously. He had that essential gift, especially near the end of his life, of objectifying his feelings so that, even while he speaks in the first person, he arrives at an appraisal of conditions of far larger magnitude than his own. Two stanzas from "Many an Outcast" may illustrate this:

Many a weakling thinks me strong
and with his thought endows
my weakness with an unsuspected
power,
unearths within my heart a fire
and in my mind an iron
that was not there before.

Many a fool has called me wise
and, doing so, has forced
the little sense I had to rise
up from its deep morass of ignorance
clear to the surface, there to solve
his problems and my own.

It is in the idea, the emotion, that Rolfe surprises, rather than in the language itself, and this is a weakness of technique, for in the craft that poetry is, wherein the words are not only means but part of the end product, it is important that the vehicle be as finely modulated, precise, and unique as the idea or feeling it carries. Because of this, even Rolfe's best successes are flawed or leave the reader thinking, "Well, this is good, but some heightening, perhaps here or over there, would have made it better."

And yet, standing up, walking away, returning to the book, this reader can but admire the reality that Rolfe brought to these last poems. The honesty, kindness, bitterness they hold are solid, can be touched and felt. It takes a brave man to measure reality, record its bad as well as good, and then still believe in it as if it were a creed. Rolfe was always brave.

GENE FRUMKIN

## Public Relations Version

AFL-CIO LABOR UNITED, by Arthur Goldberg, *McGraw-Hill Book Co.,* $5.00.

THIS BOOK relates the story of the achievement of the AFL-CIO merger. One is drawn to the book because it is the first work on the merger and because the author was the former general counsel of the CIO, and is now special counsel of the AFL-CIO, as well as the general counsel of the United Steelworkers of America and of the Industrial department of the

AFL-CIO. Goldberg had an active hand in the merger negotiations and is certainly in a position to throw a great deal of light on some of the back-stage discussions and conflicts. And there is certainly very much about the merger that still remains untold to the general public.

But this is not that kind of book. In the first place the book was written for McGraw-Hill, publishers of business and management magazines and books. It seems tailored for McGraw-Hill clients especially managers of enterprises and labor relations men, to allay fears of a "labor monopoly" "communist influence" or the possibility that labor's new upsurge may give birth to a labor party or a class struggle type of policy.

Goldberg gives assurances to the pro-business critics of the labor movement within the framework of a plea for a friendly attitude towards labor. The merger and greater strength, he says, will certainly spur labor to advances, but he insists that American labor's future will be strictly limited to a role of greater influence within capitalist society and the "free enterprise" system to which he apparently feels the unions will be attached for all time.

The bulk of the book, however, is devoted to a step-by-step report on the events that came to a climax in the merger convention of December 5, 1955, with a brief introductory sketch of trade union history since the AFL split that gave birth to the CIO in 1935. There is also a sizeable appendix that includes the AFL-CIO constitution, documents of agreement in merger negotiations, the names of the unions that compose the new organizations, a listing of executive council members and other related material.

AS AN attorney for the organization, Mr. Goldberg is obviously restricted in his scope and manner. His book, therefore, reads like a report of an officer to a convention. There is no spice in it. There is nothing in the book that hasn't been covered in the news accounts. There is really far less. There is no new light upon—nor even mention of—the conflicts within the AFL and CIO on the merger issue; the reason why Dave Beck almost walked out of the convention with his delegation representing 1,500,000 teamsters; how it came about that two Negroes were finally named to the council although at the start of negotiations there was doubt that even one would get on; or what was behind George Meany's futile effort to get a "non-aggression pact" between the newly formed AFL-CIO and the National Association of Manufacturers. These and many other questions are not touched upon.

Moreover, Goldberg only tells us what a few leaders on top did to bring about the merger. The 15,000,000 members, or any part of them, don't seem to have much to do with the operation. The book leaves one with the feeling that the members were not asked to give an opinion before or after the merger; nor are we told of any manifestations among the rank and file that would indicate they had an influence. This is, of course, a very incomplete story of the merger and for that reason the book doesn't make much interesting reading; there is little drama in it, notwithstanding the tremendous importance Goldberg attaches to the merger.

THE ONE subject that the author treats in greatest detail is the fight

on the "communist conspiracy." He seems to go to special lengths to convince the McGraw-Hill readers that: first, the CIO was completely purged of Communist influence before the merger and, second, that there were no differences on communism between the CIO and AFL. Then he goes very extensively into a description of several provisions in the constitution to keep out "communism," although the absence of such iron-clad authority to ban racism and racketeering is glossed over. In fact the reader is left with the impression that there is such authority in the constitution.

The book is largely a "public relations" job slanted towards the business community. It contains nothing on the differences over most key questions that do exist between former AFL and CIO leaders and within each of those groups. A postscript added to the book, seven months after the merger, ignores completely the fact that those differences have even sharpened since the merger, with foreign policy, civil rights, craft vs. industrial organization, political action autonomy, and other such issues involved. You'd never guess from the book that Reuther and Meany have had differences, much less sharp conflicts.

Goldberg would have us think there is a happy unanimity in the labor movement. This, of course, runs contrary to what any informed reader knows is the reality and leaves him with a feeling that the whole picture given by Goldberg isn't real. The book doesn't help, therefore, to teach the reader that unity is a process that can be maintained only by an unending struggle. Nor does Goldberg take into account the dynamics of a movement of workers who feel a sense of greater power. He rather stresses the many "controls" adopted in the AFL-CIO to guarantee a questionable "stability."

GEORGE MORRIS

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## A Glass of Champagne

A DISCORD OF TRUMPETS, by Claude Cockburn. *Simon and Schuster.* $3.95. Liberty Book Club. $2.50.

IN THE midst of the unceasing and ominous newspaper headlines of the thirties there used to appear a mimeographed newsletter, *The Week,* published in London and edited by Claude Cockburn. Sprightly in tone, confidential in manner, it brought considerable clarity to the confusions of the period by the revelations of secret conferences, concealed decisions, privately expressed opinions that were the substance of its not very sightly pages.

Beginning publication in 1933 with the most haphazard of subscription lists, it had in two years become "one of the half-dozen British publications most quoted in the press of the entire world," including among its subscribers, "the foreign ministers of eleven nations, all the embassies and legations in London, all diplomatic correspondents of the principal newspapers in three continents, the foreign correspondents of all the leading newspapers stationed in London, the leading banking and brokerage houses in London, Paris, Amsterdam and New York, a dozen members of the U.S. Senate, twenty or thirty members of the House of Representatives, about fifty members of the House of Commons and a hundred or so in the House of Lords, King Edward VIII, the secretaries of most of the

leading trade unions, Charlie Chaplin and the Nizam of Hyderabad."

Now the editor of this fabulous and legendary newsletter has written his autobiography, or at least he has set down the important events in his life up to and including the Munich days. The fondly remembered sparkle of *The Week* has not dimmed with the years; indeed telling now his personal story, Mr. Cockburn's effervescence is, with the years that lie between, of true vintage quality. This book is a delight to read.

Born into a distinguished upper-class English family with its standard quota of eccentrics, Cockburn received the conventional education of a member of his class. His memories of youth and childhood are not the usual sentimental reveries of a "sensitive soul" in an unsympathetic environment, but happily convey his pleasure in the members of his family and his school and college friends, and his growing interest in the world around him.

Electing to become a newspaperman rather than go into the Foreign Office, the natural habitat of his class, his decision aroused horror among his family and advisors, although he stressed that his goal *was* the *London Times*. But even so, as a friend of his father pointed out, "Split what hairs you will, mince words as you may, in the last analysis the *Times* is nothing more or less than *sheer journalism*." But being a reporter for the *London Times* in Berlin in the late twenties proved to be far more than "sheer journalism" for Cockburn.

For it was in the chaotic Germany of the twenties that he watched at first hand the ugly growth of fascism and at the same time came in contact with Marxism through the young intellectuals he came to know in the course of his extensive social life. The impact of Marxism for a person of his class and education, given his intelligence and the bitter struggle daily before his eyes in the streets of Berlin was profound.

America, it was widely reported in those late years of the twenties, had solved the problems of capitalism: Ford had refuted Marx. Cockburn got a transfer to America in the late summer of 1929 where he was to serve as Washington correspondent and where he would see for himself whether Fordism would provide the sovereign remedy for all the ills of capitalism.

As correspondent for the *London Times* his possibilities of movement in America were limitless, his curiosity boundless, and his increasingly critical observation of the first years of the depression endlessly instructive about the nature of the society his class had so long accepted with such calm assurance. Always detached, and singularly sensitive to the contradiction between the pretensions of power and the ways and means by which they were achieved, his stories are alive with irony and hilarious comedy that bring the personalities of the period before you in a fresh light. The high point of his American experience was perhaps his interview with Al Capone which he was never able to publish for the simple reason that Capone's statement of faith in capitalism as a way of life differed in no particle from the leading articles appearing in the *London Times* during these trying years.

Back in England, Cockburn began publishing *The Week*, and under the name of Frank Pitcairn became diplomatic correspondent of the London *Daily Worker*, and for a short period served as London correspondent for *Pravda*. An important figure now in the

world of journalism, he moved about Europe with the speed the accelerating events of the end of the thirties demanded of an ambitious newspaperman. Spain and the Munich crisis occupy the later pages of his book and to the two decisive events he brings the same detachment of observation, the same quickness for contradictions, the same ability to illuminate a whole moment of history by a few vivid and often ironical words.

The decisive evening of the Munich crisis, Cockburn spent in the Soviet Embassy in Prague with his friend the *Pravda* correspondent Koltzov. The Russian Ambassador was summoned twice to talk with Benes in the Palace. On the first occasion he was asked what the Soviet Union would do if the League of Nations declared for resistance to Hitler even at the cost of war. The Ambassador assured him the Soviet Union would fight. Then Benes asked if the League did nothing but Britain and France stood by, what would the Soviet Union do? Of course, the Ambassador said, the Soviet Union would fight. After a long pause the Ambassador somewhat impatiently asked if there was not a third question. Benes wearily replied that there was not. However, a couple of hours later a message came from the Palace—would the Ambassador secure from Moscow the latest verification and reassurance of previous estimates of the pace and volume at which Soviet air power could get into action from Czechoslovakian air bases? But when an hour later the Ambassador arrived at the Palace with the requested information, he was told that the Czechoslovak Government was no longer interested in the reply.

"With that, it was once again a certainty that Czechoslovakia would not act with Russia alone as her ally. The shape of the next act was certain. Hitler's next triumph was assured. And I do not doubt now that it was at about this moment that the German-Soviet pact was conceived."

Appropriately, his friend Koltzov repeats a suggestion made to Cockburn during another crisis in his Washington days. "Once again the only thing to say is that in the little moment that remains to us between the crisis and the catastrophe, we may as well drink a glass of champagne."

What in the end gives these recollections their peculiarly inspiriting quality that sharply separates them from the embarrassing apologias for misguided youth in the other memoires of the period is that Cockburn looks back on his youth with sparkling delight and declares it good.

If you want to relive the exhilaration of the thirties and the days of the brave fight against fascism and war, this is your book. Why drink inferior wine? Here's champagne!

MURRAY YOUNG.

## Shotgun Against Freedom

THE DEVIL IN THE BOOK, by Dalton Trumbo. California Emergency Committee (323 South West St., L. A., 5). 15 cents.

WITHIN the compass of a 42-page pamphlet, felicitously entitled *The Devil in the Book,* Dalton Trumbo has satisfied the long-felt need for an adequate and, at the same time, popular critique of the Smith Act and its impact on American life.

The pamphlet is as absorbing as it is closely reasoned. With a clarity and

force that must command the admiration of the reader, Trumbo demonstrates that in its decision in the Dennis Case sustaining the constitutionality of the Smith Act, the United States Supreme Court reflected its evaluation not of law but of what it mistakenly took for necessity. For in so deciding, the Court turned its back on what for more than a generation had been universally regarded as the constitutional touchstone of freedom of expression in America, namely, Mr. Justice Holmes' famous clear and present danger test. In rejecting that test, which permits of restrictions of freedom of speech only in the face of clear and imminent danger of substantive evils that Congress has the right to prevent, the Court opened wide the gates to the invasion of everybody's freedom, and not only that of the Communists. For, as Trumbo so trenchantly observes, "A shotgun designed to kill Communists is not selective when fired into any area of national life. It has, on occasion, even winged a Republican. But it has done more, much more damage. For, as Trumbo adds: "Because the Smith Act was allowed to supersede the Constitution, the conclusions flowing from it have made 14 million of the nation's total working force of 64 million the subjects of confidential files."

Here at long last is a formidable weapon to assist in the repeal of the Smith Act. It behooves us to be worthy of it by disseminating it far and wide.

HARRY SACHER

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## Spotlight on Taxes

THE BURDEN OF TAXES, by Labor Research Association; International Publishers, 48 pp. 35 cents.

ITS EDITORIAL offices are two cubbyholes, each barely large enough to hold one desk, several stacks of documents and no more than one visitor. It has operated on a shoe-string during its entire 28 years of existence.

Yet this tiny outfit—Labor Research Association—has shed more light on the despoiling effects of monopoly capitalism in our country than perhaps any other organization.

Its biennial Labor Fact Book (the 13th volume wil be published soon), and its monthly *Economic Notes* (now in their 24th year), as well as its other publications, have helped bring the necessary data and analysis to many a labor struggle and many a legislative campaign.

Now it has added to its list a 48-page booklet, *The Burden of Taxes*. This assembles the raw material that can stoke one of the most dynamic campaigns on an issue close to the hearts, minds—and pocketbooks—of the American people.

The pamphlet shows, in detail, how nearly one-third of the income of a family with less than $7,500 a year goes for taxes, direct and indirect. It offers some astounding facts, these among others:

"Hidden" taxes on a suit of clothes, or a ton of coal, or cigarettes or gas amount to more than 50 per cent of the retail price. The taxes on a new car come to 28 per cent.

More than 10 per cent of the total national budget—$7 billion—goes for *interest* on the national debt—and more than 90 per cent of this money goes directly to the biggest banks, insurance companies, corporations and wealthy individuals.

Plugging the loopholes by which Big

Business and the rich evade their tax responsibilities would produce public revenue equal to about $100 each for every man, woman and child in the United States.

Of particular interest is the spotlight thrown on one of the main items for which our taxes go—the cold war budget. It includes detailed data to show the scandalous profiteering and the incredible waste of taxpayers' money.

Its chapter on the government's aid to monopoly will astound even the most politically sophisticated and enrage every worker hoping for a possible tax refund next April.

For those anxious to establish connections with the mainstream, this pamphlet, if properly used, will be a boon indeed.

FOSTER KING

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## Furious Traveller

FIGURES FROM A DOUBLE WORLD, by Thomas McGrath. *Alain Swallow.* $2.75.

"WING-CLIPPED and crackling with light, the blind
Angel roars in at deck level. . . ."

With the same fury, and blazing, Thomas McGrath roars in at the lowest level of our happy land, seeing the creatures we do not see, firing at the enemy as he goes, and weeping in rage and pity as . . .

"Skidrow dawn
Withdraws a slack tide to the outer dark
And all sea-monsters hustle from the light."

Where other poets find the song of birds and celebrate the seasons, McGrath discovers for us the "midnight barstools," the "evenings in gin mills when the band played blues," the hopeless, the defeated, the lost "who all night long argue the darkness on the price of love." Or in the house of the middle-class, raucous with children, phones, TV, radio, somehow he finds a moment to cry out. . . .

"O lovers, pity, pity
Pity them, who, in some lost summer, loved, were young."

From the "gunfire of the real and terrible present" the mind of the poet goes back to an earlier time when . . .

"The roads into the country
Ran only in one direction, in childhood's years—
Into mysterious counties, beyond the farm or the town,
Toward the parish of desire, the roads led up or down
Past a thicket of charms, a river of wishing hours. . . ."

It was not long before the wishing hours became another kind of night and the poet in uniform in the icy Aleutians was . . .

"Remembering that island lying in the rain
(Lost in the North Pacific, lost in time and the war)
With a terrible fatigue as of repeated dreams

Of running, climbing, fighting in the dark,
I feel the wind rising and the pitiless cold surf
Shaking the headlands of the black north."

He returned but he had his bitter losses. In the poem, "Memorial," the most perfect in the book, he reaches a depth of understanding, remorse, and sadness scarcely equalled in our literature or our life. This is the first stanza:

"Nothing prolongs. Neither the bronze plaque
Of graveyard splendor, nor public memorial. Even
The watery eye of memory, weeping its darlings back
Fails them. Flung like leaves on the cold heaven
In Time's own season, that Always when totals are taken,
And the mortal tree is shaken,
So, from its riven,
Blood-branched and bony haven,
The soul is blown toward that South where only the dead awaken."

Still the singing could not be stopped. The poet could revert to music as in "Icon" . . .

"I see the autumn sheen on the far hills and the clover,
On the dapple of poplar leaves that gather their moony simples
Out of the bland heaven whose showering bronze is ample
To stipple the hunting fox and the pheasant crouched in his cover."

Neither could he forget the past . . .

"It is far, far
And lost in the dark, and I carry all my dead.
My own murders upon me, I seek that improbable peace
After some other midnight, darker, harder to bear."

It is a long and "intolerable journey" we have taken with Thomas McGrath, through the gin mills, the houses, the hearts of the creatures of the happy land, through two wars and many deaths. It is an ominous and tragic world he shares with us, but there is sardonic humor in it, and music, and love.

He takes leave of us, in his own way, in "Epitaph."

"Again, traveller, you have come a long way led by that star.
But the kingdom of the wish is at the other end of the night.
May you fare well, companero; let us journey together joyfully,
Living on catastrophe, eating the pure light."

CHRISTOPHER WELLS

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## Books Received

THE HONORABLE MR. NIXON and The Alger Hiss Case, by William A. Reuben. Action Books, $1.

This vigorous booklet marshals the evidence and the reasoning which reveal the sham of the notorious Whittaker Chambers-Richard Nixon myth concerning the "espionage" of Alger Hiss. Not only was Nixon's spectacular rise based on the manipulation of this myth at the height of the Cold War (with the result that he may be President of the U.S.A.), but it was also the foundation of the intellectual assault on the New Deal and its liberal followers in the universities. Reuben's demolition of the case against Hiss is an indispensable part of the battle to restore the truth about the last decade.

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