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Editorial Comment

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IN MEMORIAM



MARTIN LUTHER KING

January 15, 1929

April 4, 1968

Martin Luther King: Man of the People

The Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., the voice, inspiration and symbol of the Negro people's struggle for freedom and equality, is dead, murdered by the bigotry and racist violence that pervades our land. There were many occasions, during the past decade, when attempts were made on King's life. This time the cowardly assassin succeeded, hitting his target with a single blast. Within less than an hour life had ebbed from the body of the man who, more than anyone else, personified the heroic determination of the black people to win their liberation NOW. One of humanity's great leaders has been silenced forever.

Like the rumble of an earthquake, the news of his assassination, shook the entire nation. Shock, outrage, shame swept every nook and corner of the land. People wept openly; others lashed out in their bitterness and frustration.

Literally millions of black and white Americans joined in the day of mourning on "Black Tuesday" to honor the fallen martyr. In hundreds of towns and cities spontaneous and union-sanctioned work stoppages took place; public and parochial schools were closed; marches, vigils and memorial services were held; docks from Texas to Maine and from San Diego to Vancouver were at a standstill. The flag was flown at half-mast on official buildings.

Never before in the history of our nation had the death of a private citizen evoked such profound emotion and sorrow, nor witnessed such a mass outpouring of mourners. But the Reverend Martin Luther King was no ordinary private citizen. His name was known and revered not only within our own shores but on all continents where men fight for freedom and dignity.

Deeply moving eulogies paid homage to this man who was cut down at the peak of his maturity. Yet there was a deliberate campaign to reduce the essence of his life's work only to his commitment to nonviolence: King was "a man of moderation," "a man of restraint," "a man of peace."

People Must Act on Own Behalf

While it is indisputable that Martin Luther King espoused a philosophy of non-violence and abhorred violence in any form, he was first of all, and above all, an implacable and irreconcilable foe of racism, of oppression, of inequity. His advocacy of non-violence

meant not submissiveness, but defiance; not passivity, but militancy; not servility, but an independent spirit and the full dignity of man. He was a tenacious and dedicated fighter, and never tired of emphasizing that freedom would not come of itself but had to be won through determined and persistent mass action of the oppressed peoples themselves. "Only when people themselves begin to act," he said again and again, "are rights on paper given life blood." (*New York Times*, August 5, 1962.)

From the day he became the pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, until the very end, he devoted his great talents, his profound intellect and inspiring oratory to arouse and unite the Negro people for massive actions to win their right to walk like men.

From the 381-day boycott to break bus segregation in Montgomery, to the sit-ins at lunch counters, to the freedom rides, to the mass marches and economic boycotts, to the voter registration campaigns, Martin Luther King sought to involve thousands of men, women and children from the localities in which the struggle was being waged. It was his vision of the freedom goal that imbued the hundreds of thousands of Southern Negroes with the courage to break racist laws and defy racist practices; to maintain solid ranks in the confrontations with club-swinging state troopers, snarling dogs, water hoses and electric cattle prods. Bombings of homes and churches, brutal beatings of demonstrators, murders of civil rights activists, jailings of thousands—all this and more—failed to deter them from direct confrontation with the Southern power structure.

In his famous Letter from Birmingham Jail, a reply to eight Alabama clergymen who called for a halt to the demonstrations "directed and led in part by outsiders" since they "incite to hatred and violence," Martin Luther King explained what was meant by direct, non-violent massive actions:

You deplore the demonstrations that are presently taking place in Birmingham. But I am sorry that your statement did not express a similar concern for the conditions that brought the demonstrations into being. . . .

As in so many experiences of the past we were confronted with blasted hopes, and the dark shadow of a deep disappointment settled upon us. So we had no alternative except that of preparing for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and national community. . . .

Non-violent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. . . .

It was these non-violent, militant marches and boycotts that finally aroused the conscience of large numbers of white Americans and significant numbers of them were impelled to give support to the civil rights movement. For it was through these actions, shaped and inspired by Martin Luther King, that the country learned of the true conditions in the South, learned who were the real initiators and perpetrators of violence against the Negro.

But above all, these actions infused the American Negro with the knowledge that his inferior status was racist-imposed and not due to any inherent weakness in himself. Martin Luther King helped to create a new dignity, a new pride in the Negro's heritage, a new hope and confidence that he could and would overcome the obstacles to liberation. For King this was the most important achievement of the many battles he led. As early as 1962 he wrote:

Probably the most powerful force, however, in breaking down the barriers of segregation is the new determination of the Negro himself. For many years the Negro tacitly accepted them. He was often the victim of stagnant passivity and deadening complacency. . . .

The Negro has now been driven to reevaluate himself. He has come to feel that he is somebody. And with this new sense of "Somebodiness" and self-respect, a new Negro has emerged, with a new determination to achieve freedom and human dignity whatever the cost. (*New York Times*, August 5, 1962.)

Tokenism Will Not Bring Equality

There were some who charged that Martin Luther King was manipulated by the establishment to serve as a restraining force against the militancy of the black masses. He was called an "Uncle Tom," a "fireman for Kennedy and Johnson," inferring that, in his subservience to the powers that be, he was ready to settle for less than total equality.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Dr. King exposed the dangers of tokenism and fought tenaciously against it. Here is what he had to say about it in *The Nation*, March 30, 1963:

Tokenism can now be seen not only as a useless goal, but as a genuine menace. It is a palliative which relieves emotional distress, but leaves the disease and its ravages unaffected. It tends to demobilize and relax the militant spirit which alone drives us forward to real change.

King did not underestimate the significance of the civil rights legislation enacted in the sixties and the many court decisions against segregation. Yet he never hesitated to criticize the government for its failure to implement the legislation. In his last book,

Where Do We Go From Here; Chaos or Community (Harper & Row, 1967) he wrote:

. . . Every civil rights law is substantially more dishonored than honored. School desegregation is still 90 per cent unimplemented across the land; the free exercise of the franchise is the exception rather than the rule in the South; open-occupancy laws theoretically apply to population centers embracing tens of millions, but grim ghettos contradict the fine language of the legislation. . . . Significant progress has effectively been barred by the cunning obstruction of segregationists. It has been barred by equivocations and retreats of government—the same government that was exultant when it sought political credit for exacting the measures. (P. 10.)

Above all King realized that the conditions in the ghetto had not been affected by the legislation. If anything, despite the massive character of the civil rights struggles, conditions in the ghetto had worsened; de facto segregation in the schools had increased; unemployment had reached crisis proportions; the income gap between whites and non-whites had widened; and slum housing had further deteriorated. Thus while King considered the eruptions in the ghettos futile and self-destructive, he had only compassion for the young Negroes who retaliated against their entrapment. He directed his fire against the government for its failure to act. In what apparently was his final article (*Look*, April 16, 1968), he opened with the following words:

The policy of the Federal Government is to play Russian roulette with riots; it is prepared to gamble with another summer of disaster. Despite two consecutive summers of violence, not a single basic cause of riots has been corrected. All of the misery that stoked the flames of rage and rebellion remains undiminished. With unemployment, intolerable housing and discriminatory education a scourge in Negro ghettos, Congress and the Administration still tinker with trivial, halfhearted measures.

And he added:

Today, the Northern cities have taken on the conditions we faced in the South. Police, national guard and other armed bodies are feverishly preparing for repression. They can be curbed not by unorganized resort to force by desperate Negroes but only by a massive wave of militant non-violence. . . .

Shift to Economic Issues

With a growing awareness that unless something was done to alleviate the poverty and degradation of the ghetto there could be no progress in the fight for equality, King and his co-workers shifted their attention from the South to the North and from civil rights

to the economic and political needs of the Negro people. It was an uphill battle. Confronting the Negro were a stiffening of racist resistance and a Congress unwilling to appropriate funds to realize a meaningful program. As King pointed out:

The practical cost of change for the nation up to this point has been cheap. The limited reforms have been attained at bargain rates. There are no expenses, and no taxes are required, for Negroes to share lunch counters, libraries, parks, hotels and other facilities with whites. . . . The real cost lies ahead. . . . The discount education given Negroes will in the future have to be purchased at full price if quality education is to be realized. Jobs are harder and costlier to create than voting rolls. The eradication of slums housing millions is complex far beyond integrating buses and lunch counters. (*Where Do We Go From Here*, pp. 5-6.)

In Chicago and in a dozen other cities, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference initiated what was called Operation Breadbasket to secure jobs for Negroes. While it had some success, this still affected only a small minority. That is why, after considerable deliberation, SCLC under King's leadership decided to initiate the Poor People's Campaign to "dramatize the whole economic problem of the poor." In the Look article, King spelled out the objectives and character of the campaign:

. . . Just as we dealt with the social problem of segregation through massive demonstrations, and we dealt with the political problem—the denial of the right to vote—through massive demonstrations, we are now trying to deal with the economic problems—the right to live, to have a job and income—through massive protest. It will be a Selma-like movement on economic issues.

"We need an Economic Bill of Rights," he pointed out, that would "guarantee a job to all people who want to work and are able to work," and "guarantee an income for all who are not able to work." He envisioned that such an Economic Bill of Rights would determine the number of jobs to be created, the construction of low-income housing, and the rapid improvement in the quality of education in the ghettos—a program that would, in its initial stage, require an appropriation of a minimum of ten to twelve billion dollars.

U.S. Purveyor of Violence

It is not accidental that in the past few years King spoke out forcefully against the war in Vietnam. He clearly saw the interconnection between the fight for freedom at home and the need to halt U.S. aggression abroad. So long as billions were poured into the genocidal war in Vietnam, less than a pittance would be available for the urgent needs of the ghetto.

In a major address on the war in Vietnam at the Riverside Church in New York City, delivered on April 4, 1967, exactly one year, to the day, before his assassination, he detailed the reasons for his stand. Taking the occasion to answer his critics, who had exerted considerable pressure to silence him on the false grounds that this weakened the struggle for civil rights and undermined his stature as a civil rights leader, he stated:

. . . There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I, and others, have been waging in America. A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It seemed as if there was real promise of hope for the poor—both black and white—through the Poverty Program. . . . Then came the build-up in Vietnam and I watched the program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demoniacal destructive suction tube. So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

But in addition, he explained, it was the sons, brothers and husbands of the poor that were sent 8,000 miles away "to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in Southwest Georgia and East Harlem." In all conscience, he continued, he could not tell the Negro youth that "Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems" until he had first spoken out clearly against "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government." A strong defender of the right to self-determination of all peoples, he saw the United States intervening in what was in fact a civil war, and pursuing a neo-colonialist path to "perpetuate white colonialism."

As co-chairman of the Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam, he supported the anti-draft resistance movement, spoke at demonstrations in many parts of the country and was scheduled to be one of the main speakers at the anti-war rally in New York City on April 27th.

Need to Learn the Art of Politics

Convinced that the white power structure would not concede a single demand of the Negro people unless it was coerced to do so, Martin Luther King stressed the need for utilizing the strength of the Negro vote to increase their political power. To transform the present powerlessness of the Negro into political power that will be meaningful, it is not sufficient merely to increase the number of Negroes who go to the polls, he pointed out. It is necessary to use

the Negro vote to elect political representatives responsive to the needs of the people, men who will demand a role in decision-making on all governmental levels.

To accomplish this, he said, it is important that we be "prepared to act in unity and throw our support to such independent parties or reform wings of the major parties as are prepared to take our demands seriously and fight for them vigorously." For this the Negro will have to "master the art of political alliances" and seek out "many white reform and independent political groups" while striving to develop "genuinely independent and representative political leaders." (*Where Do We Go From Here*, p. 150.) Just this past January he urged that the Negro people make clear to the men in Congress and the President in the White House that they will not receive the Negro vote as long as they support the war in Vietnam.

Black and White Unity—Needed for Victory

At all times Martin Luther King fought to build black and white unity. Without such unity black liberation is unattainable, he continuously emphasized throughout all his years of activity. While fully cognizant of the tremendous impact the national independence movement, especially in Africa, had on the black people at home, he tried to show why the African experience could not be transplanted to the United States. He held that separatism—blacks going it alone—could only end in a dead alley and was self-defeating. "This is a multiracial nation where all groups are dependent on each other, whether they want to recognize it or not," he wrote. "In this vast interdependent nation no racial group can retreat to an island entire of itself." (*Ibid.*, p. 60.) He then explained why:

. . . the Negro's struggle in America is quite different from and more difficult than the struggle for independence. The American Negro will be living tomorrow with the very people against whom he is struggling today. The American Negro is not in a Congo where the Belgians will go back to Belgium after the battle is over, or in an India where the British will go back to England after independence is won. In the struggle for national independence one can talk about liberation now and integration later, but in the struggle for racial justice in a multiracial society where the oppressor and the oppressed are both "at home," liberation must come through integration. (*Ibid.*, p. 62.)

But integration for King did not mean the right to sit at the white man's table, with the white man remaining the host and having all the say. Integration must mean an equal share in political power; an equal share in decision-making. Not leaders chosen and flattered by whites but leaders that arose from the ranks could lead the Negro people and help determine their destiny.

While rejecting separatism and exerting pressure to bring about more effective black-white unity, King nevertheless identified himself with many aspects of black power: the stress on the need for Negro identity, racial pride, appreciation for the African cultural heritage and the contributions the Negro made to the United States. He particularly stressed the need for Negro unity, Negro initiative and Negro leadership in the battle to assert equality in all fields of human endeavor. That is why he agreed that "creative and positive power" in the economic and political spheres was the only guarantee for achieving true equality.

Strength of Unity of White and Black Workers

It is symbolic that Martin Luther King was murdered in Memphis, where he had come to rally support for 1,300 striking sanitation workers, mostly Negroes, in their fight for union recognition. Of all the civil rights leaders, King best realized that the Negro people, being primarily a working people, needed union organization and the support of the labor movement. To him it was axiomatic "that what labor needs, the Negro needs" and that an alliance between them was in the self-interest of both. While he knew that racist restrictions existed within some unions, with which an alliance for the moment was inconceivable, this did not include the entire labor movement. In convincing Negro workers why unionization was important, he showed how racist barriers were overcome in the organizational drive of the thirties:

The labor movement, especially in its earlier days, was one of the few great institutions where a degree of hospitality and mobility was available to Negroes. When the rest of the nation accepted rank discrimination and prejudice as ordinary and usual—like the rain, to be deplored but accepted as part of nature—trade unions, particularly the CIO, leveled all barriers to equal membership. In a number of instances Negroes rose to influential national office. (*Ibid.*, 140-41.)

He viewed with great understanding the inherent strength of the Negro workers and realized that they could exert tremendous power when united with the millions of white workers:

Within the ranks of organized labor there are nearly two million Negroes. Not only are they found in large numbers as workers, but they are concentrated in key industries. In the truck transportation, steel, auto and food industries which are the backbone of the nation's economic life, Negroes make up nearly 20 per cent of the organized work force, although they are only 10 per cent of the general population. This potential strength is magnified further by the fact of their unity with millions of white workers

in these occupations. As co-workers there is a basic community of interest that transcends many of the ugly divisive elements of traditional prejudice. There are undeniably points of friction, for example, in certain housing and education questions. But the severity of the abrasions is minimized by the more commanding need for cohesion in union organization.

If not explicitly, certainly implicitly, King sensed that the poison of chauvinism could be broken down more readily among workers, for they have most to lose from this influence. Thus, he continued:

If manifestations of race prejudice were to erupt within an organized plant, it would set into motion many corrective forces. It would not flourish as it does in a neighborhood with nothing to inhibit it but morbid observers looking for thrills. In the shop the union officials from highest to lowest levels would be immediately involved, for internal discord is no academic matter; it weakens the union in its contests with the employers. Therefore an important self-interest motivates harmonious race relations. Here Negroes have a substantial weight to bring to bear on all measures of social concern. (*Ibid.*, p. 140.)

A Courageous Fighter for Democracy

Martin Luther King was not a Marxist. He did not call for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism as the road for the attainment of total equality through the elimination of the exploitation of man by man. It is perhaps because of this that he did not see the limitations of his non-violent philosophy. For while oppressed and exploited peoples everywhere seek revolutionary change through peaceful means, the manner in which socialism can be reached is not determined by them alone. If all democratic channels for change are closed, the people will take whatever path they deem necessary—including armed struggle—to attain their freedom from exploitation and oppression. Revolutionary change, of course, is not brought about by handfuls of guerrilla fighters—regardless of their individual heroism—but only by the action of the majority of the working people. No revolution—including that of Cuba—has been successful without the support of the people.

Martin Luther King was a consistent democrat, fighting for the extension of democracy, cognizant that so long as the democratic rights of the Negro people were denied, democracy in the country was bound to falter. Thus he was a man of the times. For the central democratic task at home remains the fight to win freedom and equality for the Negro people. The fight for economic, political and social equality is a fight that can be won under capitalism. One of King's greatest attributes was that he imbued the struggle with hope and confidence, and despite setbacks and difficulties, did not fall victim to

despair.

But the fight is far from won.

The Fight Against Racism—Key Challenge

Many whites were taken aback when Dr. Benjamin Mays, former president of Morehouse College, declared in his moving eulogy that "the American people are in part responsible for Martin Luther King's death. The assassin heard enough condemnation of King and Negroes to feel that he had public support. He knew that there were millions of people in the United States who wished that King was dead." Ashley Montagu, author of *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, made a similar charge in a letter to the *New York Times*.

It cannot be denied, that as long as white Americans stand silently by while the most elementary human rights are denied the Negro people, when they fail to join a literal crusade to wipe out the poverty of the ghetto, they must carry the onus of the oppression, and the responsibility for King's assassination.

White Americans face an immediate challenge. It is not enough to declare, as Walter Reuther did at the massive march in support of the Memphis garbage collectors on April 8, that "the whitest American can't be free until he gives his hand to the blackest American." These words must be proven in deeds. In this respect a special responsibility rests on the labor movement. Time can no longer wait for the top officialdom to launch a drive to organize the workers in the South and smash all remaining discriminatory practices in unions and on the job. If men like Reuther would set the example by allocating forces and money for this task, they could galvanize significant sections of organized labor for an all-out drive to bring the millions of unorganized workers into the unions.

Time is of the essence in developing wide support in all white communities, people's organizations, labor unions and the peace movement, to the Poor People's Campaign. This action should now be transformed into the most massive action of white and black people this country has ever seen. Only then will it be difficult for Congress and the White House to evade their responsibilities.

A true monument to Martin Luther King demands a new commitment to the fight against racism wherever it raises its ugly and divisive head. This deadly poison is all around us. It requires a ceaseless, unremitting struggle by all who cherish democracy and social progress, and first of all by those in the growing Left and Communist ranks.

Martin Luther King, as Mrs. Coretta King said in her stoic sorrow, "gave his life for the poor of the world—the garbage workers of Memphis and the peasants of Vietnam." We must see that his memory not be desecrated. We must not fail to do all in our power to realize the dream for which he died.

The Johnson Withdrawal

When President Johnson, on the evening of March 31, made the startling announcement that he would not be a candidate for re-election, he was not the first president to make such a decision. Coolidge in 1928 and Truman in 1952 had also bowed out of the running for a second full term.

But never before has such an action been so widely hailed. Never before has it produced such a rise in popularity. "Not in recent months," reported the *New York Times* (April 2, 1968), "have such words of praise for Mr. Johnson been heard in the House and Senate chambers as those that were uttered today by members of both parties." Never before have so many Americans reacted with such expressions of relief and gladness.

It is not hard to understand why. Though Johnson sought to present his withdrawal as an act of selfless sacrifice, it is clear that he was forced to take this step because of the utter bankruptcy of his policies and his mounting unpopularity among the masses of Americans. Above all, his action reflects the growing revulsion against his war policies and the accumulating evidence of the futility of his efforts to subjugate the Vietnamese people, despite strenuous efforts of the Administration to cover this up.

Out of these developments had grown the Dump Johnson movement some time before. The withdrawal was its culmination.

It is expressive of Johnson's standing among Americans that his name has come to be associated with the phrase "credibility gap"—a polite way of saying that our President lies to us. This gap, which had been steadily widening, grew to a yawning chasm when the Tet offensive of the NLF forces gave the lie to the repeated assertions of military progress. This final strain the "gap" proved unable to accommodate.

The withdrawal is likewise impelled by the rising opposition to the economic drain of the war—to rising prices and taxes and falling purchasing power, to emasculation of social welfare and public services outlays, to the deepening dollar crisis and the accompanying demands for "austerity." It is impelled by the worsening crisis of the ghettos, by the growing revolt of black Americans against their deepening misery and oppression (which the war has accentuated). It is induced by the repudiation of his policies of "containment" and repression of the ghettos, expressed with particular sharpness in the

recent report of his special advisory commission on civil disorders. It is striking indeed that the report of a body of such conservative composition flies so completely in the face of Administration policy.

Opposition to the Johnson war policies has spread to all sectors of the population. Even Wall Street has joined the doves. "Stock Market Casts a Tumultuous Vote for Peace," headlined the *New York Times* on April 7, referring to the unprecedented upsurge in stock buying occasioned by the new prospects of de-escalation, meager as these may be. The Wall Street reaction is indicative of a significant loss of support for Johnson in monopoly circles.

Opposition has shot up in Congress and within Johnson's own party, particularly as it has become evident that not only is the Presidency in doubt but serious losses in both houses of Congress are imminent. A number of party machines deserted. The President had become a political liability. Writes *U.S. News and World Report* (April 15, 1968): "In effect, White House aides explain, a President has been run out of the White House by his own party."

But underlying all this is the swelling mass opposition to the war, which has now reached such proportions as to force a break in the situation. Theodore C. Sorensen, former presidential advisor who has now joined the Kennedy camp, says: "In no other modern war have our leaders been unable to convince so large a portion of the electorate that our national security requires a victory." (*New York Times Magazine*, March 17, 1968.) By the end of March, Johnson's Gallup poll rating, which had stood at 79 per cent when he first assumed the Presidency, had fallen to 36 per cent.

It was in the New Hampshire primaries that the accumulated mass anti-war sentiment came most strikingly to the surface, with Senator Eugene McCarthy winning an unexpected 42 per cent of the vote and 20 out of 24 convention delegates. Whatever the limitations of his position, McCarthy offered a distinct alternative for peace. "We must make a moral, military and political judgment against the war in Vietnam," he stated (*New York Times Magazine*, March 31, 1968). And to this opportunity for expression the people responded.

Faced with these realities, coupled with the fact that last-minute surveys before the Wisconsin primaries gave him as little as 12 per cent of the vote there, Johnson apparently saw no alternative but to give up. *Time* (April 12, 1968) put it in these words:

As Richard Neustadt, director of Harvard's Institute of Politics, observed last week: "It never hurts to walk out at the end, instead of being carried out." And Lyndon Johnson, realizing that he was in danger of being carried out, chose the more graceful exit.

By hard-headed politicians, McCarthy's campaign was initially looked upon as somewhat quixotic, since he had no machine support and little financial backing. But his candidacy produced a grass-roots movement of support—both in New Hampshire and in Wisconsin, where he received 57 per cent of the vote to Johnson's 35—such as has not been seen for a long time. It struck fire especially among the young people, as shown in the remarkable outpouring of students as active campaigners. This is truly a significant development. Indeed, it is virtually unique on the present-day American political scene.

It was this which sparked the change. It was this which was the herald of a qualitatively new state of affairs. It elevated McCarthy to the status of a candidate who had to be taken seriously. And it led Senator Robert F. Kennedy, quick to sense the changed situation, to make one of the swiftest re-examinations on record and to declare himself a candidate.

As this is written, Vice President Hubert Humphrey has now formally thrown his hat in the ring. It is interesting to note, however, that while he continues to support the war and enters the race as a spokesman for Johnson's policies, he has found it expedient to change his tactics. The *New York Times* of April 23, reporting a speech to the Overseas Press Club, notes:

Vice President Humphrey avoided his customary defense of the Vietnam war last night and called for concentration on "the arts of peace" and the building of "peaceful bridges" to Communist China. . . .

Nor did Mr. Humphrey argue, as he has recently, that the United States is fighting in Vietnam to protect American national interests. His speech contained only a passing reference to the Vietnam war and made only a single mention of President Johnson.

Thus a three-way contest is shaping up in which Kennedy emerges at this point as the front runner. Kennedy's entrance into the race, whatever one may think of his motivations, has the effect of enlarging the anti-Johnson movement, since he brings with him money, considerable machine backing and the support of sections of monopoly capital. Humphrey will have the backing of the top labor leadership, of other groups supporting the war and of the major part of the Democratic Party machinery.

In these terms, McCarthy is in the weakest position. However, he not only represents the most advanced position on the question of peace but is also the spokesman of a grass-roots movement of considerable and growing strength. Certainly the showing he makes

in the coming primary contests in such states as Indiana, Nebraska, Oregon and California can have much influence on the advancement of the peace issue in the election campaign, and particularly on the position taken by Kennedy. At the same time, pressure from the peace forces and the Left can do much to influence the position of McCarthy himself. Among other things, it can help to improve his approach to the fight for Negro freedom, on which he has been lamentably weak.

At this point it appears fairly certain that Nixon will be the Republican candidate. His position requires no detailed elucidation here. But it is clear that the Johnson withdrawal confronts him with more formidable opposition and makes it more difficult for him to engage in demagogic maneuvers on his pro-war stand.

The Johnson withdrawal points up the seriousness of the crisis in foreign policy, as well as the crisis of the whole jim crow system. At the same time it gives a different character to the election campaign, strengthening the opportunities for the peace forces. Clearly the situation calls for greatly stepped up support of McCarthy in the coming primaries. It is also clear that many of those who have been involved in third-ticket movements will be drawn toward the McCarthy campaign in view of the new situation.

It does not follow, however, that these developments lessen the need of fighting for independent forms and the launching of a third ticket. Both levels of activity are essential. Indeed, the strengthening of the McCarthy campaign will serve in the end to strengthen the forces for independent action. Nor do these developments detract in any way from the importance of having a Communist presidential ticket in the November elections.

In his March 31 speech, Johnson also announced what he termed a significant reduction in the bombing of North Vietnam in the hope that this would open the way to negotiations. But he accompanied this with an announcement that the war in South Vietnam was to be stepped up, with more troops and an increase of \$2.5 billion a year in military outlays. Moreover, though the bombing was to be stopped except for the area adjacent to the demilitarized zone, the following day planes struck nearly 200 miles north of it. When this aroused a storm of indignation, the Administration admitted under prodding from Senator Fulbright that air strikes were to continue as far north as the 20th parallel, some 225 miles north of the demilitarized zone. To add to this, the magnitude of the attacks was increased, and today they are considerably bigger than they were at the beginning of the year.

All this reduces Johnson's announcement to little more than demagoguery. Yet his action does represent a step toward de-escalation, minimal though it is. The government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, recognizing this, was quick to respond. Hanoi announced its readiness to meet to discuss a total halt to the bombing and all other acts of war against North Vietnam. As a result, arrangements for a meeting are under discussion. To be sure, they are currently blocked by haggling over the choice of a meeting place. (What, it is being asked, has become of Johnson's often repeated insistence that he is ready to meet "any place, any time"?) And undoubtedly there will be many more roadblocks. Nothing is assured. Nevertheless a turn has been made. The question of negotiations is at this moment on a different footing than before, offering a basis for struggle and pressure which did not exist previously.

There is much speculation as to whether Johnson's actions are merely a maneuver—whether his withdrawal was simply intended to put him in a more favorable position in anticipation of a draft later on, and whether he is at the same time going through some motions with regard to negotiations in order to bolster that position. We do not propose to join in such speculations. Whatever his intentions, such actions have an internal logic of their own, giving rise to consequences which were not intended and cannot be controlled. This logic lies in the forces they unleash, in the fact that they open the door to mass actions on a new level, which in their turn compel further retreats. But on the other hand this logic comes to expression only if the mass struggles to which the door is opened actually materialize, only if the forces of peace and freedom take advantage of the new situation by working in a new way.

This is the responsibility which Johnson's actions impose. To the extent that it is met, the turning point implicit in these actions can unfold and a meaningful retreat from present policies can be compelled. To the extent that it is not met, the way is left open for maneuver. Such is the logic of the present moment.

Clearly, there must be no slackening of pressures now. On the contrary, the situation calls for stepping up pressures on all issues. In particular the demand for immediate cessation of all bombing in North Vietnam must be raised all the more sharply. And the fight for election of peace candidates and Negro candidates to Congress must be placed in the forefront of the struggle.

WARMEST GREETINGS, DEAR PAUL
ON YOUR 70TH BIRTHDAY!



PAUL ROBESON

Paul Robeson: A Giant Among Men

Seventy years have passed since Paul Robeson was born on April 9, 1898. They have been years of great turmoil and struggle. Within those years we in the United States have passed through two world wars and the most devastating economic crisis of the capitalist system, in which the burdens of debt and misery were placed upon the backs of the masses, black and white. Within those years great strides were taken in the development of the trade union movement as black and white workers organized the Congress of Industrial Organizations. And within those years the government gave irrefutable proof that it was a government steeped in racist ideology and committed to the development of a colonial empire.

Paul Robeson played a conspicuous part in those struggles as a people's artist, as a leader endowed with great spiritual strength and a deathless love for the oppressed. He said:

The interests of the overwhelming majority of the American people demand that the Negro question be solved. It is not simply a matter of justice for a minority: what is at stake is a necessity for all. Just as in Lincoln's time the basic interests of the American majority made it necessary to strike down the system of Negro enslavement, so today those interests make it necessary to abolish the system of Negro second-class citizenship.

Increasingly it is becoming clear that the main roadblock to social progress in our country—for labor, for education, for public health and welfare—is that very group which stubbornly opposes equal rights for Negroes. The 100 Congressional signers of the Southern manifesto against desegregation are not only the foes of the Negro minority: they are a powerful reactionary force against the people as a whole. (*Here I Stand*, Othello Associates, New York, 1958, pp. 86-87.)

Paul Robeson wrote those words in 1958 as he told the world, "Here I stand." And there he stood as an artist-revolutionary. There, for a quarter of a century he had stood in the thick of the battle, challenging the war makers and the racists, cheering the millions on every continent who heard him, exuding inspiration and courage in the words of his songs and giving confidence through his deeds.

On April 9 this black man, one of the greatest sons of the American soil, who saw in his many and varied artistic talents weapons to be used in the liberation of mankind, attained his 70th birthday. He had for years used those weapons, the heritage from a great people—albeit black slaves—in the interest of human freedom regardless of color, creed or nationality.

As Paul Robeson enlarged his experience and grew in stature, as his prestige mounted in the field of the arts, the concert stage, the theater and the films, that experience matured him. It stimulated and added depth and new dimensions to his political vision. At first he had thought "that the content and form of a play was of little or no importance . . . What mattered was the opportunity. . . ." He continued: "Later I came to understand that the Negro artist could not view the matter simply in terms of his individual interests, and that he had a responsibility to his people who rightfully resented the traditional stereotyped portrayals of Negroes on stage and screen." (*Here I Stand*, p. 39.) Those were his words. They reflected the thinking of most Negro artists.

Life had offered proof that for a people oppressed there could be no art for art's sake alone. Art had to give inspiration to people, helping them to join the freedom fight. Then only could it become a people's art. Robeson saw that truism.

Standing before a Committee of the House of Representatives which sought to create in him the image of a man disloyal to his country, Robeson answered back: "I stand here struggling for the rights of my people to be full citizens of this country. . . . That is why I am here today. . . ." (*Here I Stand*, p. 50.)

Robeson's accusers were confounded. It was *they* who were disloyal, to country, to mankind, to all that progressive humanity held decent. They had been hopelessly corrupted by the myths of white superiority and the war madness of a class that saw in mass slaughter the means of acquiring new lands and making more billions.

Those who rule the country and in their political madness seek world domination made the goal of stopping his magnificent voice a national project. They did not want Paul to have an African, Asian, or European audience. They denied him a passport and his constitutional right to travel. The leaders of the "free world," through John Foster Dulles, "America's misguided missile," publicly declared from the shelter of the State Department that it was not in the "best interests of the United States." But a voice like Paul's could not be stilled by the edict of a brink-walker like Dulles.

Paul Robeson's 70th birthday fell on an immeasurably tragic day.

On the 4th of April the assassin's bullet—fired, as the late Mr. Dulles's associates might hold, "in the best interests of the USA"—sent that giant of American humanism, Dr. Martin Luther King, to a premature grave. The funeral of this black immortal came on Paul's birthday. Yet on every continent, in every country of the world where men and women mourned the terrible loss of Martin Luther King, there were those who sent their greetings to Paul Robeson, citizen of the USA and of the world—of all seeking human freedom.

American reactionaries had tried to murder Paul Robeson. Paul was scheduled to sing at the Public Stadium in Peekskill, New York, on August 28, 1949, the proceeds to go to the Harlem Chapter of the Civil Rights Congress. The president of the Peekskill Chamber of Commerce issued a statement attacking the concert. So, too, did other "prominent citizens." On the evening of the event, as time came for Robeson to arrive, two Ku Klux Klan crosses were lit just off the grounds. American Legion veterans started hurling rocks, and the chants arose, "No one of you will leave here alive." "We are going to get Robeson."

There were deputy sheriffs and FBI agents there in abundance; but not a rioter was arrested.

Locked arm and arm together, the friends of Robeson protected him with their lives. Two days later the Civil Rights Congress, at a meeting of 3,000 at the Golden Gate ballroom in New York's Harlem, protested the failure of the police to give protection. Robeson who spoke there said: "I want my friends to know in the South, in Mississippi, all over the United States, that I'll be there with my concerts, and I'll be in Peekskill too!" He was.

Two years later, in 1951, Paul Robeson was to appear at the office of the Secretary of the United Nations in New York as the leader of a delegation that submitted a petition signed by white as well as black citizens of the USA entitled: "We Charge Genocide: the Crime of Government Against the Negro People." It was an unforgettable, history-making event.

Among other things the Petition said:

We petition as American patriots, sufficiently anxious to save our countrymen and all mankind from the horrors of war to shoulder a task as painful as it is important. We cannot forget Hitler's demonstration that genocide at home can become a wider massacre abroad, that domestic genocide develops into the larger genocide, that is predatory war. The wrongs of which we complain are so much the expression of predatory reaction and its government that civilization cannot ignore them nor risk their continuance without

courting its own destruction. We agree with those members of the General Assembly who declare that genocide is a matter of world concern because its practice imperils world safety.

But if the responsibility of your petitioners is great, it is dwarfed by the responsibility of those guilty of the crime we charge. Seldom in human annals has so iniquitous a conspiracy been so gilded with the trappings of respectability. Seldom has mass murder on the score of race been so sanctified by law, so justified by those who demand free elections abroad even as they kill their fellow citizens who demand free elections at home. . . .

The late Mr. Walter White, while Secretary of the National Association of Colored People, said of Paul Robeson as the NAACP gave him the Spingarn Medal for his activities in behalf of freedom for all men: "No honest American, white or Negro, can sit in judgment on a man like Robeson unless and until he has sacrificed time, talent, money and popularity in doing the utmost to root out the racial and economic evils which infuriate men like Robeson."

But Paul Robeson has never seen his magnificent contributions to the fight "to root out the racial and economic evils of his country" as a sacrifice. On many occasions he expressed the view that what was needed was a profound and fundamental change—a change to socialism. Thus, he wrote:

On many occasions I have publicly expressed my belief in the principles of scientific socialism, my deep conviction that for all mankind a socialist society represents an advance to a higher stage of life—that it is a form of society which is economically, socially, culturally, and ethically superior to a system based upon production for private profit. (*Here I Stand*, p. 47.)

At the same time, he declared that it was unthinkable to him ". . . that any people would take up arms in the name of an Eastland to go against anybody."

Three score and ten years, most of them spent in the greatest cause in all the world—the freedom of mankind! We salute Paul Robeson, Afro-American, American, citizen of the world and one of its greatest humanists. Millions of American youth will find in the life Paul Robeson has led heroic deeds to emulate. He has helped to make history at a moment when the demand was for giants. Our country has produced few that are his peer.

Salute!

the answer. A generation later, in Germany, the philosopher of despair asks not a question but in his parable, *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche's madman tells his mocking audience that God is dead, that "we have killed him," and the crowd is amused rather than shocked for, really, they had known it all the time.

* * *

As the atrocities of the 20th century—from Verdun to Guernica to Auschwitz to Hiroshima to yesterday's tonnage of explosives dropped upon Vietnam—make those of the 19th century seem almost child's-play, so now it is by no means madmen who seriously raise Sojourner Truth's question. Indeed, the "death of God" literature of the past six or seven years has reached such flood proportions that we already have two quite distinct anthologies devoted only to this outpouring—that edited by Bernard Ramm in 1965 and by Jackson Ice and John Carey in 1967.

It seems to me that one of the contrasting features marking this literature is that the Catholic emphasis suggests the death or, at least, irrelevance, of the present Church, while the Protestant emphasis suggests the irrelevance (or disappearance) of God. Be that as it may, surely such literature reflects profound religious and therefore societal crisis. Now, with all the promises that characterized Neo-Conservatism—the American Century, People's Capitalism, the End of Ideology, etc.—lying about, broken where not forgotten, it is not only Communist devils who speak of a crisis society, of basic malfunctioning, of profound structural corrosion. No, today, the contradictions and antagonisms are so acute that James Reston, Managing Editor of the *N. Y. Times*, writes in those terms, and the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in a speech last August before the American Bar Association, says: "The Great Society has become the sick society."

Turning more directly to the matter at hand, the literature assumes the crisis in religion and seeks to explain and perhaps alleviate it. Typical of the assumption, for example, is the recent book—*Toward An American Theology* (Harper & Row)—by Professor Herbert W. Richardson at Harvard's Divinity School. Here we read: "The matrix of meaning itself has broken down. For this reason, the crisis in religion today is accompanied by concomitant crises in philosophy, politics, economics, education, art, family life, and so forth." Mr. Richardson suggests ". . . the crisis in modern religion does not arise primarily from intrareligious conflicts (as in the 16th century), nor from a conflict between religion and science (as in the 19th

IDEAS IN OUR TIME

HERBERT APTHEKER

Marxism, Religion and Revolution*

In the summer of 1850 an Anti-Slavery Convention was meeting in Salem, Ohio. In the pre-Civil War era, Abolitionists always faced great difficulties but at that moment they confronted a particular crisis brought on by the recent passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. Frederick Douglass, himself having fled slavery but nine years earlier, addressing this Convention, offered the opinion that in the face of the latest atrocity: "There is no longer any hope for justice other than bloody rebellion. Slavery," Douglass said, "must end in blood."

Sitting in the front row was another former slave who was known as Sojourner Truth. As Douglass finished the quoted sentences, she rose, pointed a finger at him and, in a loud voice, demanded: "Frederick, is God dead?" "No" came the reply, "and because God is not dead, slavery can only end in blood."

Alas, as the next decade was to show, Douglass was right and blood drenched the Southland like water. But relevant as all this is to contemporary problems and events, here we call this to mind because of what it says about God. To one who loved Him, it seemed unthinkable that He would allow blood to drown slavery; another thought He would. This disagreement was deep, but not fundamental for both Douglass and Truth agreed as to the essential nature—as well as reality—of God; both agreed that while tactical matters were controversial, strategic considerations were certain. That is, slavery was oppressive and therefore unjust; that oppression was offensive to the Lord was unquestionable and therefore that He would end slavery was indubitable.

For those committed to such ends, and holding fast to faith, God's death is unthinkable and unbearable; hence, the former slave woman puts the rhetorical question and the former slave man never doubts

* This paper was read March 23, 1968 for a symposium on "Conscience and Faiths in this Changing World," sponsored by World Fellowship and held at the United Nations Church Center in New York City.

century), but arises directly from the deterioration of religion itself."

I find Professor Richardson's description accurate but his explanation seriously wanting. To see crisis in religion as the result of intrareligious conflict reveals little, I think, for one immediately wishes to know the source of such conflict; to see a later cause of such crisis as the conflict between religion and science does not explain the development of the latter nor why the two necessarily collided; and to affirm that today's crisis in religion is due to a deterioration in religion seems inadequate for to speak of religion's deterioration is to speak of religion's crisis. Synonyms may help elucidate character but surely they do not illuminate cause.

* * *

Where Christianity is now in admitted crisis, the social order itself is in crisis. It has been in chronic and general crisis, I think, at least since World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution. With that general crisis and with the Revolution which marks it and has since in various forms, encompassed one-third of the globe, we have entered, I suggest, the beginnings of the post-religious phase of human history; with greater confidence I agree with those who say that we have at any rate entered upon the post-Constantine era of Christian history.

The Italian scholar, Vittorio Lanternari, in his study of what he calls "modern messianic cults," sees their appearance as reflections of the drive for liberation from colonialism; in this sense, he writes, "they provide one of the most startling demonstrations of the close tie between religious life and secular, political, and cultural life." The cults represent so many "cries for freedom," says Lanternari, and constitute an "indictment of Western civilization." He adds that these religions, in having these origins are identical with the origins of all the great religions—Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam. Each, he reminds us, "began as a prophetic movement of renewal stimulated by certain given cultural and social conditions in a time of crisis"; "the striving for religious renewal and liberation," he adds, "arises from the rebellion of the masses against the existing official cults imposed by a ruling caste."*

It is Engels himself who, in an essay, "On the History of Early Christianity," published during the last year of his life, wrote:

The history of early Christianity has notable points of resem-

* Lanternari, *The Religions of the Oppressed*, tr. by Lisa Sergio (N.Y., 1963, Knopf, 1965, Mentor; first published in Rome in 1960).

blance with the modern working-class movement. Like the latter, Christianity was originally a movement of oppressed people; it first appeared as the religion of slaves and emancipated slaves, of poor people deprived of all rights . . .

In his earlier essay, "Bauer and Early Christianity" (1882), Engels saw "the essential feature" of that early Christianity to lie in the fact that it "reverses the previous order, seeks its disciples among the poor, the miserable, the slaves and the rejected, and despises the rich, the powerful and the privileged. . .". Indeed, in the first cited article, Engels remarked of the early Christian writings, "they could just as well have been written by one of the prophetically-minded enthusiasts of the International."

Early Christianity, as befits its revolutionary character and composition, denounced the ruling gods and so was called atheist, excoriated the secular powers and so was called seditious, upbraided the rich and so was called deluded, pointed to private property and the accumulation of profit and their twin, covetousness, as the chief source of evil, and so was called a dangerous madness, to be extirpated from the earth.

The post-Constantine history of this Christianity is an extraordinary one of success and of "success." The results of the latter, in its institutional aspects, certainly, were summarized accurately, I think, by a group of Worker-Priests in France in its collective letter, sent in the summer of 1964 to the Ecumenical Council. "The Church," wrote these priests,

appears to be an economic, political and cultural *power* which flourishes well under the capitalist system. In those countries where land is the chief source of wealth, the Church possesses enormous riches. It has an enormous personnel and rich institutions, owns splendid buildings. Its economic future is guaranteed by large bank deposits and stocks and bonds which are wisely administered and derive profit from the exploitation of labor. The Church is on good terms with capitalist governments and even with fascist governments, and its leaders are considered among the important people of this world.

Does the Church not therefore defend that social system which permits it to live and flourish?

The fact is, indeed, that the Vatican is the largest shareholder in the world, its securities having a value of about six billion dollars; its realizable assets equal the gold and foreign exchange reserves

of France.* Such wealth is not confined to the Vatican, of course; thus, very large blocs of stock in Republic and National Steel corporations and in the Boeing, Lockheed, Curtiss-Wright and Douglas aircraft corporations are held by the Jesuit order; the same order has substantial holdings in the Di Giorgio Fruit Company operating in California, Florida and Central America and owner of its own fleet. The assets of the Knights of Columbus include the land under the Yankee Stadium, several department stores and a steel-tube factory, while a Protestant church in Akron, Ohio owns a shopping center, an apartment building, an electronics firm, a plastics company, and the Real Form Girdle Company. Protestant churches in Bloomington, Illinois, own the luxury Biltmore Hotel in Dayton, while Loyola University in New Orleans is the owner of the city's three largest radio-TV stations—one of them a CBS affiliate. Indeed, the tax-free wealth of religious institutions in the United States totals many billions of dollars; with mounting taxes and with the intensifying urban crisis it is in place to remind ecclesiastical figures that a not altogether dissimilar situation was consequential in bringing about the Reformation.**

The point, however, is that many Christians are saying, to quote the title of Father Robert Adolfs' book, that the Church is *The Grave of God*; that is, *because they are devout*—as the Worker-Priests—they are pleading for and working for change—some more and some less fundamental, as their views may differ, but certainly for *change*.

In making these challenges, these devout rebels reflect profound and, I think, most positive values and traditions in Christianity, which appear not only in the pre-Constantine phase but also in the centuries thereafter. The turmoil is more intense and more fundamental, perhaps, than in the past; this is at it should be, for the problems and the opportunities are unprecedented.

One has the traditions of the religious-inspired mass rebellions of the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries in England, Bohemia and Germany, with the words and activities of Wycliffe, Huss, Prokop, Münzer, Winstanley and Ball, and in the 16th and 17th centuries the great dreams of More and Campanella.

And some, honored while they lived and influential within the

* The worker-priests' letter was originally published in the French Catholic review, *Lettre*, Dec. 1964; in English in *Political Affairs*, June, 1965. The Vatican's wealth is detailed in the *New Statesman* (London), March 24, 1967.

** For these data, and much more, see Alfred Balk, "God Is Rich," in *Harper's Magazine*, October, 1967.

Church while they lived, also reflected this egalitarian and communistic tradition. Notable in this regard was St. Ambrose (d. 397), Bishop of Milan. In many respects as other-worldly as the most intense traditionalist could desire, this aspect of his thinking did not keep him from demanding justice on earth and asserting that such justice could not appear so long as the private possession of the world's goods prevailed. To seek profit is to attack public interest, to be rich is to flaunt sin and both violate the "essential nature of justice": "For as long as we eagerly strive to increase our riches, to accumulate money, to occupy lands as our possessions, to be distinguished for our wealth, we put away from us the essential nature of justice and lose the spirit of common beneficence."

The master historian whose essay has rescued this aspect of St. Ambrose's thought concludes his exposition thereof with these words:*

The most significant fact concerning this side of the teaching of St. Ambrose is that so little came of it. The most powerful and popular figure in the Latin Church through two critical decades, he played a large part in determining the direction which it was to take in theology, in its ecclesiastical polity, its liturgy, and its relations to the secular authority. But his preaching of a virtually equalitarian and communistic ideal of a Christian society had no effect commensurate with its earnestness and eloquence. To the reflective historian, this negative fact calls for an attempt at explanation; but such an attempt would require a long discussion upon which I shall not enter here.

Professor Lovejoy's restraint was most unfortunate; without "a long discussion" one may offer the opinion that the equalitarian and communistic side of St. Ambrose—and not only of him!—has been neglected because of the considerations brought forward by the Worker-Priests in our time.

Still there is a thread—a red thread, no doubt!—that runs through the history and teaching of Christianity. It appears in the actions and writings of those already mentioned; in the Christianity of a Nat Turner, a John Brown, a Dorothy Day and increasingly in personalities not associated with the marked radicalism such names suggest.

Anthony Towne, writing on "Revolution and the Marks of Baptism," in the *Journal of the Committee of Southern Churchmen* the

* "The Communism of St. Ambrose," by Arthur O. Lovejoy, in *The Journal of the History of Ideas*, III (1942), 458-68. It is relevant to point out that while *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (1950 edition) finds space in its account of St. Ambrose to mention the number of hymns he wrote, it makes no mention of this aspect of his thought.

summer of 1967, announced that he wished to "seize the bull by the horns," and that we had better "reconsider the rights of property, which infect the whole of the [U.S.] Constitution, and acknowledge that property does not, in fact, have any rights." Archbishop Helder Camara of Brazil warns, in a book recently published by the press of Notre Dame University.* "Woe be to all Christians if the lowly become convinced that the Church has abandoned them in this dark hour. They cannot but believe that religion is indeed the opium of the people and Christianity an ally of privilege and exploitation." The Reverend Tissa Beladuriya, writing from Ceylon, makes his warning global. In the Catholic quarterly, *Cross Currents* (Winter, 1967, p. 56), he denounces the system of capitalism as having resulted in what he calls "world apartheid," and warns:

The purely atomistic, capitalistic principle that regulates world trade today is basically unjust, and more equitable and effective solutions must be found on the principle of human solidarity. This is not a demand for alms, but an exigency of international social justice. Otherwise it is at present difficult to reverse the process by which poor nations become relatively poorer and the rich nations richer.

And just this month, the Canon of the Malaga diocese in Spain, Father Gonzales Ruiz, urges all Christians to "commit themselves to the socialist revolution," since, he holds, "true Christianity cannot prevail in a capitalistic society." In the latter society, holds this priest, Christianity can only have a missionary role; believing, as he does, that "there is no alternative to capitalism other than socialism," and that the former represents the functioning of "a permanent unjust aggressor," the place of a Christian must be with the working people in their struggle to end such aggression and revolutionize society.** (*New York Times*, March 8, 1968, dispatch by Tad Szulc from Madrid.)

In our own country the awareness that the so-called crisis of the cities—which means, given our overwhelmingly urban society, a so-

*J. J. Considine, ed., *Social Revolution in the New Latin America: A Catholic Appraisal* (1966); the Archbishop is quoted in the preface. Actually, the entire volume is to my point.

**Relevant is the fact that from March 17-23, 1968, 40 Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic churchmen are meeting in Moscow. This meeting was set in August, 1967 by the central committee of the World Council of Churches; it will consider revolutionary activity, international economic activity and Christian ethics in relation to secular ethics. Its report is to be submitted to the General Assembly of the Council meeting in Sweden in July.

cietal crisis—derives basically from the private ownership of land and buildings within the cities and the consequent profit-making aim of such possession—which permeates the best of the secular analyses (as that of Charles Abrams and Hans Blumenfeld)—appears with increasing frequency in religious writings, as those by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, and in such periodicals as *The Christian Century*.*

Of course, the most striking illustration of the shift in recent thinking on property—and on revolution—bringing that thinking very much closer to that which dominated early Christianity, appears in certain Encyclicals coming from the present Pope and his immediate predecessor. Thus, in *Populorum progressio* (Development of Peoples), issued in March, 1967, one finds reflected the polemics of Emmanuel Mounier and of Cardinal Lercaro, Archbishop of Bologna, against the concept (basic to *Rerum novarum*, Leo XIII, 1896) that property right was an immutable right. They insisted this stemmed not from biblical text but rather from Roman law. And Pope Paul VI in the aforementioned Encyclical quotes from none other than St. Ambrose, and from precisely that part of his writings hitherto signally neglected by the Church; for St. Ambrose is quoted to establish the idea that "the earth was given to all, not just the rich," and the Pope here specifically says that "private property is not an absolute and unconditional right for anybody," and that "wherever a conflict arises between acquired property rights and the cardinal needs of society, it is up to the public authority to resolve the conflict with the active participation of persons and groups." Explicitly—even dramatically—this Encyclical adds that "the public good invokes expropriation of some possessions if—by virtue of their size, partial or complete disuse and the consequent poverty of the population and damage to the interests of the country—they represent an obstacle to collective prosperity." Single-minded concentration upon profit is denounced and the so-called "free exchange" reflective of so-called "free enterprise" also is held to have been found wanting in human benefit.

Further, in this Encyclical, the Pope holds: "Revolutionary insurrection except in case of evident and prolonged tyranny that

* C. Abrams, *The City is the Frontier* (Harper & Row, 1965); H. Blumenfeld, *The Modern Metropolis* (M. I. T. Press, 1967); M. L. King, *Where Do We Go From Here*, (Harper & Row, 1967); and, for example R. K. Taylor, "Property Rights and Human Rights," *The Christian Century*, September 6, 1967.

threatens gravely the fundamental rights of persons and dangerously injures the common good of the nation, will produce new injustices." As Father Juan Luis Segunde, S. J. of Uruguay, has recently written: "Both in and out of the continent many Christians and non-Christians will describe the situation of many Latin American nations precisely by using the terms covered by that 'exception'." (*Christianity and Crisis*, March 4, 1968, p. 231.)

No wonder the distinguished savant, William L. Buckley, suggests that for some reason the Pope had put forth a "perfumed Marxism" and that the *Wall Street Journal* regretted the Pope's "confused Marxism."

As a Marxist, however, I must admit that the Pope's Encyclical was enunciating—in mild, though significant form—the traditional levelism and the original revolutionary quality of Christianity; on both these matters, let me confess it, Marxism is a latecomer.

* * *

Reference has been made to the widespread belief that we are in a post-Constantine era if not a post-Christian one. At least as widespread in the United States is the idea that we are in a post-Marxian one. Affirming the obsolescence or, at least, the irrelevance of Marxism is a commonplace in this country. While noting, as I did, the proliferation of God-is-dead literature, one must observe that a somewhat similarly entitled book reflected the Marxism-is-dead literature, i.e., *The God That Failed* (1960), edited by Richard Crossman and with essays by distinguished figures who, having mistakenly believed in the divinity of Marx and/or Lenin and/or the Communist Party, quite naturally found themselves disappointed, if not betrayed.

Similarly, while in earlier pages we have referred to the crisis in capitalist society, I know that an insistence upon crisis in socialist society is commonplace in the United States. Yet I think the latter, to the degree that it exists, reflects the newness of the venture and its unprecedented audacity, the forms and ferocity of the opposition it met and meets, the areas in which it first appeared and developed, and inevitable difficulties of expansion and growth, as well as problems of "success."

This is not the occasion, certainly, to develop an overall evaluation of the meaning to Man of the socialist transformation, nor to argue the relevance of Marxism for the United States. On the latter point, let it suffice here to note that quite apart from the considerable—and growing—number of Americans who affirm they are Marxists—and this has included perhaps the pre-eminent American of the 20th

century, Dr. Du Bois—one sees an insistence upon Marxism's consequence from such scholars as the late C. Wright Mills, and from Sidney Lens, William A. Williams, Staughton Lynd, George H. Hampsch, Howard L. Parsons, Robert S. Cohen, Richard Lichtman, Herbert Marcuse, and others. One observes, also, such a phenomenon as the annual Socialist Scholars Conference which for three years now has attracted several thousand academicians; the growth, too, of the American Institute for Marxist Studies, during the past nearly five years, attests to something other than obsolescence.

That conferences on Marxism are regular occurrences now—from Notre Dame to the University of Santa Clara to annual meetings of the American Sociological Association to this occasion, itself, bears witness in the same direction. Perhaps ultimate proof has come now that the *New York Times Book Review*, on Sunday March 10, in a characteristically inane feature belatedly devoted to Herbert Marcuse, found it was "all too easy to be patronizing or supercilious about the Marxian apparatus." God knows that magazine should know! It even went on to admit the subtlety of "serious Marxian analysis"; perhaps we shall live to see the day that the *New York Times* actually permits such analysis in its pages.

* * *

The evidence—and this paper has presented only fractions of what is available—suggests that advocacy of Christian-Marxist *rapprochement* need not be confined to the practical, so-called. That is, it is not uncommon now—both from the Marxian and the religious sides—to see advocacy of cooperation in terms of deeds or "works." This has been the emphasis—where this matter has been considered—on the Marxian side certainly at least since the 1930's; and from the religious side, this emphasis was central for example to the whole Christian Socialist movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and was emphasized then and later by such figures as Walter Rauschenbusch, Harry F. Ward and A. J. Muste.

It is at least implicit in the kind of historical analysis offered for example by Harvey G. Cox and he has on occasion made this explicit; it is in almost explicit form in a book issued last year by Notre Dame, to which reference was made earlier. The Reverend Mark C. McGrath writes:

There is nothing good and holy in the Marxist promises which is not better set forth in that Christian attitude towards the world which the Second Vatican Council is now studying . . . We, too, desire and work for an expansion of all material means

of production and welfare, so that in our century, for the first time in recorded history, all men have access to a material standard and an education which will free them from bodily want and the sad, almost animal dimness of life without knowledge, without culture, without joy, without beauty, without love.

I am urging that where Michael Novak calls for "The Revolution of 1976" that would see "a fundamental realignment of the bases of economic and political power in this land" (*Commonweal*, July 14, 1967) he certainly speaks as a Christian, albeit one wedded to the leveling teachings and practices of early Christianity; and in doing this he is affirming not only a certain congruence in practice between Marxists and Christians *but also in theory*. That there is this theoretical affinity has not been emphasized; the contrary has been done, by both sides. I am urging that such emphasis—where it excludes the other—militates against fully implementing the practical cooperation so widely suggested.

It seems to me that my argument is made almost verbatim—from the opposite approach—by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the closing section of his latest book, previously cited:

The Western nations that initiated so much of the revolutionary spirit of the modern world have now become the arch antirevolutionaries. This has driven many to feel that only Marxism has the revolutionary spirit. Communism is a judgment on our failure to follow through on the revolutions we have initiated. Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal opposition to poverty, racism and militarism.

If this cry is a judgment upon Christianity as practiced, it is a call in accordance with the deepest themes of Christianity; it is also a call in terms of the deepest currents in Marxism.

Some doubt that the ethical theme *is* a component in Marxism; not infrequently indeed something approaching cynicism—if not worse—is attributed to the Marxian evocation of such themes. For example, Professor Julian N. Hartt, of Yale's Divinity School, has written recently:

Here the Christian revolutionary is up against an ally of the most formidable foremindedness, the dedicated Communist. The true believer of that sect freely—zealously indeed—uses value-charged terms but he insists that he is using them "scientifically" . . . Here we are struck by a curious flavor of theological consistency, since the Marxist does not believe that any spiritual power (good or evil) is causally efficacious in the movements of history. (*A Christian*

Critique of American Culture, Harper & Row, 1967, p. 422.)

I appreciate Professor Hartt's calling one such as myself an "ally" even if his greeting is not quite fraternal, but when he says the Marxist does not believe in the efficaciousness of good and evil in history he does not speak for this Marxist. The Marxists see the historical conditioning of all phenomena, including morality, but comprehending source and origin is quite different from denying consequence and significance.

Any attempt to strip Marxism of its profoundly humanistic source and purpose is a caricature of Marxism. When Marx was 18 years old, writing a *gymnasium* examination paper on "Reflections of a Youth on Choosing an Occupation," he began by insisting that man's "general good" was "to improve mankind and himself." He closed that essay with two paragraphs that ring out with pathos and feeling:

History calls those the greatest men who ennobled themselves by working for the universal. Experience praises as the most happy the one who made the most people happy. Religion itself teaches us that the ideal for which we are all striving sacrificed itself for humanity, and who would dare to destroy such a statement?

When we have chosen the vocation in which we can contribute most to humanity, burdens cannot bend us because they are only sacrifices for all. Then we experience no meager, limited, egotistic joy, but our happiness belongs to millions, our deeds live on quietly but eternally effective, and glowing tears of noble men will fall on our ashes.

Certainly, this is the pre-Marxian Marx; but this dedication to ennoblement, this passion against injustice, this purpose to commence "the human epoch of history" is the heart of Marxism; divorcing that heart from the brain destroys Marxism.

If it has been possible to move from systems based on the private ownership of the means of production to socialism in one-third of the world and the elimination therefrom of the private appropriation of profit, it may well be possible to move institutionalized Christianity from its present commitment to capitalism. That commitment ties Christianity to a corpse and not to a living God; it certainly is not in accord with Christianity's own reading of its original concepts and practices.

Of the religions of the oppressed studied by Professor Lanternari, he writes (p. 254, cited work):

The messianic movements are movements of the people as well as movements of innovation. Within the religious dynamics of

their society they highlight the critical "moment" at which tensions and differences have reached a climax—the moment between traditional forms too static to move ahead and the new challenge to religious life. Because these movements are both popular and revolutionary, new and able to renew, because they are spurred by the urgent and vital needs of oppressed people and societies caught in a dilemma, they look to the future and to the regeneration of the world.

Christianity, too, had these origins and commitments; is it still able to renew? Certainly, Marxism had fundamentally similar origins and basically identical commitments. I do not think we—those of us who are religious and those of us who are Marxists—*need* be the strange kind of allies Professor Hartt pictured.

When the World Council of Christian Churches said at its Geneva Meeting, "We recognize the need for fundamental changes in the structure of society," and added that the duty of Christianity today was "to speak a radical 'No'"; when in the Documents of Vatican II, we read that while the Roman Catholic Church in the 18th and 19th centuries cast itself "in a role of intransigent resistance to movements of social revolution" but that today "the Church intends to play its true historic role as a champion of human rights and to align itself with those who fight for these rights" and when these Documents conclude that "neglecting temporal duties . . . jeopardizes eternal salvation"—when the two major bodies of world Christianity announce these things, then this "dedicated Communist"—to use Professor Hartt's language—is moved to say, with a joyous heart, Amen!

Political Affairs has received a letter from Professor Jurgen Kuczynski, asking us to inform all our readers that the American Edition of his book *The Rise of the Working Class* (McGraw-Hill) is so poorly translated that it distorts the original meaning of his work.

Lessons from the Setback In Indonesia (Part III)

Weaknesses and Mistakes of the Party

Let us now analyze the subjective factors bearing upon ourselves, factors which, scientifically speaking, determine the success of the revolution, namely: the readiness of the vanguard class for a struggle under the leadership of the Party armed with the correct strategy and tactics.

Actions aimed at taking over U.S. imperialist enterprises did not imply any physical clashes because they were fully supported by the government. The workers, at the same time, had a bitter experience that these actions failed to give them clear advantages, while the enterprises were falling into the hands of capitalist bureaucrats.

The actions aimed at crushing the city devils were still at the level of demonstrations and demands that government officials take resolute steps against the city devils, i.e., there was no immediate physical contact with the devils themselves. Only the one-sided actions of the peasants aimed at crushing the village devils went through the stage of physical clashes with the armed forces and resulted in the loss of human life. However, these one-sided actions were later checked by the Party and directed along the lines of reason and negotiations (*musjallah*). It is becoming ever clearer that we were not sufficiently seasoned in non-peaceful action, that we did not want to quarrel with Sukarno who had extinguished the revolutionary actions of the peasants.

As a result of the disease of self-conceit, bureaucracy and the cult of the personality that flourished in the Party, many functionaries and rank and file were unable to train themselves ideologically and organizationally to act according to the maxim: "Do not cry over broken pots and cut knuckles."

What had caused us concern found factual confirmation after the beginning of the September 30th Movement. At the beginning, reports on the arrests of prominent figures from the Generals' Council (except its top leader) were received with enthusiasm and the people joyfully listened to the broadcasts of Colonel Untung about the September 30th Movement. Among the top-ranking officers who took

part in the September 30th Movement resentment and alarm began to manifest themselves when they found out that President Sukarno had refused to give his blessing to the Revolutionary Council.

The situation changed drastically when in the course of 24 hours units of the Generals' Council succeeded in restoring their positions in Djakarta, while the people whose names were quoted to be members of the Revolutionary Council, began to make statements one after another that they had not the slightest idea that they had been appointed to serve on the Revolutionary Council, saying they were devoted to no one else but President Sukarno. The units of the Generals' Council exploited this situation to the utmost for propaganda purposes and charged the Revolutionary Council with being a counter-revolutionary organization intending to unseat President Sukarno, since the Council had forced the resignation of the Cabinet where President Sukarno was Prime Minister.

During those tense days the Party, having given its support to Colonel Untung's actions, committed the following political mistakes:

a) The organizers of and immediate participants in Untung's actions failed to take into consideration the need to draw the masses to their side in order to secure the support of progressive forces within the country. After the successful seizure of Radio Republic of Indonesia (RRI), they did not offer the people a positive socio-economic platform, nor did they call upon peasants and workers to watch for the danger of the conspiracy of the Generals' Council.

Instead of issuing a decree for the creation of people's armed forces, a decision was made to give a fresh boost to the military. Following all this, it was hard to count on the support of the masses for the September 30th Movement.

b) When all the political leaders denied their participation in the Revolutionary Council, the leadership of the Party made a belated statement to the effect that it was wrong to believe that the Party had taken part in the September 30th Movement. However, the Party leadership did not refute allegations that it had supported the purge carried out by Untung and his followers.

Western Java, as a region where the influence of the Party was relatively small, ought to have received primary attention from the Party leadership during the preparatory stage. In actual fact it was treated as an orphan up to the defeat of the September 30th Movement in Djakarta. In Western Java neither the situation nor plans for future actions were known.

Within 24 hours the Party leadership in the provinces and in the Kabupaten (counties) were arrested by the authorities on a large

scale and practically without resistance. In the following days, under the influence of dissatisfaction with the leadership and despondency resulting from mass surrender to the reactionary authorities, statements were made on the dissolution of Party committees, accompanied with accusations against the Party leadership. On the other hand, those who still continued to fight attacked the Party leadership from the Left, which explains the fact why two diametrically opposed tendencies emerged in Western Java: shameful mass surrender was going on parallel with the flourishing of the ultra-Leftists. Both stem from one and same source—general disillusionment with the political leadership of the Party.

In Djakarta itself, territorial units composed of young men, who had just completed their military training, and veterans stayed at their posts. However, a decree to arm the people was not issued. When it was apparent that the situation was changing unfavorably for the Movement, it was necessary not to procrastinate but take up arms and start a mobile guerrilla resistance in the city, as Marx had taught, so as not to play irresponsibly with arms but, once having started an armed struggle, to carry it to the end. For at that time there were opportunities for such actions, since the chief forces of the enemy were still busy chasing the main detachments of the September 30th Movement, the mass of the reactionary youth did not yet know what they had to do to crush us, rent by doubts due to the uncertainty of the situation. However, an armed struggle was not taking place. An order was given that weapons be hidden securely and everyone should seek refuge and wait for a political resolution. A presidential directive was circulated, which boiled down to the following:

Law and order should be enforced and armed clashes avoided;

A full meeting of the Cabinet should be convened and a political solution urgently sought.

Heated debates had taken place in the Party leadership about whether the Party should obey the President's orders or continue the struggle and repulse the onslaught of reaction. It was decided to issue a statement in support of a political solution by the President, to attend the full Cabinet meeting so as to bring pressure to bear upon the President during that meeting, to recognize the Generals' Council and agree to the formation of the NASAKOM Cabinet; if this failed—to continue resistance.

In this lies the following major mistake committed by the Party: the passivity of and panic among the Party leadership in an emer-

gency situation which resulted in surrender of all authority to President Sukarno and his political decision, but not reliance on the strength of the masses.

Counter-Revolutionary Terror

While the Party depended on President Sukarno's actions aimed at finding a political solution, which was long in coming, reaction was not idle. Persecution of progressive revolutionary elements began. Mad white terror was unleashed which knew no limits of inhumanity. Hundreds of thousands of the Party rank and file and the functionaries of progressive revolutionary organizations together with their innocent families were plunged into a blood path and became victims of mass killings. Hundreds of thousands of others were thrown into prisons or concentration camps. Even the Party's top leaders failed to avoid the terror, among them Comrades D. N. Aidit, Lukman and Njoto.

Counter-revolutionaries came to power and the revolutionary tide began to ebb. Such is the sad fate of the September 30th Movement resulting from suicidal Leftist policies for which the Revolution paid a dear and unnecessary price. That was the mistake the consequences of which for the Indonesian Revolution and international Communist movement are hard to rectify.

Paying homage to those who have fallen victim to the counter-revolutionary terror, we should recall the golden words of Lenin and draw them to the attention of those who will carry on the cause of our Revolution. Lenin said that the government and bourgeoisie should not be allowed to drown the Revolution in the blood of a *premature* uprising. He cautioned against falling easy prey to provocations. He said that we should wait for the high tide which will sweep everything away and bring victory for Communism . . . If 100-300 people are killed by the bourgeoisie, this will not kill the cause of the Revolution. But if the bourgeoisie succeeds in provoking a massacre and 10,000 or 30,000 workers are killed, this *may check* the revolution *even for several years*. For the sake of everything we hold sacred the Revolution should be nursed carefully until it is really ready to give birth to a child.

Some Lessons and Conclusions

An analysis of the entire development and activities of the Party in the past few years and during the September 30th Movement yields the conclusions that:

1. The chief reason underlying the failures of the PKI in leading

the revolution was that the PKI still lacked the traits characterizing a Leninist party, i.e., it was not a sufficiently bolshevized party, nor did it have a mass nature. In the past the Party had not paid adequate attention to measures aimed at increasing the role of proletarian elements in it or at improving its ideological and cultural level. In the recent past the Party tended to ascribe too much significance to the revolutionary spirit of the peasantry, whereas, without wishing to detract from our view that the peasantry is the staunchest ally of the working class, it should be pointed out that the petty-bourgeoisie is hamstrung by a serious drawback and one to be borne in mind, namely, that it is inconsistent in its actions.

The doors of the Party were flung wide open for the mass admission of petty-bourgeois elements with the result that ideologically, politically and organizationally the Party was flooded with a petty-bourgeois wave, while the fact that the Party leadership was turning bourgeois was completely ignored.

Hence, ideologically the Party was infected with a petty-bourgeois spirit and fell victim to overindulgence in ultra-Leftist slogans and petty-bourgeois nationalism, all of which crippled the spirit of proletarian internationalism, that integral and inalienable part of the activities of the party of the working class.

Theoretically, there was, on the one hand, an upsurge of dogmatism which found expression in easy acceptance of concepts revolutionary in form but failing to take stock of local conditions. On the other hand, there was an emergence of revisionism which tended to upend the monolithic doctrine of Marxism-Leninism and replace it with "national Marxism" within the framework of the so-called "Indonesification of Marxism-Leninism."

Politically, the Party was not consistent in defending its class positions and engaged in class collaboration with the bourgeoisie; it gave prominence to cooperation within the framework of the NASA-KOM, it lost its freedom of action in strengthening the sacred alliance of the workers and peasants; it demonstrated subjectivism and haste in assessing the situation and in evaluating the balance of forces; it failed to define its tactics, shuttling between adventurism and capitulation; it made absolute its choice of the forms of struggle, tending to take just one aspect of the struggle out of the many forms that a party of the working class must employ. All of this led to the Party's inability to play the role of leader of the Revolution.

Organizationally, in its internal activities the Party was further deviating from the principles of democracy and collective leadership; it was increasingly falling into the snare of the personality

cult; it was demonstrating an increasing lack of internal democracy in the Party; it was stifling initiative coming from the rank and file; it was fettering criticism from below and was not encouraging the development of vigorous self-criticism.

Firm discipline was not strengthened in the Party, liberal attitudes towards the decisions of the Party organization flourished, serious measures to curb bureaucracy in the Party were not taken.

2. The adventurism of the abortive September 30th Movement and its epilogue proved to be the inevitable result of the accumulation of the Party's past mistakes, its confused ideological, political and organizational line, all of which caused the Party to be punished by the objective development of history.

The Path Ahead

The alternative facing the Communist and Workers' movement in Indonesia at the present time is this: whether to stick to the old erroneous position and continue adventurist policies, failing to see the real state of affairs, and upholding organizational sectarianism, which signifies a divorce from the masses, or to completely give up pseudo-revolutionary concepts and take to the right path again, to be devoted to the Statutes and the Program of the Party adopted by the Fifth Congress of the PKI and supplemented at the Sixth Congress, to enjoy the love and sympathies of the broad masses and to make the Party play the role not just of the vanguard, but of leadership of the Revolution.

Ideologically, it is necessary to strengthen the outlook and methods of the working class, strengthen the proletarian elements of the Party, oppose petty-bourgeois nationalism, develop the spirit of proletarian internationalism in conjunction with true patriotism. The Party should deepen the knowledge of the universal teachings of Marxism-Leninism in conjunction with concrete revolutionary practices in Indonesia, it should free itself from the wrong concept of the "Indonesification of Marxism-Leninism."

The Party should return to the correct way of creating a united national front. It should value most of all the strengthening of the union between workers and peasants as the basic foundation of the united national front. The Party should step up its work among the peasants on the basis of a revolutionary agrarian program, which can make the peasants a tested ally of the working class and secure correct proportions in the cooperation of the working people with the national bourgeoisie and other democratic elements. The Party should increase its influence among the masses by using all forms

of legal or illegal struggle, take into account the requirements and demands of all strata of the working people for improved living conditions, consistently and increasingly carry out mass revolutionary action for democratic rights, higher living standards and social progress.

3. The building of a bolshevized and mass party should continue; a party that would be spread through the entire country, giving priority in it to the admission to the party of workers, without, however, slamming the doors in the faces of the best sons of other strata of the working people, especially the poor peasants and agricultural laborers in accordance with the norms and standards of the party statutes bearing on party membership.

The Leninist norms of party organization should be restored; the principles of democratic centralism should be unflinchingly followed, among them the principle of collective leadership; criticism and self-criticism should be reborn.

For the sake of preserving true unity within the Party and for the sake of the renovation of the Party, a clear line of division should be drawn with those who still stand on positions of advocating ultra-Leftist and sectarian principles, those who in the past unambiguously pushed the Party to adventurism and opposed cohesion in the international Communist movement.

Under the prevailing conditions, it is important to remind the Party of the need always to heighten Party vigilance, enforce firm discipline among the Party members, effect the division of labor in concert with the abilities and growth of professional Party cadres. It is necessary to remember the need to encourage initiative from below, the wise and flexible use of all the forms and methods of work in legal organizations, even though they may be of the most reactionary sort.

To provide for the victory of the August 1945 Revolution the immediate target task of the Party today is to forge a united Left-wing front, progressive, democratic and patriotic in nature, a front able to carry on a consistent struggle against pro-imperialist and anti-democratic reaction and thus deal it a crushing blow; as before, to concern itself with keeping Indonesia in the camp of anti-imperialism and peace and preserve the good relations of the Republic of Indonesia with the Socialist-bloc countries.

In the sphere of international activities, the Party should continue to pursue a consistent anti-imperialist and anti-colonial foreign policy, continue to defend peace and peaceful coexistence.

The banners of proletarian internationalism should be raised aloft;

the unity of the international Communist movement should be strengthened; all attempts to split and undermine the alliance and unity of the front of Communists and Workers' parties fighting the common enemy—imperialism led by U.S. imperialism—should be frustrated and foiled; the Party should be truly devoted to the letter and spirit of the Moscow Declaration and Statement worked out jointly by all the fraternal parties. Realistic relations should be maintained with all the Communist and Workers' parties on the basis of the principle of independence and equality, without allowing an open attack against each other in the face of the enemy.

Such is the way out of the existing situation.

Confidence should prevail that the international proletariat, the Communist and Workers' parties of the world, all the progressive and revolutionaries the world over will always demonstrate their international solidarity with us, as was the case during the time when Indonesia's progressive and revolutionary forces went through an ordeal similar to the present one, and we drew on their support and sympathy. Experience demonstrates that life itself ruthlessly condemns those who, instead of gratitude, flaunt evil prejudices by alleging that there are fraternal parties which, while saying they are concerned, in fact do no more than shed crocodile tears.

To the fallen victims, who number hundreds of thousands of Communists and their followers, who have shed their blood for the escutcheon of the Motherland as a result of the recent atrocities of the white terror, and in token of our gratitude for fervent international solidarity, we can give but one answer: to forge ahead along the new correct way, along the Marxist-Leninist way toward the final victory of our national democratic Revolution.

Long live the PKI, the vanguard of the working class!

Long live the unity of the international Communist and Workers' movement!

Eternal condemnation to the assassins of the hundreds of thousands of Communists, workers, peasants and intelligentsia—the true sons of Indonesia!

Long live the Indonesian people and the Indonesian Revolution!

PROGRAM DISCUSSION

DANIEL RUBIN

How Program Can Be Strengthened

The second draft of our Program is a considerable improvement over the first, and the first was already a significant contribution. Undoubtedly the discussion and Special Convention will make further substantial improvements.

Among the improved sections I find those on state monopoly capitalism, the world setting, the anti-monopoly coalition and projected anti-monopoly government and its relation to working-class power and the possibility of peaceful transition, and the section on the Negro people. And there are others. But I also feel there are some fairly consistent departures from the main line, though less so than in the first draft.

The Working Class

The major instance is in the handling of the working class. In the main section on the working class (pp. III-5-III-16) we begin completely on the wrong footing. We should begin with an examination of why the class struggle is sharpening so much and what is its prospect. First we should examine the trends. The monopolies are pressing hard to hold the line on wages, while pushing speedup and striving to cut costs through mechanization and automation, and through runaway

plants here and abroad. They are resisting concessions much more sharply. They are fighting hard to prevent company-wide and industry-wide bargaining, to weaken and even destroy unions through prolonged strikes and anti-strike legislation, and to obstruct unionization and strikes particularly among public workers.

What are the underlying economic trends that cause this? Can we expect this policy to continue? A new mood is rapidly developing within the working class, a mood of militantly fighting for better wages and working conditions, against speedup and for adequate grievance machinery. It is a militancy that defies pleas to sacrifice for Vietnam (auto, copper) or public interest (teachers, garbage collectors). It breeds willingness to face long strikes, big fines and imprisonment to win demands and it is forging labor unity on a new fighting basis. It is a rank and file militancy that overturns established union leaderships which resist it, that reverses their contract recommendations or presses them into fighting for more substantial demands.

The factors in such trends are inflation and higher taxes, causing declining real wages while productivity and profits soar. Will

these factors continue to operate?

What are the trends among workers with respect to assuming leadership on the great social issues—peace, Negro freedom, independent political action? What are the prospects?

At present these questions are not really dealt with at all. Instead we begin with the question of “class partnership” and the reactionary role of the Meany leadership. Even the slight mention of rank-and-file action is hinged solely to the question of rebellion against reactionary union leaderships, not to the struggle against the bosses for the needs of the workers.

Starting this way, going on to other major weaknesses of the class that hold it back, and ending up with the historic role of the working class, but failing to deal with the class enemy and trends in the class struggle—all this results in an undesirable stance. It is the stance of the radical on the outside of the labor movement who knows from reading Marx what the role of the class is supposed to be and then lectures it from afar about what is holding it back and what it should do to straighten out and fly right. This treatment also presents an unnecessarily negative estimate of the level of the working class today and thereby feeds notions in the middle-class Left that “maybe some day the working class will play its role but not in the near future.”

When the trends in the class struggle and the vital demands of the workers are put first, then

the weaknesses and problems of the class can be put with the fullest sharpness without creating a problem. Then Meany and his policies are not an enemy in isolation but rather a reflection of ruling-class attacks on the interests of labor within its own ranks, a reflection that retards the healthy trend of militant struggle against monopoly.

I think the section on the historic role of the working class should come before that on its weakness and after the opening section proposed above. Then the section would begin with the problems the workers face and their growing struggle against monopoly which is leading in the direction of their playing their full historic role. This would then be defined, followed by the problems and dangers that must be overcome if the working class is fully to play this role.

While it is good in many respects, the section on the historic role of the working class needs strengthening. It is not made clear that the class has no choice but to struggle against monopoly because it is exploited, because it is the source of surplus value without which the system does not function. The workers, therefore, have decisive power in their hands, which is especially evident in strikes in basic industry. Production stops, new surplus value is not created, and the monopolists sooner or later must find a way to resume production for all else in the system to have any meaning. In other words, the arguments why the working class must strug-

gle to change the system and why it alone has the power to do so are not made strong enough.

The Decisive Sector

Our program should single out that section of the working class which is most decisive—workers in the basic industries. For some time many on the New Left did not agree that the working class was a class with any progressive potential, let alone the fundamental class for social progress. Now a section of the New Left has drawn more positive conclusions about the working class. However, it contends that a “new working class”—teachers and other college-graduated professional workers—has become the leading sector, on the grounds these groups have the training to think theoretically and in broad terms and to work out a strategy for social progress.

Then there are those who argue that the poorest sections of the working class are the most important since the better-off sectors will not be so militant and resolute in struggle for basic change since they have something to lose. Or a slight variant of this approach is that Negro, Puerto Rican and Mexican-American workers in the distributive and service industries are the key sector of the class because of their poverty and double oppression.

It is not the income level but the relationship to the means of production which determines one's class status. Nor is income level the most important criterion within the working class in determining what section is decisive. Here,

too, relationship to the means of production is the deciding factor. Workers in basic industry are engaged in producing the means of production on which the rest of the economy is dependent. A prolonged strike in steel eventually brings to a halt all those industries dependent on basic steel. A transportation strike can close off the whole economy. Auto workers are producers of the means of transportation without which complex products cannot be made and sold, and without which workers cannot get to work.

Such sections of the workers—and we have not recently studied scientifically exactly who they are—are in a position in the economy where their activities or lack of them have a tremendous impact on all else. They are the most powerful sector of the class and this position tends to breed an over-all class view—to see the whole class and not just some little segment of it. Production here is on a very large scale, involving both large numbers of workers and a high level of technology. The drive to keep costs down and to increase productivity is very great since these products are a basic cost in the production of finished products throughout the economy. As a result there is great intensity of labor, much job insecurity through constant introduction of new techniques, strong resistance to wage increases, and above all, just about the highest rate of exploitation in the economy. We should keep in mind here that tremendous new values are created in basic industry. Work-

ers in auto can see through published figures the rapidly widening gap in absolute and percentage terms between the dollar value of the products they turn out and their total wages.

It should also be noted that Negro workers are a very substantial proportion of the workers in auto, steel and many sectors of transport (often in the neighborhood of 50 per cent), while Mexican-American workers hold the same position in metal mining. We need to learn the precise national composition in basic industry as well as the distribution by industry of black workers.

In addition, these are strongly organized industries affording an additional potential of experience in organization and, therefore, of consistent power.

It should be kept in mind we are dealing with the objective position of different sections of the working class and not with the actual level of understanding and activity of any given section. We must determine the objective position in order to establish a fundamental direction over the long haul. Thereby, in our immediate responses to militant levels of struggle, now by this section of the class and tomorrow by another, we can contribute the directing of effort toward the most decisive sector in order to bring it fully and consistently into that role which it alone can play.

Today a strike of hospital workers may be a very militant struggle, involving extremely poor and oppressed workers. It may even be a key to reinvigorating the

whole class in the area. But we should see giving priority to such a struggle also as a means for us to reach the decisive sectors and to move them forward. The hospital workers, for all their militancy and poverty, just are not in a decisive position in the productive process. They do not produce new values and are not a direct source of surplus value but rather are paid from the surplus value created by productive workers.

The point is not to pose one section of the class against another as being worse off, more exploited, etc., and to argue that one section should therefore be ignored. Rather, a scientific study is necessary in order to point a long-haul direction, keys to move the whole class and with it the whole of the anti-monopoly forces. Again, this does not mean that some other section may not be more advanced than the decisive section at a given moment and that priority effort may not have to be placed there for the very sake of being able to move toward the decisive sector. However, I believe we have already reached a level where workers in auto, steel, metal-mining and key sectors of transport will yield nothing to any other section of the class in level of understanding and struggle.

Placing the question of the decisive section of the working class in our Program is necessary from several standpoints. We have already seen that just as the role of the class itself is the heart of our strategic line, the recognition of the decisive sector of the class is likewise of strategic importance.

Second, among the more recent forms of middle-class radicalism is the proposal to base strategy on certain peripheral sections of the class. And third, the first part of our Program, in presenting the problems created by automation, gives only those of Negro, Puerto Rican and Mexican-American workers, or of young and old workers (I-2 and I-7). While these sections face special problems, the white workers in many industries, including the basic industries, face very important problems arising from automation and other sources. We should not feed the idea that these workers have no significant problems and therefore cannot play a progressive role.

There are a number of other places where the role of workers, their exploitation and the problems they face are left out. On page I-9, among the factors which made our country relatively rich, we do not include the high rate of exploitation and the creativity of our workers. On page III-42, in listing our central objectives at this time, nothing is said of the working class and its specific needs. On page III-49, the absolute necessity of enhancing the role of the working class as the leading force in the anti-monopoly coalition is omitted. On page III-53, in the list of what we fight for, and on page IV-8, the end of exploitation and the implications of this as *the* most central question of socialism are absent.

The Fight Against Racism

In dealing with white chauvinism, there are several weaknesses.

Page III-10 sounds as if, because of labor's weaknesses or racism, sections of the Negro people are becoming anti-union and this is on the verge of becoming a mass phenomenon. The black community has rightfully leveled some sharp criticism at labor, and there are even isolated instances of anti-union or anti-strike action. But this is not the main form of danger at this time to black-white class solidarity. More dangerous is the weakening of the fighting capacity of white workers, with the possibility of diversion and certainly the danger of insufficient fighting unity in the face of tough struggles ahead.

There are great dangers before the working class because of the penetration of white chauvinist ideology. But this section seems to be drawn on the assumption that it is only possible to mobilize progressive forces to overcome these influences of racism on the basis of fear or disaster. As a result, only the backward trends among white workers are cited. The labor-Negro alliance is treated as completely non-existent, with the remaining aspects of friendly relations breaking up.

But there are also trends in the opposite direction, such as the strengthening of labor-Negro relations in Gary, where the steel union campaigned for the Negro mayoralty candidate Hatcher and produced the necessary margin of white working-class votes. Similar examples could be cited from the Cleveland mayoralty elections, from the Detroit uprising, from the struggles of the New York

brewery workers. It is important to cite them to overcome lack of initiative and struggle by whites because they feel overwhelmed by the task, because they lack confidence in white workers, etc. And it is important because the objective situation contains *both* the danger and the potential, with the outcome far from decided. Sometimes fear of disaster paralyzes rather than mobilizes, just as confidence in a positive outcome can sometimes lead to inactivity through complacency.

In the development of a coalition such as the labor-Negro alliance, there are two turning points of great importance. The first occurs when labor and the Negro people act more or less in a parallel direction rather than in hostility toward one another. The second occurs when each consciously recognizes a broad similarity of interests and sets up an organizational structure of a joint program of struggle. In between is a complex process of quantitative buildup toward the second turning point. It is an uneven process with obstacles which must be seen and tackled, principally the influence of white chauvinism in the ranks of white labor. On the whole it can be said we are past the first turning point but have a good way to go to reach the second. A much more precise estimate of where we are and of the various current trends needs to be made on the basis of serious study.

Middle-Class Radicalism

There is another unsound approach which emanates from

middle-class radical circles. Such people, not feeling the pressing problems of workers, tend to abstract their demands and goals from the concrete, vital needs of the workers, to view the issues as of little importance in themselves and merely as instruments to radicalize the masses.

They proceed solely from the abstractly placed objective of changing the system. The question for them is how to break the masses away from the Establishment and the main answer is to promote confrontation on questions that involve the premises of the system. Often their understanding of the essence of the system, what is wrong with it, why it has to be replaced and with what, is unclear. They tend to speak mainly in terms of a gigantic bureaucratic mechanism which determines how we lead our lives and thus curtails our freedom to do as we please. For some, the alternative is a socialism in which there will be no such bureaucratic mechanism (which they do not distinguish from the necessary administrative and organizational apparatus of the economy) and in which every individual will be free to do as he or she pleases, except for some local self-rule in the economy and social services.

Part of the process of breaking people away from the system, in this view, is to demonstrate the irrelevancy to the people's lives of the institutions that buttress the system, to show that they can get along without them. From this usually flows a denigration of the importance of legislative and elec-

toral struggle aimed at influencing or winning anything within the present legislative and executive governmental structures. Rather the effort is to show that they are instruments for deceiving masses into believing that they can get their needs without changing the system.

Much needs to be said concerning this line of reasoning. Here only a couple of points can be made. For us there should never be a separation between the fight to win every small improvement in the lives of the working masses and the fight for major improvements, for the power of decision-making on a local level, or for working-class state power. While middle-class intellectuals may proceed from the principle that everyone should participate in making all decisions affecting him, the starting point for the masses is different. In struggling to cut prices and taxes, to improve housing or schools, they are concerned with what is done on these issues and therefore with the need to put people in office who will do what they need.

The danger in looking *solely* for what will radicalize, what will show the irrelevance of bourgeois institutions and will call for decision-making in the hands of those affected, is that it leads to overlooking the other objective that always must go hand in hand with these—to fight, even if not always successfully, to meet the immediate needs of the people. Without this, it is impossible to lead masses anywhere for very long. They will question whether

you are sincerely on their side and whether you have the ability to win anything they need, today or tomorrow. This approach leads to abstract schemes and rigidity in forms of struggle and organization that quickly isolate one. Raising the level of understanding of workers begins with a firm grasp of what their needs are, on what issues they are ready to struggle.

For us the sharpening of the conflict should be a by product, not an aim in itself. We fight to mobilize and unify the people in struggle for their needs. If we are successful, the response of the monopolies will decide whether there is a sharpening. Masses do not take as an aim an abstract "sharpening of the conflict." Today we predict such a sharpening is in store because the demands of the masses on peace, freedom and economic issues are more urgent, while monopoly has less ability to maneuver and shows itself less willing to make concessions. But if we should make "sharpening" our aim and pursue this without regard to a serious fight to win the needs of the people, our sincerity might well be put in doubt.

It is correct to identify ourselves with those middle strata who rebel against a strangling bureaucracy. But we should not treat the bureaucracy as a thing in itself. It is a product and servant of monopoly capitalist interests. When it is separated from this class meaning, it feeds opposition to any organizational structure on the grounds that as such

it creates a group with an interest unto itself, separated from serving the needs of the people. Such a view undermines the fight to build people's organizations as something more than momentary structures. It also fails to see the different class meaning of the state, of economic planning and management, of party and public organization in the socialist countries (granting errors in the direction of bureaucracy). Therefore it paints the socialist countries as being no better than the capitalist countries.

There are a number of formulations in the Program that lead in this direction. Page III-40: "true interests . . . served by sharpening the conflict . . ." Page III-47: "premised on sharpening conflict" (ambiguous as to whether this refers to objective prediction or to our aim). Page III-50: "democratic self-rule in all aspects of national life" (this has two possible conflicting meanings). Page III-40: "asserting . . . independence of the bureaucratic structure" (but no class content is given). Page III-43: "power now resides in bureaucratic hands" (again no class content). Page VI-1: "Towering over this society is a vast bureaucratic power, foisted upon the nation by trustified capital, dominating the total life of the nation to ensure the continued rule of the exploiting class." (It is state monopoly capitalist power that towers over this society and dominates the total life of the nation, not some separate entity put in by monopoly to ensure its rule but apparently

capable of a separate existence.)

When we say (p. II-47) that "the ruling class attempts to confine the movement to conventional legislative lobbying and electoral contests" because these are channels where its domination is most secure and the people's power least visible, we feed the idea of parliamentary struggle. The ruling class does not always prefer "electoral contests" to other forms of struggle. This depends on whether some sensitive centers of its power are challenged, which may be done even in a regular contest—for example, by a Marcantonio or by certain current peace candidates. Masses in motion may express themselves in various ways, including electoral contests or mass lobbies to Washington. If by "conventional" lobbying is meant a few people visiting Congressmen in Washington, it may have some validity. But is the April lobby to Washington projected by the martyred Dr. King "conventional"? Was the 1963 Washington Freedom assembly "conventional"? Would it be "conventional" if the labor leadership were to organize a mass lobby against the war?

Forms and channels of struggle are tactical questions because they come up in many different settings in which they have varying content and meaning. No rigid conclusions as to "preference" should be drawn, though it may well be that because these particular forms are so closely related to state power, they are particularly sensitive areas of struggle for the ruling class.

The Party

The section on the Communist Party is not a bad section, but I think it is not good enough. There is argument as to why its existence is a good thing, primarily from the standpoint of the development of a science of society and the resulting ideological contributions. This part is particularly good for intellectuals. But the Party, as an absolute necessity in the struggles of today and for the winning of socialism, growing out of the nature and requirements of the class struggle, is not presented effectively. We must do more to answer in a positive way the arguments that a Communist Party is not needed, that some other organization or movement can do instead.

Besides stressing its ideological role, we have to stress the Party's role as the most consistent organizer of struggle for the needs of the people and relate the two. In this connection, in recounting the Party's contributions we stop with the fight against McCarthyism. But we need also to treat our role in this recent period to combat notions we are dead or irrelevant.

We say Left unity "may or may not take the form of one united party of socialism" (VI-7, VI-14). There must always be a Marxist-Leninist party. Either the united party of socialism will be Marxist-Leninist in content or it will be in addition to a Marxist-Leninist party, perhaps being a socialist electoral front such as exists in Chile. We should pose it in this

way, in relationship to the permanent existence of a Marxist-Leninist Party. Avoiding it in the name of not putting unnecessary obstacles in the way at this distance, can only feed an attitude of tentativeness toward the CP-USA and toward the absolute necessity always to build the existing Marxist-Leninist organization, among other things, as a pre-condition for any other group coming to Marxism-Leninism and for the development of some form of organizational unity.

Some Miscellaneous Points

Finally, several miscellaneous points.

1. The opening, by keeping the well-written wording of the first draft, now underestimates the crisis elements in the U.S. Later sections correct this.

2. Page II-5. We must add the mass opposition in the U.S. to the factors listed as to why Cuba exists and Vietnam is winning.

3. Page III-41. Radical reforms can alter the relationship of forces but not class relationships.

4. We need to look into the qualitative difference between radical reforms and other reforms. We cannot avoid this question as it has a bearing on strategic lines that are offered in place of ours and because it makes our anti-monopoly perspective more meaningful.

5. The qualitatively new level of struggle in the Mexican-American community should be indicated.

6. While dealing with the special character of the youth ques-

tion, the links to the class question and the question of the role of class divisions among youth needs to be strengthened.

7. On the possibility of peaceful transition, we should not speak in absolute terms of violence or no violence. There is violence now for which the ruling class is responsible, and we are likely to experience it in various forms and degrees from here on. Our aim, and at this distance it remains a possibility, is to prevent major violence, such as a civil war, from being precipitated by the ruling class. The paragraph beginning on line 14, page III-51, makes the possibility of a peaceful transition a hundred-to-one shot. Such pessimism is not warranted by any scientific judgment. If Lenin, in August 1917, could see the possibility of peaceful transition at least briefly, then we have no business using such formulations at this point, when the final determination cannot occur until very close to the event.

8. Page VI-5. Where we deal with positions on the Left with which we disagree, we tend to set up straw men or choose the poorest expression of a significant trend. Thus we fail to come to grips with related questions of great importance.

9. With regard to unity of the international Communist movement our estimate should be that such unity of equals is growing. We should speak of new forms of internationalism exemplified by the tremendous disinterested help from the socialist countries, the USSR in the first place, to devel-

oping countries and to the fighting Vietnamese people.

10. I hope that one of the first acts of a working-class state will be to outlaw racist and war propaganda, if such laws have not been previously enacted. We should not, for a short-sighted popularity, try to sell people the idea that we are absolute civil libertarians, standing for the right of anyone, at any time, or any place, to say or write anything. No one has ever successfully defended such a position.

11. On the Negro question, some estimate of the ghetto uprisings should be made and more should be said on such subjects as nationalism, nationhood, guerrilla warfare, what can and cannot be won under capitalism, and what demands flow from the position of the Negro people as a strongly marked, specially oppressed national minority as distinct from a nation. It seems to me the section should begin by putting the Negro question in the context of the struggle for progress of the whole country. Only in this way can its full centrality be understood.

* * *

I do not view the weaknesses of the present draft as being in the nature of a wrong strategic line, but rather as some weaknesses and inconsistencies in applying this line to all major areas of struggle. I could be happy with the present draft, though I hope some contribution for improvement made here, together with contributions from others, will produce an even better final draft.

Notes On the Aristocracy of Labor

It is interesting to note, and not without significance, that Lenin never used the phrase "aristocracy of labor" unaccompanied by quotation marks. The phrase was borrowed from Engels, and while Lenin used it liberally for illustration he seems not to have adopted it for himself. Generally, where Engels used the term "aristocracy of labor," Lenin used the term "upper strata" or "small upper strata."

Both men were grappling with the same problem: the existence of social chauvinism and opportunism in the leadership of the labor movement. Lenin, in his article "Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement," wrote that "opportunists (social chauvinists) are working together with the imperialist bourgeoisie *precisely* in the direction of creating an imperialist Europe on the backs of Africa and Asia. . . ." (*Collected Works*, Vol XIX, International Publishers, New York, 1942, p. 341.) Engels saw the problem as the increase of bourgeois influence in the labor movement; in Marx's eyes "the English labor leaders had sold themselves."

Clearly, for all three men the important thing was that some members of the working class were sharing in the bounty of imperialism. Complaining that England was tending to produce a bourgeois proletariat, Engels commented that "for a nation that ex-

ploits the whole world this is, of course, to a certain extent justifiable." (*Ibid.*, p. 343.)

Lenin said:

We have deliberately quoted the direct statements of Marx and Engels at length in order that the reader may study them *as a whole*. They must be studied; they are worth pondering over, because they reveal the *pivot* of the tactics in the labor movement that are dictated by objective conditions of the imperialist epoch. (*Ibid.*, p. 345.)

Bribing the "Upper Strata"

Marx and Engels didn't live to see the epoch of imperialism, but because England displayed at least two of the main features of imperialism as early as the middle of the 19th century, Lenin was able to say: "These two trends, even *two* parties in the present day labor movement, which so obviously parted ways all over the world in 1914-16, were *traced by Marx and Engels in England* for many *decades*. . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 343.)

Lenin took up the question of the "upper strata" in 1916 in an urgent polemic with the Kautskyans, representatives of one of the two trends that had "so obviously parted ways." From 1892, when Engels last expounded on the question, until 1916, the notion of an "aristocracy of labor" underwent considerable alteration. Or rather, it could be said, the "aristocracy of labor" went through a number

of changes.

In his article "Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International," Lenin noted:

The relatively "peaceful" character of the period between 1871 and 1914 first of all fostered opportunism as a *mood*, then as a *trend*, and finally, as a *group or stratum* of the labor bureaucracy and petty-bourgeois fellow travellers. (*Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, International Publishers, New York, 1942, p. 18.)

In his preface to the second edition of his *Conditions of the Working Class in England*, written in 1892, Engels wrote: "With the collapse of England's industrial monopoly the British working class will lose its privileged position. . . ." (Cited by Lenin, *Collected Works*, XIX, p. 345.) At one point Karl Kautsky, pointing out that England's industrial monopoly had long since been destroyed, sought thereby to justify collaboration and conciliation with opportunists. But Lenin was quick to point out that while England had lost its industrial monopoly, the colonial monopoly remained for some time. As long as England's colonial hegemony remained, he said, it was "*economically able to bribe the upper strata of its workers, devoting one or two hundred million francs a year for this purpose, because its super-profits probably amount to a billion.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 346.)

He went on to say:

Between 1848 and 1868, partly even later, England alone enjoyed a monopoly. *That is why opportun-*

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ism could be victorious there for decades. There were no other countries with very rich colonies, or with an industrial monopoly.

The last third of the nineteenth century witnessed the transition to the new imperialist epoch. Monopoly is enjoyed *not* in one, but in some, very few, Great Powers. . . . The monopoly of modern finance capital is furiously challenged; the epoch of imperialist wars has begun. Formerly, the working class of one country could be bribed and corrupted for decades. At the present time this is improbable perhaps even impossible. On the other hand, however, *every imperialist "Great" Power can and does bribe smaller* (compared with England in 1848-1868) strata of the "labor aristocracy." (*Ibid.*, p. 347.)

Lenin's observation, it should be noted, was not that the problem of opportunism declined as the world moved into the imperialist epoch. The tendency continued and as a matter of fact became more acute. What he observed was that the category "aristocracy of labor" would shrink. The loss of monopoly status made it possible to buy off only a small—yet not insignificant—section of the working class. He further observed that "the economic desertion of a stratum of the labor aristocracy to the side of the bourgeoisie has matured and become an accomplished fact." (*Ibid.*, p. 348.)

Opportunism, Lenin wrote, would not be the dominant trend throughout the imperialist epoch. Rather, the history of the labor movement unfolded two tendencies:

On the one hand, there is the

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tendency of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to convert a handful of the richest, privileged nations into "eternal" parasites on the body of the rest of mankind. . . . On the other hand, there is the tendency of the *masses*, who are more oppressed than formerly and who bear the brunt of the suffering caused by imperialist wars, to throw off that yoke, to overthrow the bourgeoisie. (*Ibid.*, pp. 347-348.)

Now, 66 years since Engels raised the question and 52 years since Lenin re-examined it, opportunism is being discussed once more. reference to the "aristocracy of labor" has reappeared. Unfortunately, the discussion has become quite confused.

Debate Over "Aristocracy of Labor"

One problem is the tendency of the discussants to pick the opposition's weakest arguments, or to do *indirect* ideological battle. Witness those who say: people who claim there is an aristocracy of labor give aid and comfort to the New Left which says that all labor is an aristocracy. Having thus connected the two, one then beats the New Left into a bloody heap and acts as if thereby the notion of an "aristocracy of labor" has been swept into the dustbin of history, when all that has really been accomplished is a travesty of Marxism.

Another problem is a tendency to confuse *opportunism* and *consciousness*. The subject under discussion is not the level of consciousness of the working class as a whole or of individual workers.

Certainly the influence of agents-aristocrats and the spread of opportunism and social chauvinism affect consciousness. But it would be a mistake to suggest that the level of consciousness at any given point is the indicator of the level of bribery and corruption (*e.g.*, if 60 per cent of the workers are racists then 60 per cent belong to the "privileged stratum.") A look at the state of Mississippi would quickly indicate the foolishness of such an assertion. Yet the practice persists. Witness the frequent conclusion that the "aristocracy of labor" is the "white working class" or (in the minds of the more charitable or cautious) at least most of it.

The same could be said of the notion that ownership of a house or an automobile earns one a listing in the "aristocracy of labor" or that one earns such a listing by voting for one or the other of the two bourgeois parties.

Another problem is that in trying to find the correct forms of activity for the present, empiricism triumphs over Marxism. The history of the working class is passed over as being creditable but largely irrelevant ("it doesn't tell us what to do today"). This tendency can perhaps be (and is) winked at or passed off as the impatience of youth. But the way the future of the class is dealt with cannot be treated in this way. What any phenomenon *was* is important, as is what it *is* and what it *can become*.

The tendency is to "discover" new "laws" in the present situation or to dig up old concepts like

the "aristocracy of labor" and posit them as the determinants of what *will* be. The trouble is that the conjuring up of the *idea* can become reality if it is transformed into activity—or better still, inactivity.

If today the working class is not fulfilling its historic mission on schedule, then the explanation is that imperialism is able to bribe it. Therefore as long as imperialism exists it will be bribed (barring a crisis). And therefore "we" should turn our attention elsewhere (to other classes or subclasses). A moment's thought will reveal that if the conscious elements—those expected to spur the development of consciousness—turn elsewhere, the effect will be that of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Opportunism and Imperialism

How then are we to examine the question of opportunism in the labor movement and collusion with U.S. imperialism and its foreign objectives? Not by denying that such a thing exists, nor by an ostrich-like stance that declares such opportunism to be solely a question of individual leaders who have been corrupted, without any reference to their economic and social base and without any historical meaning.

As an alternative we might try using the scientific method employed by Lenin 52 years ago. He said:

It would be absurd to regard the whole question as one of personalities. To explain the crisis of the whole movement it is necessary, firstly, to examine the economic sig-

nificance of a given policy; secondly, the ideas underlying it; and thirdly, its connection with the history of various trends in Socialism. (*Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.)

What, then, is the economic significance of collaboration of certain sectors of the labor movement with imperialism in the context of suppression of national liberation movements, of neo-colonialism and economic expansion abroad?

At the close of World War II, U.S. imperialism emerged with almost complete hegemony over the capitalist world. The immediate opponents in the war were defeated and prostrate (Germany, Italy, Japan). The more traditional rivals were war-torn, their economies a shambles (England, France, Holland and others).

Victor Perlo noted in 1951:

Western Europe is the most vital area in the Wall Street scheme of world domination. It contains well-developed industry and skilled labor, thereby becoming a potential source of great super-profits for the imperialists who can reduce the area to semi-colonial or colonial status. It is the key, wielded through the older empires as intermediaries, to domination of much of Africa and Asia.

Lenin long ago pointed out that imperialism strives to annex not only agricultural regions, but also highly industrial countries. With the world already divided, imperialists reach out for any kind of territory from which to derive superprofits. (*American Imperialism*, International Publishers, New York, 1951, p. 134.)

The superprofits were enormous

and were far more important than the "new economics" in producing postwar prosperity. Another factor also had a major effect: the construction and expansion of the huge armaments complex.

It is true that for some sections of U.S. monopoly the extensive penetration of the colonies produced not insignificant returns. But with the exception of oil superprofits, the importance (though not the potential) of this factor has been overemphasized.

The rebuilding of Europe is pictured in the popular histories as costly altruism. Actually it was nothing of the sort. The project caused riches to flow into the coffers of American capital. Widespread unemployment was warded off and a period of sustained "affluence" set in for millions of workers.

From the beginning of the cold war and the original collaboration on the Marshall Plan and the suppression of popular movements in Greece and Turkey, through the intricate web of CIA-type intrigues, Washington was able to secure the growing support of certain stratum of the labor bureaucracy. In the main, this support came from those associated with Gompersism, craftism and reactionary social democracy.

The class base through which opportunism moved is located mainly in the highest strata of the craft unions. Elsewhere, particularly in the major industrial unions, it was usually promoted by ruthless action by the leadership, including especially the expulsion of advanced workers

through government-sanctioned anti-Communism. It was through the craft unions that opportunism attained a degree of hegemony over the merged labor organization.

The war was hardly over when William Z. Foster wrote: "The AFL Executive Council's disruptive stand toward the World Federation of Trade Unions fits in perfectly with the program of imperialist expansion of the big American trusts to dominate the world." (*Problems of Organized Labor Today*, New Century Publishers, New York, 1946, p. 33.)

At the 1947 CIO Convention, Walter Reuther said:

... the thing that is weak about American foreign policy is not its idealism, is not its motives—those motives cannot be challenged and they need no defense from me—the weakness is in how it is being sold to the people of Europe. (Quoted by John Williamson, "The AFL-CIO Convention," *Political Affairs*, December 1947.)

This is not the place to recount the activities of certain strata of the trade union leadership in the period after the war. It is adequately told elsewhere, including George Morris's excellent *Labor and the CIA*. Suffice it to say that it is a story of active worldwide collaboration with U.S. imperialism. In Europe it took the form of preparing the way for U.S. economic penetration; in Asia, Africa and Latin America it sought to facilitate the penetration of neo-colonialism.

One important reason for looking at it historically is to re-

examine the idea that opportunism and support for U.S. imperialism inside labor's ranks can be explained away as the "Meany-Lovestone axis." The phrase actually explains nothing. It is as if Lenin were to condemn the "Kautsky-Hilferding axis."

Economic Base for Opportunism

What is being maintained here is that while the forces of opportunism and social chauvinism declined considerably with the coming of the epoch of imperialist war and while the nature of its social base (the "aristocracy of labor" or "small upper strata") underwent significant change, the period which followed World War II saw the opportunistic tendency reassert itself significantly in the bureaucracy of the American labor movement. Further, the period witnessed stepped-up penetration of bourgeois ideology into the labor movement and the development of a (temporarily) privileged stratum of the working class.

The above formulation, of course, does not name the opportunists and social chauvinists nor does it identify the upper "strata"—that is, what workers, what industries, what unions. To do the former is hardly necessary; to do the latter is difficult, not only because of the limitations of the writer's critical ability but also because such identifications are constantly in flux. For instance, what might have been said of the position (objectively) of highly skilled building trades workers during the late fifties could hardly be said today.

About as close as Engels ever came to precise identification was his reference, in a letter to H. Schluter in 1890, to "the old trade unions, the skilled laborers, the aristocracy of labor." He wrote: "There you see the difference: the new unions hold together; in the present strike, sailors (steamer) and firemen, lighterman and coal carters are all together, but of course not the engineers again, they are still working!" (*The Selected Correspondence of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, International Publishers, New York, 1942, p. 464.)

Why the paucity of precise identifications? The answer is simple. The formulations "aristocracy of labor" and "upper strata" were developed in polemics with the opportunists and misleaders of labor and those advocating collusion with them. The purpose was not to write off sections of the working class or the labor movement. It was not to say: these guys, the oilers, they are the reactionaries! It was to affirm that opportunism, as Lenin stated, is not simply a matter of personalities but also has economic significance. He wrote:

We cannot—nor can anybody else calculate what portion of the proletariat is following and will follow the social-chauvinists and opportunists. This will only be revealed by the struggle, it will be definitely decided only by the socialist revolution. (*Collected Works*, XIX, p. 351.)

Sharpening of Imperialist Contradictions

U.S. economic penetration of

Europe and the underdeveloped world began immediately at the close of the war. It developed during a period of almost complete hegemony. Although it reaped tremendous dividends from the beginning, the full impact did not come until near the end of the last decade (about 1957). It was only at this point that the great potential of the penetration was felt sharply by the national economies of Europe and in the U.S. The effect was twofold.

In Europe the effect has been to sharpen severely the contradictions within the imperialist world. Europe, once back on its feet, found itself confronted with almost insurmountable competition, not from the U.S., but from the American economic structure within its own borders. By now nearly 60 per cent of the new investments in English industry came from U.S. concerns, mostly with capital generated in Europe itself. In France, de Gaulle bases his policies on curtailing and weakening the U.S. position in Europe, while in West Germany debate rages over whether security rests in becoming even more an American fief or striking an independent course along with France.

In the U.S. the first effect was increased competition from the same sources encountered by the Europeans. Some American industries found it increasingly difficult to compete with U.S. branch industries based in Europe, thus the rush to follow suit. This has, of course, a major impact on the U.S. trade union movement. U.S.

workers are placed in the position of being in direct competition with the lower-priced labor markets of Europe. In steel, lumber, auto and scores of other industries, workers face the constant threat of runaway shops to Europe, a threat similar to that of runaway shops to the South. The South can be organized. Already organized European industries present a different problem—the uneven development of capitalism.

This situation brought the 81 Communist parties that met in 1960 to observe:

The uneven course of the development of capitalism is continuously changing the balance of forces between the imperialist countries. The narrower the sphere of imperialist domination, the stronger the antagonisms between the imperialist powers. The problem of markets has become more acute than ever. The new interstate organizations which were established under the slogan of "integration" actually lead to increased antagonisms and struggles between the imperialist countries. They are new forms of the division of the world capitalist market among the biggest capitalist combines of penetration by stronger imperialist states of the economies of their weaker partners. (Statement of the 81 Marxist-Leninist Parties," *Political Affairs*, January 1961.)

The above considerations led the parties to declare: "A new stage has begun in the development of the general crisis of capitalism." It is characterized by

... the growing instability of the entire world economic system of capitalism; the sharpening of the con-

traditions of capitalism resulting from the growth of state-monopoly capitalism and militarism; the increasing contradictions between monopolies and the interests of monopoly as a whole.

Shrinking Base For Opportunism

Another development which has directly affected American workers is intimately connected with foreign economic penetration. Advanced technology, spurred by the war and by military spending, has become a principal weapon for U.S. penetration abroad and has made a qualitative change in the exploitation of workers at home.

Gus Hall has written:

The explanation for the present-day U.S. reality lies in the heightened, greatly sharpened relations between these two classes [labor and capital]. The new, immediate factors propelling the objective reality can be stated in two words—automation and the policy of imperialist war. (*The Trade Union Movement: Review and Perspectives*, mimeographed draft, 1967.)

If automation is exacting a price from workers at the point of production and in the unemployed lines, imperialist adventures abroad have become a great economic burden on the workers and, indeed of other sectors (including a major section of the ruling class). *The war in Vietnam produces no superprofits*; it is, as Hall says, a “massive miscalculation.”

Thus the following changes have occurred in the situation in which the “aristocracy of labor” is being discussed:

1. There is a change in the nature of the epoch in which the discussion takes place.

2. There is an increasing challenge to U.S. hegemony, through competition from the Soviet Union and the growth of economic nationalism in Western Europe.

3. U.S. penetration abroad which once produced considerable superprofits and temporary benefit for a stratum of the working class has now become a threat of decisive importance to the class as a whole.

4. The negative effects of automation have sharpened the class struggle.

5. The cost of foreign military adventures has been shifted to the backs of the people as a whole, particularly the working class.

The effect of all this has been and will be the shrinking of the economic base for opportunism and social chauvinism.

Does this mean that these will disappear? Not at all; they will always be with us.

The change in the era and the situation should be a warning against a static view. It would be criminal folly to regard any but the most reactionary as lost from the faith forever (it would be equally foolish to suggest their return is inevitable because of “objective conditions”). Perhaps the classic illustration of this is the new situation in the auto industry. Foreign competition and the need for international bargaining and standards have drastically changed the situation in which the union operates. This is reflected in the shifting stance of

the leadership.

What, then, is the antidote for the presence of opportunism in the labor movement? It is, as in all things, the conscious activity of human beings, not the abstract promotion of formulations. Lenin wrote:

... it is our duty, therefore, if we wish to remain Socialists, to go down *lower* and *deeper*, to the real masses; this is the whole meaning and the whole content of the struggle against opportunism. Exposing the fact that opportunists and social chauvinists really betray and sell the interests of the masses, that they defend the *temporary* privileges (emphasis added—C.B.) of a minority of workers, that they are the conduits of bourgeois ideas and

influence, that in practice they are the allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we thereby teach the masses to understand their real political interests to fight for socialism and the revolution throughout the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices. (*Collected Works*, XIX, p. 351.)

If we are careful to remember that the tendency described by the term is real and exists to some extent always as a spawning ground for influences which must be combatted resolutely, then we should probably drop the use of the term “aristocracy of labor” and along with it “upper strata.” As the lines which will mark the brewing struggle become clearer, no doubt, a new phase will emerge.

One of the concepts that has come under challenge is that of leadership to masses—the idea of mass struggle, mass movements, as an indispensable key to social progress, to the achievement of socialism. There is a need to fight for the concept that a revolutionary movement is above all a mass movement. This is a Leninist—a working class—approach to struggle. It is the only path to victory.

There are all sorts of pressures against this concept. These pressures reflect a petty-bourgeois influence on the struggle for social progress. They all reflect the individualism, the lack of class cohesiveness of the middle class.

Gus Hall, *For A Meaningful Alternative*, p. 61

BOOK REVIEWS

TOM FOLEY

Nkrumah and the Congo

The "challenge of the Congo" is a challenge to create the political unity necessary for the victory of the African Revolution. The Congo is perhaps the most horrible example of how the imperialists exploit the divisions and disunity existing in the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. President Nkrumah of Ghana is a long-time advocate of African unity, one of Africa's outstanding statesmen, and was closely involved in the events he describes in his book.* He puts forward a carefully reasoned plea for African unity while presenting us with undoubtedly the most clear and lucid historical account to date of the incredibly complex Congo situation.

On June 30, 1960, the new Republic of the Congo became independent. There was an army mutiny almost immediately. The mutiny was exactly the pretext the Belgians needed to invade (or reinvade) the Congo. Moise Tshombe, backed by the huge mining firm Union Miniere du Haut-Katanga, declared the "secession" of Katanga province from the rest of the Congo. Union Miniere refused

to pay taxes to Premier Lumumba's government, throwing it into financial chaos, while it provided Tshombe's regime with 70 per cent of its budget.

Tshombe was able to pay white mercenaries to train and officer his army, to buy war material from West Germany, France, Belgium and Britain, and to launch a world-wide propaganda campaign in favor of his "pro-Western, anti-Communist" regime.

The legal Congo government appealed to the U.S. for aid. A UN "peace-keeping force" was sent to the Congo. Lumumba soon began to complain that the UN acted as if it were out to *replace* the Congolese government rather than protect it. Neither Lumumba nor Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold seem to have realized the utter ruthlessness of their real opponents, nor the extremely high stakes they were playing for. Both Lumumba and Hammarskjold might well have taken this advice Nkrumah offered to Lumumba in a 1960 letter:

Brother, we have been in the game for some time now and we know how to handle the imperialists and colonialists. The only colonialist or imperialist that I trust is a dead one. (P. 46.)

Unfortunately, Lumumba, too trusting, put himself in a situa-

NKRUMAH ON THE CONGO

tion where he could be kidnapped, taken to Katanga and brutally murdered in the presence of Tshombe. This crime, which shocked the world, led to the break between the socialist countries and Hammarskjold. Hammarskjold, also too trusting, flew to meet Tshombe at Ndola, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) on the night of September 17, 1961. His plane, taking its "landing instructions" from Ndola tower, lowered its wheels and landed in the thick forest nine miles west of the airport. All sixteen aboard, including Hammarskjold, were killed.

It is no exaggeration to say that the imperialists were playing for high stakes: the Congo is the so-called "free world's" biggest supplier of uranium, as well as the producer of 60 per cent of its cobalt, 70 per cent of its industrial diamonds, and nearly 10 per cent of its copper. The Congo forms a shield, protecting the racist, imperialist-dominated South of Africa from the more progressive North. Its potential as a base from which to dominate the rest of Africa, the Middle East, and even Europe was understood.

And obviously, this is not simply an affair of the nasty Belgians. Since 1945, the United States has bought up the entire production of Congolese uranium. United States interests are also involved in Union Miniere: 20 per cent of U.M. stock was held by the British firm, Tanganyika Concessions, Ltd. ("Tanks" for short), whose board of directors is loaded with Tory M.P.'s and other unsavory characters. In 1950, the U.S.

pressured Britain into selling 600,000 shares of "Tanks" to an American firm in the Rockefeller group. This was the price Britain had to pay for Marshall Plan aid.*

U.S. involvement in the Congo took place through three administrations—Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. Whatever else Kennedy may have done, at least he recognized the growing strength of African nationalism in Northern Rhodesia and the impending break-up of the Rhodesian Federation. This is probably the reason why Tshombe was dumped, without ceremony, in 1963, and Union Miniere began to pay taxes to the central Congo government. (Curiously, the press campaign in favor of Katanga came to an abrupt halt at the same time.)

But when Kennedy was assassinated, Lumumbist groups were beginning to gather strength in the Congo, especially in the area around Stanleyville. The new Johnson administration intervened again in force, using U.S. planes and Cuban exile pilots to bomb Stanleyville. Tshombe arrived back in the Congo, and to everyone's horror was proclaimed premier in violation of Congolese law. Mercenaries began their dirty work again, acting under instructions such as these: "Even if men, women and children come running to you, even if they fall on their knees before you, begging for mercy, don't hesitate. Just shoot. To kill." (P. 260.)

* R. Palme Dutt, *Problems of Contemporary History*, International Publishers, New York, 1963, pp. 68-69.

* Kwame Nkrumah, *The Challenge of the Congo: A Case Study of Foreign Pressures in an Independent State*, International Publishers, New York, 1967, 304 pp., \$7.50.

It seems unlikely that instructions such as the above were necessary for the ex-Wehrmacht officers, ex-Legionnaires, Afrikaner nationalists, and other scum who fought for Tshombe. For many of the mercenaries, Katanga was the last ditch of a battle they had started losing at Stalingrad, in Vietnam, in Algeria, and now here. It seems insane, but in this country, the mercenaries were called "freedom fighters" who were trying to save Western civilization, while Patrice Lumumba was described as a "mad dog," a "cannibal" and a "savage."

Moise Tshombe's premiership came to an abrupt end when he drew too close to General de Gaulle (who was becoming Washington's favorite *bete noir*). When Tshombe took the Congo into the French-sponsored Afro-Malagasy Common Organization (OCAM),

he was sacked and in November 1965, Col. Mobutu, that staunch anti-Communist, set up a military dictatorship. Recently, Tshombe began to seem more useful dead than alive, so he was betrayed to his enemies. Commenting on this, Tshombe said: "I was the victim of the CIA. . . . The imperialists could not tolerate the fact that I was received three times by General de Gaulle." (Los Angeles *Times*, July 22, 1967.) If anyone should know about CIA plots, it is Moise Tshombe.

President Nkrumah has made a convincing case for African unity in this book. He has also shown what powerful forces are fighting against that unity and how difficult of achievement it is likely to be. Difficult, unless we, here, and others all over the world play our part in the final victory.

The unity of Negro and white workers in the labor movement and a firm alliance between labor and the Negro freedom movement are the keys to progress in our country. This is equally true in both the North and South. Without this unity, labor can make no substantial gains organizationally, economically or politically. Without such unity the Negro freedom movement is fatally handicapped in the fight to put a permanent end to the system of jim crow.

Trade Union Resolution,
18th National Convention, C.P.U.S.A.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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