

# LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Weekly

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## PRAGUE 1984

By ALBERT GATES

PRAGUE, 1984—The long expected purge trials at Pankrac Prison is on. Fourteen outstanding veteran leaders of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, men prominent in the founding of this Stalinist state and government leaders for many years, are being prosecuted as enemies of their state, as saboteurs, spies, Trotskyites, Titoists and agents of the United States, Great Britain and France. Because eleven of the defendants are Jews, an international-imperialist-Western-Zionist plot has also been discovered. Among the diverse personalities who figure in this macabre affair are John Foster Dulles, Republican secretary of state-to-be in the Eisenhower cabinet; Konni Zilliacus, dissident member of the British Labor Party and erstwhile Stalinist fellow-traveler; Moshe Pijade, Tito's theoretician; Earl Browder, the pathetic ex-secretary of the American Stalinist Party; Mordecai Oren, representative of the pro-Stalinist Mapam of Israel; Anna Pauker, recently deposed Stalinist ruler of Roumania—the list continues to lengthen.

The amalgam created by the Stalinist rulers of Czechoslovakia is as mendacious as it is stupid. Its very incredibility means that it will only impress the ignorant and stupid outside the Iron Curtain. Within the border of Stalinland, it makes little difference. The police regimes control all the means of information. There the long-suffering people are subjected to unremitting bureaucratic propaganda, the bureaucrats trusting that of all the lies turned out for mass consumption, some will stick, and that if they do not stick, then at least the suffering peoples will nevertheless justifiably hold these ex-leaders responsible, in part at least, for their gray existence.

In this land, the defendants accused of political crimes are then convicted, since accusation and guilt are one and the same thing. Who are they?

Rudolph Slansky, former secretary-general of the Stalinist Party.

Vlado Clementis, former foreign minister.

Otto Sling, former party secretary in the city of Brno.

Bedrich Geminder, "mystery man," known also as the party's "gray eminence."

Arthur London, former deputy foreign minister.

Lt. Gen. Bedrich Reicin, former deputy defense minister, Moscow-trained intelligence man.

Josef Frank, former deputy party secretary under Slansky.

Otto Fischel, former deputy finance minister.

Dr. Evzen Loebel, former deputy minister of foreign trade.

Ludvik Frejka, economic advisor to the government.

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## UN Debate on Korea PWs Casts Light on War Aims

By GORDON HASKELL

The diplomatic maneuvers around the Korean war have reached a new stage of intensity. The longing of hundreds of millions of people all over the world to put an end to the slaughter there; the fear shared by the peoples and many of their governments that unless the war is ended it is likely to engulf the world; these have now concentrated themselves in a major effort to solve the prisoner of war problem which seems the last barrier to a truce in Korea.

The assumption that the prisoner of war question is the key to ending the war is a most doubtful one. But if, for the moment, that assumption is accepted, the problem is difficult, but not insoluble.

The United States government has taken the position that it will refuse to return to the Stalinists some 50,000 or 60,000 prisoners of war who have declared that they will resist repatriation to North Korea or China. This principle has been accepted by all the governments in

the United Nations outside the Stalinist bloc. The Stalinist governments, on the other hands, insist that all prisoners of war be exchanged as a condition for a truce, regardless of whether or not they want to be turned over to "their own" side.

### GENEVA CONVENTION

The Stalinists base their demand on the provisions of the Geneva Convention on the return of prisoners of war, although their own governments refused to participate in it. This convention

provides that at the end of hostilities, each government is obliged to repatriate all prisoners of war. Thus they have a formal point in international law on their side. Yet two factors indicate the complete cynicism of the Russian government's stand on the matter. First is the fact that to this day there are tens if not hundreds of thousands of German and Japanese prisoners of the war which ended in 1945 who have not been returned to their homes by the Rus-

(Continued on page 5)

## WILLIAM GREEN—AND THE AFL

By BEN HALL

William Green, like Philip Murray who died two weeks before him, was born in a miner's family; he worked in the mines and was a member of the United Mine Workers Union; he became its secretary-treasurer and later was elected president of the American Federation of Labor as the candidate of John L. Lewis and the miners' union.

At the time of his death he had lost his membership in the miners' union; the UMW forced him out because of his opposition to the founding of the CIO. To hold the top AFL post he needed a card in some other union; and so, he became an honorary member of the Musicians Union. This change of affiliation best expresses the course of his career.

It was Green's sad fate to be elevated to the presidency of the AFL just as its weaknesses were to be most glaringly exposed. He wielded no direct power or influence in any international union and owed his high post to the fact that he served as public spokesman for others. He finally threw in his lot with the most conservative section of the labor officialdom, the leaders of the old line craft unions.

The AFL was founded as a



WILLIAM GREEN

loose foundation of highly centralized craft unions which organized a thin stratum of American workers, the highly skilled tradesmen. Its guiding philosophy was based upon a preoccupation with

Before industry was dominated by giant industrial combines, this philosophy was adequate to create and hold together a union movement. But it proved hopelessly impotent when mass production industries arose in steel, auto, rubber, oil and electricity, drawing millions upon millions of unskilled and semi-skilled workers into the factories.

At best, the AFL could continue for a time to protect its own membership as industry became centralized and trustified, only by timidly avoiding any provocation to the big corporations and leaving the mass of workers disorganized and defenseless. Its craft structure made it impossible to organize modern industry. Where the mass production workers had to unify into one solid industrial union which welded all crafts and skills into a single united front, the AFL proposed to divide them into innumerable squabbling crafts and even to exclude some workers entirely.

### WEAK PHILOSOPHY

Green became president of the AFL in 1924, only a few years before the labor movement was to face the critical days of the great depression. By 1929, it entered a stage of precarious weakness, some of its most important sectors, the industrial and semi-industrial unions, faced with possible extermination. In the crisis of 1929, and through the early thirties and even in the first period of recovery, the

AFL with its outmoded philosophy was incapable of rescuing the labor movement. It was not the AFL which led labor out of its mortal crisis, but the already existing unions of mass production workers. And they had to bypass the AFL, split from it and found a new federation of labor... the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

In the days when the newly born industrial unions in steel, auto and rubber were fighting for their lives, the craft policies of the AFL became, to put it mildly, a barrier to the further progress of American unionism. Green's union, the United Mine Workers, left the AFL to help found the CIO. But Green stayed behind to ornament the AFL as its president. He remained rooted in the past while the labor movement surged forward. It was his unfortunate distinction to become the foremost symbol of everything that was futile and outlived in the labor movement and even in this, he was merely the public face for others.

### OLD AFL VANISHING

The AFL has to find a new president but nobody could perpetuate what Green symbolized. The old AFL ideology is vanishing. Inch by inch it has been forced to retreat from time-worn ideological outposts. It has been compelled to modify its structure somewhat to allow an influx of unskilled and semi-skilled, if only

(Continued on page 2)

# International Harvester Breaks FE Strike

By PETE JARMS  
CHICAGO, Nov. 22—The whole labor movement received a blow in the strike settlement between the International Harvester Company and the Farm Equipment Division of the United Electrical Workers (FE-UE). The contract was signed on Saturday, November 15, and ratified the next day by all the FE-UE locals.

It would be hard to call the contract signed a "settlement." It would be better to classify it as a complete capitulation of the Stalinist controlled union to the company's terms.

The 87-day strike ended amidst great confusion. It was obvious that something was in the wind when a newspaper ad published by FE publicly withdrew its original 122 demands, and asked for an agreement based on the old contract. But no one expected such a fast capitulation, not even the local leaders of FE. Leaflets were passed out on the Northwest side in Chicago calling for support of the strike the day after the strike was over. A letter mailed on Saturday with the date of November 17 was sent out by one of the local unions' publicity department analyzing the company's miserable offer. The union meanwhile had accepted the entire package.

Local union presidents and members of the local shop committees were excluded from the room where the bargaining was taking place in order to allow the Stalinists to carry out their capitulation without interference.

James Matles of the national office of UE came in to the negotiations to bring it to an early end. He was accompanied by Ernie de Maio, district director. Matles is the darling of the General Electric Company, and is famous for his part in undercutting the General Motors 1946 strike when he broke an agreement to hold firm with the UAW-CIO.

### ON ANY TERMS

Matles brought with him the decision to end the strike on any terms whatsoever. He motivated the order by stating that the strike was lost anyway, and the union had to be saved. Harvester had succeeded in their back to work movement.

As one leaflet explained, "It became more and more clear in the final days of the strike, that the company wanted to drive us back to work without a contract, with the union destroyed. Under such circumstances, despite the justice of union demands, it would have been membership to a starve-out operation and eventual return to work without a contract" (McCormick Works, Local 108, November 17). And as Locals 101 and 182 of Tractor Works stated on the same

day: "For 12 long weeks our strikers withstood the hardships, the blacklists, the threats and the lies in the press. When it became clear that we did not have this unity and the strength to carry the fight on longer, the IH Conference Board made the wise decision of saving the UNION."

In order to attempt to soften the blow of this strike loss the FE is claiming that the new contract in essence is the same as the Harvester UAW-CIO and AFL contracts. They repeat this over and over.

There is no resemblance between the new FE contract and the UAW and AFL contracts. Harvester deals with one large AFL local and 29 UAW-CIO local unions.

### MILITANTS ARE OUT

During the strike the company discharged anyone involved in so-called "violence" on the picket line. There were fifty-one of these people, including many local union presidents, shop committeemen, and executive board members. For example the president, and entire shop committee of the Louisville local was fired.

As a condition of settlement FE signed away all these workers' jobs and seniority, and they will not be rehired by the company.

Can anyone explain this one away? The consequence of this part of the settlement will only be known in the future, when and if FE ever strikes again. If the best militants have no protection then who will be willing to be aggressive on the picket line? The company hid behind the Taft-Hartley Act on this one, but why accept those conditions? In 1948, the first UAW-CIO chain-wide strike faced the same issue. Six people had been discharged for "violence" on the picket line. Dick Gasser, international vice president, told the company that the strike would go on for years before he personally would agree to anyone losing their seniority because of a strike. The company backed down and reinstated the people.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE  
The cornerstone of any union is the right of the union to police the contract and effectively protect the members' conditions in the shop. In the new FE contract this is impossible. The role of the stewards and the shop committeemen have been stripped completely. Grievance procedure is now on a two-step basis. The worker tells his complaint to the foreman. If it is not settled there he can call his steward. The steward writes the grievance, and it goes on to a management meeting where the shop committee presents the grievance.

As the company brags in a full page newspaper ad: "The new con-

tract should make it possible to bring to employees and the company the peace which both desire. One reason is that, in the future, union stewards and committeemen will no longer be paid for time spent roaming the plants, investigating grievances and stirring up trouble. Hereafter they will be paid only for time actually spent in meetings with management."

The company does not pay for investigating grievances, there are no review meetings on discharge cases, the union must wait for the weekly meeting between the company and the shop committee. The shop committee has one function, they are to meet with a management committee on grievances, without the right to investigate these grievances. The worst feature is that the workers are encouraged to deal exclusively with their foremen.

As the company states in its jubilant letter to the employees: "Under the new grievance procedure, you have a right to take up any grievance directly with your foreman, without any union steward being present unless you wish him to be." The practical result of this will be that the union will be eliminated from the grievance procedure. The worker will hesitate to approach his foreman on a problem, and secondly, if he does, the foreman will "settle" the issue, many times by talking the worker out of his complaint.

The UAW and AFL contract gives the right to the worker to tell his steward (one in each department) that he has a problem and have the steward take the matter up directly with the foreman. The steward has the right to consult with his shop committeeman on any grievance. Both the stewards and the committeemen can investigate any grievance. The chairman of the shop committee, shop committeeman and the departmental steward all meet in a second step with the superintendent after the grievance is answered by the foreman. If the grievance is not settled it moves up to a top management meeting. Either the chairman of the shop committee or the shop committeeman can investigate the case before the management meeting. On any discharge case an immediate hearing is held with three union representatives present. All above procedure is paid by the company. FE had all this before—now none of this is allowed.

### CHECK OF ESCAPE

The company also obtained a twenty-day escape clause from the check off to start as soon as the strike was over. This runs to December 6. The company is advertising in the papers, and foremen are telling the workers how to escape the check off. Letters mailed to their homes are congratulating the scabs, and warning the union men that they will be discharged if they "attempt to get even." They spell out in minute detail how to get off the check off. Later there will be a time to completely escape from the union, etc., etc.

The union gave up some impor-

tant parts of the contract protecting piece workers. One was the right of the worker to go home if reassigned to a job with a bad price. This was one of the best weapons the workers had.

FE-UE did not obtain the right to strike on piece work prices. This exists in all five-year contracts, and is the warning to employers against speed up and wage cutting. This was the weapon used by the UAW-CIO Melrose Park, Illinois, local to obtain 800 piece work price adjustments, raise day work classifications, and reinstate two discharged employees. The UAW Local 6 strike began before the FE strike and faced the same problems. The foremen began their visits to the homes at this plant in an attempt to recruit scabs, but were unsuccessful. Provocations on the picket line were a daily occurrence, but the local union held firm.

Now the FE has an absolute no strike clause. In addition, it has lost a number of rights for union officers which are necessary for the efficient conduct of business, as well as other standard contractual provisions.

### HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

There were many factors contributing to FE's defeat. The company for the first time did not sit idly by and only resort to letter writing. They used every known trick to recruit scabs. But even then FE would not have lost if it had been able to maintain the solidarity of the strike. The isolation of FE from the main body of the labor movement was the decisive factor. The independent United Mine Workers can take on a struggle and win for two reasons: one, nobody scabs; and secondly, all the coal mines are shut down tight. FE can take down only a part of International Harvester.

About everything there is in the book was thrown at FE. First came a letter from the company attacking the union leadership. Then the Un-American Committee cited two prominent FE leaders, and then postponed their subpoena because of the strike after the damage had been done. The foremen visited homes, encouraging workers to come back to work. The police in Chicago and the small towns were particularly vicious. Injunctions were obtained limiting the size of picket lines. The death of a scab was played up, and a union leader was arrested for his murder. Added to all this was the years of fighting while still in CIO as to whether the UAW or FE should have bargaining rights in Harvester. All the jurisdictional disputes, all the twists and turns of the leaders as they followed the Communist Party line, left their mark.

As the workers returned to work in numbers the company's ads became more arrogant. Long columns advertised to come to work at Harvester. "Why wait until the strike is over?" When the back to work movement reached 18 per cent the CP threw in the sponge. The local leaders did not want to accept company terms, the CP shoved acceptance down the militants' throats.

FE FORMULA BACKFIRES  
Since 1946, the UAW had supplanted FE as the pace setter for Harvester. In the 1948 contract fight, the FE sat on the side lines and took the concessions the UAW won. In 1950 the UAW struck for 77 days and won a terrific victory. FE was offered the same settlement but because of their line on five-year contracts and the escalator clause they rejected the offer.

The FE formula had been: big hullabaloo at contract opening time. New demands. Work up a strike pitch, take the workers out for a couple of weeks and then settle for the old contract plus the national pattern. This contributed to the idea in the minds of FE workers that this year it would be a short strike as in the past.

This negotiation followed the same pattern: 122 demands, big fever, shut the plant down. The end, however, was tragically different. The FE withdrew their 122 demands and asked for their old contract, but the company, smelling victory, would not retreat from their counter-offer.

### WHAT NEXT?

From all reports on the industry the farm equipment manufacturers show a decline in their market. The high post-war production figures cannot be maintained. Their profit position is in danger. The Wall Street Journal has reported a projected huge drop in sales. The Harvester Company's victory will embolden the rest of the industry. All this is in UAW territory.

There was much sentiment in the UAW to come to the aid of FE. The question was how. No one wanted to see an arrogant manufacturer beat a union, not even a Stalinist one. They hesitated because of past differences. This was a mistake. Something should have been done.

For the victory of Harvester will cause a lot of trouble for the UAW. The 1955 contract demands of this company and the rest of the industry may well be patterned after the Harvester FE contract. The UAW contracts in the farm equipment field are superior (except for working piece work) to those in the auto industry. The UAW is determined to improve the General Motors, Ford and Chrysler contracts. This defeat will not aid them. The unions must build their strength and prepare for a showdown.

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# BLP Left Wing Protests Ban on Party Factions

During the latter part of October, the Parliamentary Labor Party passed a resolution which had as its purpose the harassment of the "Bevanites" in England. It was hailed by the conservative and even liberal press of this country as a great victory for the Attlee wing of the party. The resolution itself read as follows:

"This Parliamentary Labor Party accepts and endorses the statement of the leader of the Party, and calls for the immediate abandonment of all group organizations within the Party, other than those officially recognized. It further calls on all members to refrain from making attacks on one another either in the House, the Press, or on the platform."

For the information of the readers of LABOR ACTION we reprint here a statement issued by a group of Bevanite members of Parliament after this resolution was adopted. It appeared in the October 31 issue of *Tribune*:

Last week the Parliamentary Labor Party passed a resolution calling "for the immediate abandonment of all group organizations within the Party other than those officially recognized."

We deplore this resolution for three reasons. It is illiberal. It is based on allegations which are not true. It is prejudicial to party unity.

(1) It is illiberal. Such a resolution is unprecedented in the history of Parliament. To demand

### BOOKS RECEIVED

Received from New American Library, publishers of Signet and Mentor pocket books, published November 17 and 29:

*A Documentary History of the United States*, by Richard D. Heffner. Mentor, 288 pages, 35¢.

*Those Devils in Baggy Pants*, by Ross S. Carter. Signet, 192 pages, 25¢.

*Love in a Dry Season*, by Shelby Foote. Signet, 192 pages, 25¢.

*The Long November*, by James Benson Nablo. Signet, 160 pages, 25¢.

*Lie Down in Darkness*, by William Styron. A Signet double volume, 511 pages, 50¢.

*The Double Door*, by Theodore Keogh. Signet, 144 pages, 25¢.

*The Six-Gun Kid*, by William MacLeod Raine. Signet, 160 pages, 25¢.

*The Lonely Hearts Murders*, by Wenzell Brown. Signet, 144 pages, 25¢.

*The Sky Is Red*, by Giuseppe Berto. Signet Giant, 320 pages, 35¢.

*New World Writing #2*. Mentor, 352 pages, 50¢.

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### LONDON LETTER

## BEVAN GAINS MP VOTES

By DAVID ALEXANDER

LONDON, Nov. 18—It was announced last week that in the elections for the Executive of the Parliamentary Labor Party (or "shadow cabinet") Aneurin Bevan received 82 out of 192 votes cast for vice-chairman.

Despite what has often been said to the contrary, Mr. Bevan does not, at present, want to question Clement Attlee's leadership of the Labor Party. He does not feel as yet that he has enough support among the trade unions, although the Morecambe conference demonstrated his success with the Labor Party itself.

### SHARE CONTROL

However, the success of the Bevanites led them rightly to claim a share in the control of the real machinery of power—the Parliamentary Party. Bevan therefore stood for vice-chairman against Herbert Morrison, the hero of the right wing.

No one thought that the former would be elected, but the majority were extremely surprised to see that in a secret ballot Bevan could poll 82 votes. This means that 82 out of the 295 Labor Members of Parliament were prepared to support his policy. This is a considerably greater number than have ever come out for him before.

It may be remembered that in a previous London Letter I pointed to the necessity of the left wing gaining influence in the trade unions and the Parliamentary Party. This is a step in the latter direction.

The importance which the Labor Party attaches to the internal struggle has been intensified by their expectation of being returned to power in the next election.

## Senate Bares Negro Plight

Both the economic and social situation of Negroes has greatly improved in the United States during the past ten years. This has been a result of the need for manpower during the war and the permanent war economy, the struggle of the Negroes themselves for equality, and the pressures exerted by sections of the labor movement and liberal organizations.

During a period of full employment Negroes, particularly in the North, have been able not only to get jobs, but to get them in industries and in positions in which they never had them before. Yet the fact remains that on the average the income of Negroes is still far lower than that of the white population.

This was clearly demonstrated in a study prepared for the Senate subcommittee on Labor and Labor-Management Relations a summary of which appeared in the November 21 issue of the *New York Times*.

During 1950, according to this study, Negro wage and salary workers earned an average of about \$1,300 per year, or about 52 per cent of the average for white workers. In 1939, while the depression was still on, the average for Negroes was about \$400, or less than 40 per cent of the white average.

On family earnings the study contained figures comparing the relative standings going back only to 1945. There was an actual decline in the position of Negro families compared to whites between 1945 and 1950, although the income of both increased. Negro families averaged \$1,869 in 1950, or 54 per cent of the average income of white families which was \$3,445. In 1945, the Negro families' average was \$1,538, or nearly 57 per cent of the \$2,718 for white families.

Although the report showed that Negroes have made considerable gains in the kinds of jobs to which they have access, it is clear that the vast majority are still restricted to lower-paying and less skilled jobs than are their white brothers. The proportion of employed Negro men engaged in professional occupations remained at 2 per cent, while the proportion of Negro women in such positions rose to more than 6 per cent by 1952, largely because of the increased employment of Negro school teachers.

### SCHOOL ENROLLMENT UP

The percentage of Negroes enrolled in schools increased appreciably between 1940 and 1950, though the *Times* summary does not give the figures. About 15 per cent of all Negroes be-

between the ages of 18 and 24 were enrolled in schools in 1950, while ten years earlier it was 9 per cent. Further, the study shows that in 1950 Negroes aged 25 and over had completed an average of seven years in school which is nearly three years less than the average for whites. This represents an increase since 1940 of a year or more for both groups. The highest increase, 1.3 years, occurred among Negro women.

One of the most damning statistics which bears witness to the continuing economic and social discrimination against the Negroes is that of life expectancy. About thirty years ago the life expectancy of a Negro boy at birth was 47 years, or nine years less than the 56 years for a white boy of that time. By 1950 the life expectancy of a Negro boy had increased to 59 years, while that of the white boy had gone up to 66 years.

These figures show how far we still have to go in this country before we can even claim to be approaching equality between the races. It is doubly important to emphasize them today, when it has become standard procedure to point to the gains made in answer to the Stalinist exploitation of the discrimination issue, rather than to the distance which still must be travelled.

tion. Last week, however, the situation took a new turn.

At the election at High Wycombe, a Conservative won with a greater majority than at the last general election. Immediately, the right wing ascribed this to the country's fear of Bevan, while the left wing said that the defeat was due to his policy not having been put over forcibly enough.

### A NEW FACTOR

Actually, a new factor has emerged in the struggle. There is quite a strong possibility that a temporary balance of the country's economy will be brought about under Conservative rule. For reasons which are patently obvious to socialists, the present government cannot settle the fundamental problems of capitalism. But by a policy of deflation and cutting imports they managed to achieve last month not only an 82 million dollar surplus in trade, but also a gold surplus with the European payments Union.

There has been concurrently a shift of trade in favor of manufactured goods producers. This coupled with deflation, a fall in imports, a fall in exports, and 400,000 unemployed has secured a balance of payments under the Tory government.

This puts the right wing of the Labor Party in a dilemma. It does not want to go any farther with socialist policies and has not felt really deeply the long-term inefficiency of deflation as an economic weapon. The left wing, however, insisting on a greater measure of nationalization and socialization, has not had the wind taken out of its sails. Insofar as the right wing depends for its propaganda on the Conservative's inefficient handling of the capitalist system, they are rather at a loss for words when the Tories gain a temporary amelioration.

At the same time, the period out of office is forcing the whole labor movement to redefine its views toward the basic principles and aims of socialism. Superimposed on this rethinking in both wings of the labor movement is the determination not to allow the Conservatives to turn back the pages of history.

The whole Labor Party has made quite clear its unshakable determination to re-nationalize both road transport and steel which the Tories are on the point of selling to private interests. The problem of the socialist left is to make clear that it wants more than just the reestablishment of the status quo before the Labor Party was ousted from office. Socialism can only exist if it is a dynamic movement. We must not allow it to degenerate into a "stand in" for an inefficient or ill capitalist government.

[Although David Alexander's interpretation of the meaning of the 82 votes cast for Bevan for vice-chairman of the Parliamentary Labor Party is one which is held rather widely, perhaps it should be pointed out that this vote could have a different meaning. It is quite possible that a number of votes were cast for him not because of agreement with his policy, but out of the consideration that a wing of the party which had shown its strength at the Morecambe conference is entitled to representation in the "shadow cabinet."—Ed.]

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Socialist Workers Party says "YES" Independent Socialist League says "NO"

Friday, December 5 8 PM

BARRINGTON HALL

2315 Dwight Way, Berkeley, Calif.

## Green —

(Continued from page 1)

to compete with the CIO. It has entered the broad political battleground by the formation of its Labor's League for Political Education, AFL counterpart of the CIO's Political Action Committee. Its last convention underlined the steady process of evolution by endorsing the Democratic candidate for president.

And now, if possibilities exist for a reunification of the AFL and CIO, it is not because their respective presidents are gone and old personal frictions with them. It is because the living facts of the class struggle, which split them asunder some fifteen years ago, are now pushing them together for self-defense.

# The ISL Program in Brief

The Independent Socialist League stands for socialist democracy and against the two systems of exploitation which now divide the world: capitalism and Stalinism.

Capitalism cannot be reformed or liberalized, by any Fair Deal or other deal, so as to give the people freedom, abundance, security or peace. It must be abolished and replaced by a new social system, in which the people own and control the basic sectors of the economy, democratically controlling their own economic and political destinies.

Stalinism, in Russia and wherever it holds power, is a brutal totalitarianism—a new form of exploitation. Its agents in every country, the Communist Parties, are unrelenting enemies of socialism and have nothing in common with socialism—which cannot exist without effective democratic control by the people.

These two camps of capitalism and Stalinism are today at each other's throats in a worldwide imperialist rivalry for domination. This struggle can only lead to the most frightful war in history so long as the people leave the capitalist and Stalinist rulers in power. Independent Socialism stands for building and strengthening the Third Camp of the people against both war blocs.

The ISL, as a Marxist movement, looks to the working class and its ever-present struggle as the basic progressive force in society. The ISL is organized to spread the ideas of socialism in the labor movement and among all other sections of the people.

At the same time, Independent Socialists participate actively in every struggle to better the people's lot now—such as the fight for higher living standards, against Jim Crow and anti-Semitism, in defense of civil liberties and the trade-union movement. We seek to join together with all other militants in the labor movement as a left force working for the formation of an independent labor party and other progressive policies.

The fight for democracy and the fight for socialism are inseparable. There can be no lasting and genuine democracy without socialism, and there can be no socialism without democracy. To enroll under this banner, join the Independent Socialist League!

## INTERESTED? Get Acquainted

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# FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

By LARRY O'CONNOR

The recent residential campaign gave every thinking American an exceptional chance to experience for himself what it means to live in a country with a "free press." No governmental agency, no official propaganda bureau, no public censor dictated the "line" which the great newspapers, and magazines should follow during the campaign. The newspaper writers, we are asked to believe, wrote the news as they saw it . . . and the editorial departments published it as they saw fit. The total effect turned out, just by chance, to be devastating for the Democratic Party and its candidates, and highly gratifying for the Republicans.

In its November 25 issue the magazine *The Reporter* had an excellent series of articles which could be summarized under the title of one of them "What's Wrong With the Press?" It is a pretty thorough indictment of any pretence that may still exist that in their news columns American papers are "impartial," while they permit themselves their right to express the views of their owners on the editorial pages.

### IMPARTIAL REPORTING

Throughout the campaign the overwhelming majority of the newspapers were for Eisenhower. Most of them consistently buried or killed news favorable to the Democratic candidate, or even which reported what they were saying, and just as consistently played up every banality which issued from Eisenhower's mouth as if it were a statement of major national significance. Even when reporters sent in stories which might reflect a favorable light on the Democratic campaign (such as reports on large crowds flocking to hear Stevenson, or the replies of the men who were slandered by McCarthy) these were usually hacked to pieces by the copy desks, and the mutilated corpses were then quietly laid to rest in the back pages where only the most diligent readers could ferret them out.

In discussing the reasons for the one-sided presentation of the campaign, *The Reporter* goes to some lengths to demonstrate that the American newspapers are not a "bought press." That is, that neither the big advertising agencies who guide the flow of revenue-producing ads from the great corporations to the periodicals, nor the great corporations themselves who are the source of the basic advertising revenues of the publishing industry directly dictate policy. It proudly points out that "In most European nations the local counterparts of our General Motors or Westinghouse directly own or subsidize publications in order to increase their bargaining power with their government. There is nothing of this kind in our country, where the advertising agencies, by acting as buffers between big business and the publications, are a guarantee of the freedom of the press. They are, however, not at all free from professional prejudice—most dangerous of all, the prejudice that the influence they exert on buying habits also fits them to mold thinking habits.

It is quite probable that in the recent campaign no major daily paper or magazine was forced to work for Eisenhower by threats from advertising agencies or corporations to take their business elsewhere. Most of their owners are big capitalists in their own right, and just naturally think the way their brothers in the ad agencies and behind the corporation desks think. And the few exceptions who jumped over the fence are too well established and too powerful to be shoved around.

### CAPITAL FOR SURVIVAL

Though this is probably true of the large established publications, it is not at all true of the smaller and weaker ones. For a daily newspaper or a new magazine to have a chance of survival in America, it requires a large amount of capital backing. And in most cases, it must get advertising very

early in its career and in large amounts if it is to survive. Although the capital requirement itself is a pretty good guarantee that no one who does not already think like a businessman is going to start a publication, it is not an absolute guarantee. And if it should turn out to be otherwise, it is at that point, in its infancy, that the advertisers can and often do strangle a publication which looks as if it is going to be a maverick.

Any discussion of the relationship between financial pressures and the ideology expressed by the American press would be incomplete without mention of the sad fate of the New York daily Stalinoid paper, *The Compass*. About two days before the election, *The Compass* went out of business for good. It simply announced that its mortgage had been called in by Corliss Lamont, wealthy angel of Stalinist causes.

Of course, we have no way of knowing just how hard pressed Lamont was for money, or what the total considerations were which went into the decision to collapse *The Compass*. But no one could help but be struck by the strange coincidence of the demise of *The Compass* and the fact that it had taken a stand which was in contradiction to that taken publicly by the Stalinists. For several weeks before the election, its editor, Thackaray, and its chief journalistic light, I. F. Stone, had been advocating a vote for Stevenson for president and Corliss Lamont (on the American Labor Party ticket) for Senator from New York. That was heresy, and they were told so publicly by Vito Marcantonio and others. After that, they were folded up.

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# LABOR SCOPE

## HOW TO CHOOSE A CIO PRESIDENT

By L. G. SMITH

AS LABOR ACTION goes to press the top officers of the Congress of Industrial Organizations are still locked in relatively silent conflict over the succession to the presidency of their organization.

To date they do not appear to have been able to agree on a candidate. No reporter has even been able to quote any leading officer of the CIO by name as being in favor of one candidate or another. The whole thing is a great mystery which is being decided, or at least struggled for, on the olympian heights of the bureaucracy. To us ordinary mortals, and that includes the dues-paying members of the CIO, it is left only to wait till the word comes down from on high . . . and to speculate.

### SPECULATIONS

Our speculations can be based on what is known about the lineup of forces in the CIO, and that was done in Walter Jason's article last week. In addition to this we have the speculations of the "labor experts" of the daily press, whose job it presumably is to hang around the corridors outside of the conference rooms and try to worm some hot tips out of the labor leaders who assemble there. To date, their tips have been very cold indeed.

In a lugubrious article on November 24, Murray Kempton of the *New York Post* just about counted old Bill Hayward out of the running. Whether Kempton really knew something, or just contented himself with a good guess based on Hayward's age is a matter for his own conscience. Another pundit has written that Reuther is definitely out of the running, due to the opposition of the steel workers' chiefs, and that the finger is now pointing ever more firmly toward none other than Joe Curran of the National Maritime Union.

### OPEN FIGHT?

But this column was not intended to be about the successor to Philip Murray, and even less about Joe Curran. It was intended to take up one question in connection with the succession. This was the question raised by some of the reporters who inform us that as things look now it will not prove possible for the CIO leadership to agree on a successor in private negotiations, and that the matter may thus have to be fought out on the floor of the convention which meets on December 1.

This is invariably written in such a way that the reader gathers that choosing a president of this great labor federation in open convention is the worst way in which it could be done. It is a course of desperation, or rather, an alternative which must be resorted to only because the preferable method has proved impossible.

It is not difficult to understand why the reporters feel that way about it. They are simply reflecting the feelings of the bureaucrats most directly involved. Although they are strong for full and free democracy in Germany, South Africa, India, Russia, and even the United States, most of them are just as strong for the idea that in the labor movement itself democracy should always be well organized, fully prepared, and at all times completely under the control of the men who best understand the interests of the membership . . . namely themselves.

### NO DICTATORSHIP

They are, of course, against dictatorship, and they find the adulation which Stalinists heap on the Leader of the Peoples, etc., etc., quite nauseating. But in their own organizations they invariably organize big demonstrations when their top leaders enter convention halls or accept nominations for office, they sing "I, our leader, we shall not be moved," till they are blue in the face, and their official publications never permit a word, or even an indirect hint of criticism of the top man or any of his actions. At least as long as Phil Murray was alive, any suggestion that he, or any of his acts, were short of perfect was confined to whispers in the corridors of unions other than the United Steel Workers of America. In the whole history of Murray's presidency as far as we know there was only one CIO officer who dared to criticize him right out loud in public, and that was Reuther in connection with the 1946 General Motors strike demands.

This aura of unassailable perfection with which the labor leaders surround themselves in their own organizations has become a tradition in the labor movement . . . at least for them. The ranks don't share in this tradition. They grumble and criticize to their heart's content, but their voices never reach the union press, and rarely even the union floor, except where their local leaders are concerned.

But if different groups in the CIO come to this convention with different candidates for the presidency, will they be able to maintain the tradition? After all, it will be difficult to debate the merits of their candidates without saying a word or so about the reasons why their opponents are not as good. And what if, after the speaking and the balloting is over, some bitterness should remain in the hearts of the losers and the delegations which supported them, and they should fail to join in the fulsome demonstration of respect and love for their new leaders? How would that look in the newspapers?

### DEALS COOKED UP

At their recent conventions, both the Republican and Democratic parties demonstrated that it is possible for them to choose standard-bearers in a rough-and-tumble fight in front of the whole nation. Even though deals were cooked up behind the scenes, their results were seen clearly in the actions which took place on the floor. Despite the wide cleavages of policy and interest groups which exist in both these political parties, the conventions did not seem to hurt them any.

It does not seem likely that the CIO is any less homogeneous than the Republican Party, or that an open airing of opinions about its various leading figures would do any real damage. We do not expect that even if the presidency should be contested in the convention the delegates will forget themselves to the point of actually saying all they think about the various candidates. After all, the rank and file does not attend CIO conventions, and a respect for the bureaucratic tradition of the leadership cult can be counted on to restrain those who do. But even so, if they are forced to speak on the floor of the convention we are likely to know a good deal more about what is actually cooking than we would if the whole thing were settled behind closed doors. Both we, and the membership,

# Korean PW Debate

(Continued from page 1)

sians. And the second is that the Geneva Convention was framed not to force the repatriation of prisoners who do not want to go home, but to compel governments to release prisoners who are being detained against their will, as is the case with the German and Japanese victims of the Stalinists.

From the point of view of political morality, of humanitarian principles, the American government's stand in refusing to repatriate North Korean and Chinese prisoners of war who resist going home is correct and deserves the support of every decent person. In the first place, many prisoners gave themselves up because they were promised asylum by the American military commanders. Secondly, they have incurred the undying hatred and certain vengeance at the hands of the Stalinists by the stand they have taken. There can be little doubt that their names have been collected by the efficient Stalinist organization in the prison camps, and are already inscribed on the lists of the Stalinist liquidation squads in the North. And this is true whether or not they became anti-Stalinists in the first place out of a love for the principles of democracy and freedom, or as a result of promises of very concrete immediate or long-range rewards given them by the Americans.

To turn these helpless people over to certain slaughter would be inhuman. Yet we are perfectly justified in questioning whether the American insistence on the principle of resisting forcible repatriation is based on grounds of humanitarianism and democracy, or whether it has its origins in altogether different considerations.

### U. S. HUMANITARIAN?

The first item which must raise such a question in the minds of all thinking persons is the record of the American government on humanitarianism as a principle, particularly in cases which do not involve the lives of Americans. The atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are not so far removed in our history as to be irrelevant to the question. The willingness of the government to prop up the fascist regime of Franco in exchange for military bases shows that whatever democratic and humanitarian leanings may exist are easily outweighed by other and more "practical" considerations. The passage of the McCarran immigration act which excludes tens and hundreds of thousands of people from entry into this country on the most flimsy, anti-democratic and anti-humanitarian grounds, and thus condemns many of them either to a life of misery or to a death as certain as would be that of the anti-Stalinist prisoners of war if repatriated . . . that too is a case in point.

Why, then, does the American government take such a correct and righteous stand on this particular matter of the repatriation of the prisoners of war? Why are they willing to continue the war over this issue, and to suffer tens of thousands of American casualties and a profligate expenditure of American arm?

The November 23 issue of the *New York Times* gave one explanation which may have a good deal of truth in it. "One of the West's basic premises in its struggle with world communism," wrote the *Times*, "is that there is great potential resistance to the Communist regimes within their own borders. The West regards that latent opposition as the biggest chink in the Communist armor and, in the Korean war, exploited

it with good results. Large numbers of the prisoners in the U. N.'s hands surrendered because they were told they could thereby free themselves from Communist control. Thus it is held that if the West now turns these prisoners back to the Communists, it would permanently deprive itself of one of its most powerful weapons in the struggle with communism. The Kremlin's recognition of that fact is believed to lie behind its insistence on forced repatriation."

In other words, it is the *Times'* analysis that it is not primarily a concern for these particular prisoners of war which motivates the American position. The American government is looking ahead to future, and perhaps bigger wars. It realizes that these prisoners can be an example, even an inducement to millions of soldiers drafted into future Stalinist armies to give themselves up as prisoners of war rather than fight to the bitter end. But that inducement will be destroyed if these prisoners are returned.

### INDIAN RESOLUTION

At the moment, however, the big conflict among the capitalist powers in the United Nations is not over the question of whether the "principle" of non-repatriation of anti-Stalinist prisoners should be abandoned. It is over an attempt by the Indian government to work out a proposal on the prisoner of war question which might be acceptable to the Stalinist governments while safeguarding the "principle."

The Indian resolution proposed that a repatriation commission be set up composed of four nations already selected as truce supervisors in the draft armistice agreement—Poland, Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Switzerland plus a mutually acceptable "umpire." It provided that force shall not be used against prisoners "to prevent or affect their return to their homeland." It proposed, further, that the disposition of any prisoners who had not been repatriated at the end of ninety days would be referred to the overall Korean political conference provided for in Article 60 of the draft armistice agreement.

The British government immediately hailed the Indian proposal as a basis for negotiations. Foreign Minister Anthony Eden suggested that the "umpire" provided for in the Indian motion be a regular member of the Repatriation Commission, and agreed that some provision would have to be made for the eventual resettlement of any prisoners who might remain adamant in their refusal to return to their homelands. It would obviously be applying enormous pressure on them if their only alternatives were to go home or to remain in a prison camp indefinitely.

The Indian delegation agreed substantially to Eden's amendments. They revised the draft of the final paragraph of their resolution to read as follows: "At the end of ninety days, after the armistice agreement has been signed, the disposition of any prisoners of war whose return to their homelands may not have been affected in accordance with the procedure set out in these proposals or as otherwise agreed, shall be referred with recommendations for their disposition, including a target date for the termination of their detention to the political conference to be called as provided under Article 60 of the draft armistice agreement. If, at the end of a further sixty days, there are any prisoners of war whose return to their homelands has not been effected or provided for by the political conference the responsibility for their care and maintenance until the end of their detention shall be transferred to the United Nations."

The American delegation at the UN has been opposed to the Indian proposal. Dean Acheson is demanding "further clarification," and appears to be insisting on such concrete spelling out of exactly how the Repatriation Com-

mission is to handle its affairs, and exactly what provision will be made for prisoners who refuse to go home as to reduce the proposal to a technical plan for carrying out the final American offer at the Panmunjon truce negotiations. Despite the extreme pressure which the American delegation has been able to apply to its allies in the past on questions which it considers vital, to date, at least, it appears that the British, French and some other delegations are resisting the Americans in this matter. It is their contention that if the American terms are accepted, the Indian proposal will no longer have any value as a compromise possibly acceptable to the Stalinists.

Since the Indian proposal appears to safeguard the "principle" of no forcible repatriation, why are the Americans so firm in demanding its amendment to the point of uselessness? Is their insistence in this matter based solely on the consideration that unless everything is worked out to their satisfaction in advance, the anti-Stalinist prisoners of war may become a political football in the peace conference which will follow the armistice agreement?

This idea will not stand up under careful examination. Once a truce has been proclaimed, and the fighting has stopped, it is quite possible that the "peace negotiations" will drag on interminably. But the Indian proposal provides that the prisoners will be turned over to the United Nations for final disposition not more than six months after such negotiations have started. At that point, if the Stalinists should claim that the terms of the truce had been violated by whatever the United Nations might do with them, they would have to take on the responsibility for resuming the war. Even if they should do that, how would the position of the United States, or the United Nations, or the prisoners themselves be worse than it is under present circumstances?

### VISHINSKY TO RESCUE

Just as the adamant position of the United States had produced banner headlines in the papers announcing a split between the American and British governments over the question, Vishinsky came riding to the rescue. In a speech before the General Assembly's Political and Security Committee, Vishinsky rejected the Indian position completely, even before it had been formally presented to the Assembly. He insisted, once again, that the Russian government would stand for nothing short of the complete exchange of all prisoners of war, regardless of their own will in the matter.

Although Vishinsky's speech seems to have torpedoed the Indian resolution, a number of governments are still advocating that it be placed before the Chinese and North Korean truce negotiators. They still cling to the hope that these governments, who have been bearing the brunt of the struggle, are more anxious to end the war than are the Russians. This hope is reinforced by the strong feeling that the Indians would not have made their proposal without advance consultation with the Chinese.

### WHY WAR CONTINUES

It should be quite clear that whether or not this proposal finally becomes the basis for a truce in Korea does not depend at all on its intrinsic merits. At best it can serve as a formula which permits an end to the fighting without that end appearing to be a major defeat for either side. That is why it is being so ardently supported by the British and other governments who can see no advantage from a continuation of the war. But its acceptance or rejection will depend on whether the major parties to the conflict, Russia, China and the United States are willing to accept an end to the war without a major victory.

It is not too easy to see just what these reasons are on either side. From the Russian point of view the war in Korea has considerable propaganda value, particularly in Asia. As long as it lasts the people of that continent can be shown that Western imperialism is far from dead. The "germ warfare" pitch was of undoubted value to the Stalinists all over the world, but then such stories can be manufactured in peace as well as in war (remember the potato-bug scare of a few years ago in Eastern Germany?). The war keeps a heavy strain on the alliance of the United States and the countries of Europe, it gives the Russians a chance to test their air and other weapons in action, and it keeps the Chinese government under a constant economic strain which makes its dependence on Russia greater than it would be otherwise.

From the American point of view a continuation of the war on the present basis seems to offer much less of value. The involvement of the Chinese in Korea may prevent them from throwing their weight around in Southeast Asia as much as they could otherwise. Although initially the Korean war gave a great political impetus to the rearmament program, the last election shows clearly that it has now become a domestic political liability rather than an asset.

Even though an abrupt end to the war might have serious economic effects in the country, the commitments on the armament program are now so firm that it is not likely that they would be greatly curtailed even if the fighting should end. The major consideration on the side of the American government appears to be the political requirement that the war be ended only on the basis of a clear-cut victory at least on the prisoner of war issue. It is probable that the Republicans do not feel such a victory to be as essential to them as it was to the Democrats under whose administration the war started. They could always claim that considering the mess that was handed them by the Democrats, they did the best they could.

Any discussion as to why the Korean war continues cannot be other than speculative. The kind of war that has been waged there for the past year has no precedent, at least in recent history. It is unique because neither side has exerted its maximum effort in an attempt to reach a military decision, while at the same time neither can hope to win through the exhaustion of the other.

### DANGER OF EXPANSION

But as long as the war continues it is not only a brutal slaughter of human beings and a continued devastation of a helpless country. Its continuation presents the constant threat of its expansion into World War III. Hence the pressure of the common people all over the world to end it. Hence the strong support for the Indian resolution as a possible means for its termination by those governments which find both the economic and political pressure most unbearable.

As socialists we have condemned the imperialist policies on both sides of the cold war which led to the explosion in Korea. We have refused to support the war which resulted from these policies. But the problem now is to bring the war to a close as quickly as possible. Even though we recognize that the Indian resolution in itself does not touch the basic causes of the war, it may prove a means by which the fighting can be stopped. At the very least, even should it fail to achieve its objective, it may clarify the real motives of the Stalinist and American governments for continuing it. That in itself would be of value in the further struggle against war and its instigators.

# Great Russian Supremacy Sought

(Continued from page 1)

Rudolph Margolius, former official in the foreign-trade ministry.

Andre Simon, former editor of the party paper, *Rude Pravo*.

Karol Svab, deputy minister.

The trial of these men is not President Klement's variation on a theme by Stalin. It is Stalin's variation on one of his old works. For the trial itself is no more the independent production of the Czech state than the state itself is independent. The trial was conceived in the Kremlin; the plot was written there; the directors are Russian. Only the main performers and the chorus are Czech nationals.

A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since the Moscow Trials. In the midst of the cold war, the world is not as credulous as it was willing to be during the honeymoon of the People's Front and collective security of "the democracies" (including Russia) against Hitler. Thus at this trial there is one very significant omission from the audience. No foreign correspondents except those from Stalinist countries have been admitted. No ambassadors sit in the boxes, no "distinguished foreign jurists" grace the front bleachers.

The Russian secret police are obviously afraid of a slip-up. They cannot get over the fact that in the Bulgarian show trial a few years ago, one of the chief defendants, Kostov, refused to follow the script and protested his innocence to the end. They can't be sure that their satellite cop pupils know how to do their job as well as the masters. And if a man should be admitted to the witness stand who had not been completely broken in mind and spirit, the results might be embarrassing, specially if the foreign press were present. This is not 1937, when only the exiled Trotsky in Mexico and a few unimpressed socialists and liberals raised their voices to expose every discrepancy and obvious falsehood in the trials.

Several new and significant parts have been written into the Prague trial. These do not distinguish it from the Moscow Trials of the thirties, but emphasize that the Czech affair largely follows the original theme but that it has been brought up to date. In the Moscow Frameup Trials the defendants were "found guilty" of plotting against the national interests of their country. In part, it was this charge, and the confessions which came in the trials, that led so many uninformed but noisy intellectuals and publicists to sympathize with the Stalinist regime and to endorse the proceedings. They were relieved to think that Stalin was destroying the "internationalists" and "revolutionaries."

## The Interests of Russia

The charges in the Prague trial are not only that the accused were working against the interests of the Czech Stalinist state, but more than that, against the "interests of Russia!" That is the greatest crime of all behind the Iron Curtain, where subservience to Great Russian nationalism is the highest political principle! The trial therefore marks a new step in Stalin's effort for complete, total domination of Czechoslovakia.

The charge of an "international-imperialist-Western-Zionist plot," is the anti-Semitic aspect invented to spice-up the trial. It is a logical extension of the campaign against Jews in Russia under the guise of the struggle against "cosmopolitanism," by which was meant anything that does not fit into the backward narrow, concepts of Great Russian nationalism, which resembles Czarist Russia's Pan Slavism. Jews are too international-minded; they have no strong national feelings; they are too interested in the arts and culture; they are unassimilable; and so on, ad nauseum. The campaign in Russia against "cosmopolitanism" reaches full fruition in the anti-Semitism of the Prague trial.

The indictment accuses them of being "nationalist traitors and enemies of the Czechoslovak people and socialism (!)" who at one and the same time plotted with the American and British governments, Trotskyists, Titoists and Jewish organizations. They tried to smuggle wealthy Jewish families out of the country. Laurence A. Steinhardt, former U. S. minister to Prague, had advised Clementis to help in this

work because John Foster Dulles would one day be secretary of state and "it would be good for Czechoslovakia to win Dulles' friendship." This was in 1948! Behind all this was a Zionist conspiracy, because Jewish organizations trained spies, saboteurs and terrorists.

## The Same Old Stuff

A broadcast from Prague spelled out the charge against the indicted men:

"In the service of American imperialism, under the leadership of Western espionage agencies, they formed an anti-state conspiracy center in order to destroy the people's democratic machine in Czechoslovakia and to sabotage socialist reconstruction and the national economy."

They were accused of "espionage activities, weakening of the national unity and defense of the Czechoslovak nation in order to separate Czechoslovakia from the Soviet Union." Further, they were "attempting to liquidate the people's democratic regime and with trying to re-establish capitalism in order to bring Czechoslovakia into the imperialistic camp."

## They Are Expendable

Only a cretin will be impressed by these charges. After the long experience of the Moscow Trials and the political events of the past fifteen years, few people outside the Stalinist world will give any credence to the utterly stupid charges hurled against the defendants, all of them loyal and deserving Stalinists, who did everything they could to bring the Czech Stalinist party to power and were the first "architects" of the new regime. They are now the expendables in the effort of Stalinism to consolidate its power domestically and to stiffen its lines in the conflict with the West. And the confessions, too, are those of loyal Stalinists who are sacrificing themselves in behalf of the new regime and the future of Stalinist society. They are all patently rehearsed in the manner of the Russian trials and the Russian defendants.

The first confession came from the most prominent figure among the defendants, Rudolph Slansky. He was known as the most ardent supporter of Stalin and Russia. A member of the Communist Party since 1921 and one of its leaders since 1929, Slansky was onetime editor of *Rude Pravo*. When the war broke out in 1939 he fled to Moscow and only returned to Prague in 1944 with Gottwald, the present Stalinist gaulite of Czechoslovakia, and the Russian army. It was then that he, with his comrades, began the campaign for seizure of state power and became the leading figure in the purges against "nationalist" and "untrustworthy" elements in the party. In 1947, Slansky helped to found the Cominform in Poland. Then, following the Russian pattern, Slansky was suddenly removed as party secretary and made a vice-premier and coordinator of economic planning, guaranteeing his arrest which followed shortly.

With these facts in mind, Slansky's confession is utterly bizarre. He began by saying: "I was never a true Communist [read: Stalinist]." The dreary recital continues. This old Stalinist hack, the loyal tool of the Kremlin, now being sacrificed for "higher" interests, declared that he had worked for the Benes government and remained in the most intimate contact with the U. S. espionage services. He admitted the murder of his comrade, Jan Sverma, when the latter arrived from Moscow to assist in the abortive Slovak revolt of 1944. To lend credence to the anti-Semitic indictment, Slansky stated that after the liberation of the country he placed in important posts "capitalist Jewish emigrants who returned to Czechoslovakia as imperialist agents" and permitted them to establish relations with Israeli organizations that were "nothing other than camouflaged American spy networks."

## Everyone Was Guilty

In the style sadly reminiscent of the Moscow Trials, Slansky implicated Clementis, Josef Frank and the other defendants. Clementis maintained the contact with Benes; Josef Frank was guilty of many murders. And he, Slansky was

really a Titoist. The evidence? In 1948, he visited Moshe Pijade in the Yugoslav Embassy where Tito's aide informed him of the conflict they were having with Stalin!

Slansky says in his confession that, "I have been an enemy of the Communist Party and I created a conspiratorial movement designed to split the party. I also worked similarly within the army right back to the first Czech rising in 1942, when I was active against the interests of the Soviet Union and on behalf of the Benes regime (wasn't Slansky in Moscow then?) . . . I am a person with two political faces. In reality, I never was a Communist."

One of the Moscow Trials featured the confession by Yagoda that he conspired with the doctors to shorten Maxim Gorky's life by keeping him out in the cold thus causing him to contract pneumonia and die. In Prague, Slansky confessed that he conspired with President Gottwald's doctors to "shorten the president's life." He also placed Clementis in leading positions in the government. When asked what other kind of agents he had planted, he replied, without blinking an eye or blushing: "French agents, British agents, American and Yugoslav agents." What did he report to these agents? "Everything. The situation, the dispositions (of the armed forces), the people's organizations and people's committees."

## Post-Mortem Purge

Vladimir Clementis, the second figure in the trial, a man with the reputation of being a "nationalist" Stalinist, somewhat anti-Semitic, rather than an "internationalist" like Slansky, was the next to confess. In the Stalinist hierarchy, you see, position takes precedent even in confessions. Clementis corroborated Slansky's testimony that he was an agent for Benes. Benes is now being tried, too, in what the New York *Herald Tribune* aptly called a post-mortem purge. The presiding judge asked Clementis: "How is it possible that you, a representative of Slovak bourgeois nationalism, were simultaneously an agent of Benes who is known always to have opposed the legitimate demands of the Slovak nation for national independence?"

The question was loaded and the answer was the expected one. Clementis stated that he discussed the matter with Benes in 1941 and 1944 in the presence of another accused, Laco Novomesky, former head of the Slovak Academy of Arts and Sciences. Benes, according to the ex-foreign minister, maintained a negative attitude toward Slovak independence from the Czech state, but he did not mind Clementis' "bourgeois nationalist attitude because any form of bourgeois ideology was closer to Benes than a working class policy." Indeed, Benes was said to have realized that the ultimate aim of Slovak nationalism was identical to his own—the restoration of capitalism. Needless to say, Novomesky corroborated Clementis.

Vavro Hadju, former deputy foreign minister, testified that Clementis sent him to a foreign ministers' conference in Paris (how suspicious indeed! The foreign minister sends his deputy foreign minister to a foreign ministers' conference, and in Paris, too!). There he met and was recruited as a British agent by Sir Gladwyn Jebb. These poor country boys from behind the Iron Curtain, were so easily had by the urban slickers from the West!

## A Noel Coward Fantasy

Andre Simon, the former editor of the party paper, *Rude Pravo*, admitted guilt of high treason. He enlisted in the British Intelligence Service in 1939 through, of all people, Noel Coward, the actor-playwright. Simon did not indicate, however, what kind of plot material Coward was looking for, or whether he was merely trying to undermine Stalinist theories of love. This may have been a lighter feature in the trial, but Simon quickly went on to implicate David Schoenbrun, the American correspondent, who is supposed to have told him that he (Schoenbrun) was instructed by the U. S. Secret Service to collaborate with Simon because "it was the duty of every Jew to support the policy of the United States even if he did not agree with it."

Simon was no ordinary figure, because he returned to Czechoslovakia as a "triple agent for the United States, Britain and France." Then he denounced Slansky and Earl Browder. He said that "Slansky was particularly interested in United States Communist Browder's activities because

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# In Czech Trials "Made in Moscow"

(Continued from page 6)

Slansky wanted to follow Browder's policy of liquidating the people's democratic regime." Presumably from 12th Street in New York City. And finally, Slansky wanted Simon to cooperate with the Zionists in Mexico in 1946! Why the Zionists? And why particularly in Mexico? Only a Stalinist GPU agent's mind could conceive of such idiotic, if insidious, melodrama.

Ludvik Frejka confessed his guilt because he paid the U. S. \$18 million for a steel mill which has not yet been delivered. Josef Frank confessed that he sabotaged the nation's agricultural program. To make sure that he is a mean and guilty man, he had to confess to causing the death of several Russian and French fellow-prisoners in the Buchenwald concentration camp. Frejka admitted all details about economic sabotage directed against all defendants. In addition, Frejka was a "Zionist and long-time American spy, which is borne out in his failure to provide for sufficient development of heavy industry, making the country dependent upon Western raw materials imports."

## Sabotage By Planning

Frejka said, "We deliberately caused a disproportion between the demands of power and the supply of coal. It will take a long time to end the results of this mismanagement." The reader should bear this point in mind, because it is a key to one of the main reasons for the trial.

Bedrich Geminder gave evidence in broken Czech, thus emphasizing his Sudeten German origin—that alone would constitute a crime in Stalinist Czechoslovakia. In addition, he never became a citizen of the country. This, too, is a crime under Stalinist "socialism." It was he, the testimony disclosed, who acted as the agent of Ziliacus—for whom and for what is not revealed.

Of great interest in the trial is the fact that one of the witnesses against Clementis was Mordecai Oren. Oren, a leader of the pro-Stalinist Mappam party in Israel, was arrested in Prague last December on his way home from a Stalinist trade union meeting in Berlin. What a fortunate witness the Stalinists had in their hands—a Jew!

This leader of a pro-Stalinist, yet independent organization in Israel would lend weight to their anti-Semitic campaign, if he could be made to testify for reasons of his pro-Stalinism and whatever redress might be promised him.

The power of blackmail in this case is enormous. Whatever the methods used, he gave "corroborative tes-

timony" against Geminder and Clementis, after the latter had recorded that he was a French agent since 1939 and never was a real Communist, but a Slovak nationalist. The presence of Oren in the trial has caused great embarrassment to the Israeli government, and the organizations in that country are awaiting further developments before replying in full after their statements denouncing the Prague charges.

The indictment, which reached Vienna only a short while ago, names Noel Field and his brother Herman, as Western spies. Noel Field was charged with having organized an espionage network in Prague. This is interesting because Field disappeared from his European haunts after he was sought by the American government to answer charges of being a Stalinist agent. Not very long ago LABOR ACTION published material conclusively establishing that Noel Field was a Stalinist masquerading as a liberal, and that he had been a Stalinist agent for many years.

When Field disappeared from Switzerland, it was easily surmised that he had fled behind the Iron Curtain. That he should turn up in the Prague trial as a "Western spy" is no surprise either, for Stalin has strange and wondrous uses for his agents, no matter where they come from.

## The Fields Reappear

Herman Field went behind the Iron Curtain to search for his "missing" brother. And he, too, disappeared while on flight from Warsaw to Prague. Now both brothers are charged with being agents of Allen W. Dulles, former head of the American office of Strategic Services, now deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency and brother of John Foster Dulles. The charge against Herman Field is vigorously denied by his wife who was awaiting him in London.

But if Herman Field's wife defends him against the charges, the conduct of the wife of Arthur London, and Marie Svermova, the sweetheart of Otto Sling, is again reminiscent of the ways of Stalinist morality in Russia. Mrs. London wrote the court that she had first believed her husband guilty only of minor crimes, but after reading the indictment (the guilt is there and not in the proof) she realized that he was a traitor. Her two older children, when told what their father had done, allegedly promised her they would remain good Communists all their lives. She then demanded a just verdict against her husband.

Otto Sling's sweetheart, Svermova, testified against her lover and Slansky, saying that the latter "blocked the way to Gottwald so that the president never could get accurate information."

# Student Co-op Exchange — —

(Continued from page 8)

Spring issue of *Anvil & Student Partisan*.) Mr. Burrows, in the act of fighting against those who think that the co-ops must develop a greater political awareness, is involving himself in a political struggle. The choice before the co-ops is really not whether to take a political position or not, but whether to take a wrong political position or a correct one.

That the co-ops are subjected to the same laws as all other groups in society is best demonstrated by the fact that in England and Canada, where the wages are the same but the objective situation different, they were forced to draw the same political conclusions as the labor movement, and join forces with the labor and socialist movement in the British Labor Party and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. But since "ideologies" usually lag behind the actual social developments, we may expect most American labor leaders to cling to "trade-unionism, pure and simple" and Mr. Burrows to cling to "co-operative living pure and simple" long after their respective situations will have reached altogether different dimensions.

## The Rochdale Principles

But the Rochdale principles! Don't they say that co-ops must not get involved in politics? Of course not. The Rochdale weavers, who were themselves mostly socialists and chartists, undoubtedly knew that it is impossible to avoid taking political responsibility one way or another. What the Rochdale principles imply is non-affiliation in political matters.

Now Mr. Burrows seems to assume that I asked the co-ops to affiliate with the Socialist Youth League. Although I would not object if they did, this is not the case, as anyone can tell who reads the article in LABOR ACTION. The article states that "the co-ops . . . must conceive of themselves not only as living groups, but consciously recognize their solidarity (not identity—D. F.) with political groups that work on different levels toward the same goals. There

is a need for the co-ops to formulate a program of action on the political level."

The article proceeds to explain that "in terms of student activity, this would imply (for instance) that the co-ops initiate and support in their own name campaigns for civil rights, for academic freedom, against conscription, and issues of the same nature whenever the occasion arises, perhaps jointly with liberal or socialist organizations." There is certainly no suggestion of affiliation there, and if this is an "enlistment call in the cause of socialist" it is the weakest one I ever heard. (By the same token, a trade-union that backs a campaign for civil liberties to protect its own interests and for its own reasons, does not thereby become affiliated to all other organizations that fight for civil liberties.)

Mr. Burrows claims that even independent political activity is not necessary for the co-ops. At the same time he recognizes that the co-ops are under pressure from "persistent antagonists" to whom he wants to show LABOR ACTION to prove that the co-ops are not really "conspiring" with socialists. As everybody knows, these "persistent antagonists" are usually reactionaries who attack the co-ops because they see in them, for reasons Mr. Burrows cannot understand, a "strong coincidence with parts of a system currently being advocated under such left-wing terms as communism, socialism, etc."

## Ideology of Appeasement

It is precisely such pressure, which is inevitable but which Mr. Burrows nevertheless hopes to appease, that forms the basis for the solidarity between the co-op, the labor and the socialist movement. Unless these pressures are met with a conscious educational, i.e., "ideological," effort the co-op movement will lose ground as it has, Mr. Burrows' peptalks notwithstanding, and will be threatened internally more and more by situations such as the anti-co-op red-baiting within the co-ops, which disturbed Bob Farmer (in the same issue of *Co-ops on Campus*).

It is indispensable to recognize that the co-

The trial will go on for some time. It will be followed by other trials in Czechoslovakia and in the other satellite states, Rumania, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria. There is no question but that the economic difficulties of Stalin's states in Europe, are the cause of dissatisfaction among the masses of these overrun countries ruled, in reality, by Stalin's secret police. The trials are therefore an effort to throw the blame for the economic difficulties in these several countries not on Russia, which exploits them mercilessly, but on "internal traitors" who have mismanaged, sabotaged and deliberately worked to destroy the rhythm of economic progress in these respective nations. That is the meaning of Frejka's testimony. He not only sabotaged heavy industry, but the rationing of electricity and food, and the production of automobiles (with the aid of an American!). The people are admonished not to blame the regime for their difficulties, but the "traitors" who planned it that way.

The trials reflect the effort to strengthen the tenuous satellite states which Stalin does not yet trust, knowing that the populations have not been sufficiently atomized and paralyzed with fear by the regimes. The regimes show too much weakness and up to now also have displayed more independence and national interest than suited the purposes of Great Russian expansionism. To strengthen his bloc, Stalin has embarked on a campaign of reducing the satellite states to the most abject servants of the Kremlin and the Russian army.

Therein lies the meaning of the repeated statements in the indictments that the defendants acted against the "interests of the Soviet Union." Stalin takes no chances. He does not trust the "cosmopolitans," the stateless Jews, who he thinks have an overriding interest in the state of Israel. The "internationalist" Jews are untrustworthy in the great struggle for Stalinist Pan Slavism.

What about those who are not Jews? Those who were foreign ministers and who had contact with the outside world, with the West—they, too, are untrustworthy even though they profess their loyalty. Stalin trusts no one in the satellite states who has lived in the western world or had long diplomatic relations with it. Such are automatically tainted. This is the way the cold war is reflected in the Stalinist world, in the world of totalitarianism.

The cold war also explains in part the anti-Jewish campaign. Stalin in undoubtedly courting the Arab states. He is counting noses and guns, and adding up divisions with his customary ruthlessness and cynicism.

The Prague trial is another episode in the extension of Stalinist jurisprudence to lands beyond Russia. Frame-ups are the heart of that system, and the trial in Czechoslovakia bears the Moscow stamp. We shall follow new trials across Eastern Europe.

ops always have been and always will be subjected to attacks from racists because they don't believe in discrimination; to attacks from all kinds of authoritarians because they believe in freedom and in individual responsibility; to attacks from capitalist "theoreticians" because they believe in co-operation rather than competition. It is equally necessary to understand that the district economic need which gave rise to the co-ops also imposed on them a distinct form of organization and that this form of organization necessarily influences the type of thinking—the "ideology"—of its members. This is why its implicit values and assumptions are close to socialism and communism (the latter, to be sure, in the original Marxist, not in the Stalinist sense) and this is why the co-op movement is subjected, in a different manner, to the same pressures which are brought to bear against the labor and socialist movements.

The basic premise of the student co-op movement, mostly unstated but sometimes clearly formulated as in the booklet of the co-ops at Kansas University ("What are the KU co-ops?") has always been the following: "Co-operative living requires and develops the maturity implied in the free acceptance of responsibilities rather than obedience to orders as an essential condition of a free society. And, of course, this is our social aim: trying to make our society more one of free and voluntary co-operation rather than one founded on conflict and compulsion. By their organization as student-owned, student-operated, student-governed living units, the co-ops are preparing today the foundations of a better, freer society."

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# STUDENT SOCIALIST

DECEMBER 1, 1952

STUDENT-YOUTH SECTION of LABOR ACTION

FIVE CENTS

## What Is the Relevance of Politics for the Cooperative Movement?

# AN EXCHANGE ON STUDENT CO-OPS

The article appearing on this page entitled "Go Politico?" appeared originally in the October issue of Co-ops On Campus, the official organ of the North American Student Cooperative League. It is a reply to Daniel Faber's article in the September 8 issue of LABOR ACTION entitled "What's Happening to the Student Co-op Movement?"

We believe that this article, and Daniel Faber's reply, are relevant not only to the student co-ops, but to the problem of the relationship of the cooperative movement as a whole to politics.—Ed.

By DANIEL FABER

In the October issue of *Co-ops on Campus* the editor has risen up in arms to protect the co-ops from criticism and from politics. He says that "an enlistment call in the cause of socialism" has been issued to the co-ops, and goes on to explain that the co-ops are non-political organizations—the Rochdale Principles say so—that the purposes of a student co-op are not "ideological" or "political" and that they are "not served most efficiently when impeded by involved entanglements in politics" or "affiliation with political organizations."

It is unfortunate that the editor of *Co-ops on Campus* did not avail himself of our permission to reprint the article which excited him so. Had he reprinted it, the readers of *Co-ops on Campus* would have been in a position to exert their own judgment, which is always preferable, since the only picture which they can get from his reply is a distorted one.

Only by distortion, for example, can Mr. Burrows describe the article in LABOR ACTION as an "attack on the co-ops." It may be an attack on the type of thinking that Mr. Burrows represents, and it is possible that Mr. Burrows identifies all criticism of his concept of co-ops with "attacks on co-ops." Such an attitude, however, not only distorts the terms of the present discussion, but is far removed from serving the best interests of the co-ops. I would venture to say, on the contrary, as one who received most of his political and social experience in them, and helped to the best of his abilities to build them while a member, that I am in this controversy defending the best interests of the co-ops against Mr. Burrows and his superficial ideology.

But let us go to the heart of the disagreement. To begin with, it is clear that Mr. Burrows uses the terms "political" and "ideological" in a different sense than they are used in the article. The article says: "... the co-ops, too, have an ideological basis without which they have no reason for existence." To this Mr. Burrows replies: "We have yet to see a college co-op which was formed with the pursuit of an ideological system as its burning goal." He goes on to say that co-ops are formed on an economic basis, for economic reasons; that for most of their members they are not "a means for promotion of political ideology" but, economically speaking, "an intelligent expedient, a happily found means to an end."

### What's an Ideology?

Everything Mr. Burrows has said in this paragraph is quite true and at the same time quite beside the point. What must be understood is that a distinct economic basis of organization involves of necessity a distinct "ideology." Clearly, the term "ideology" has two uses: in its first,

narrow sense, which Mr. Burrows uses "ideology" means a clearly outlined, consistent system of ideas, possibly embodied in a political program. In the other, wider sense, "ideology" means a more or less conscious body of ideas, assumptions, values, which express more or less accurately the position of a group in relation to the rest of society.

In the latter sense the co-op movement, like all other groups in our society, has an ideological basis, acknowledged even by its less advanced sections represented among others by Mr. Burrows. In the former sense too the co-op movement has an "ideology": Mr. Warbasse's. But, needless to say, this is not the "ideological basis" we are interested in here. What alone is important, is the basis by which the co-op movement defines itself and defines its relationship to the rest of society. Such a relationship, of course, is not necessarily always clearly expressed in the marks of the individual members of a movement, nor can it always be.

If we apply Mr. Burrows reasoning to the trade-union movement we can say with equal justification (if we except the IWW and a few other splinters) that "we have yet to see a trade-union which was formed with the pursuit of an ideological system as its goal," burning or other-

wise. Like the co-ops, the overwhelming majority of the trade-unions were formed on an economic basis—the recognition that anything less would, as Mr. Burrows puts it, make "the feeding of the stomach and the housing of the body extremely difficult."

### Politics of the Ostrich

Does that mean that trade-unions have no ideological basis or political involvements? Far from it. The ideological basis of a trade-union is determined by its nature as an organization dedicated to the defense of the interests of the workers. This purpose, in turn, determines its political position. Because even the primitive position of Gompers' "reward one's friends and punish one's enemies" is a political position; even "trade-unionism pure and simple" expresses a political attitude since it has political consequences. It is, however, the worst possible political attitude since it leaves one, like the ostrich, as a blind target for those enemies who recognize the need for politics.

The co-ops, too, play a political role whether they know it or not; and so do the fraternities. (On this subject see Alan Daniels' article on "Conformity, Inequality and Fraternity" in the

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## GO POLITICO?

Student cooperatives received an attack recently from an unaccustomed corner. The medium was the weekly socialist newspaper LABOR ACTION. In an article in the September issue, Daniel Faber has lamented the "lost dynamism" of student co-ops. He contends that we are in "a period of decline of the co-ops as a movement on a national scale," and that "there are . . . very few healthy co-op organizations on a local level." And the reason for our "decline," says Mr. Faber, is unquestionably our refusal to become involved in political affairs. He holds that co-ops are founded on an "ideological basis" which is "definitely in contradiction with the prevailing values of our society," and that in order to survive under such circumstances, we "must consciously recognize . . . (our) solidarity with political groups that work . . . toward the same goals." He concludes that "there is a need for the co-ops to formulate a program for action on the political level . . . jointly with liberal or socialist organizations." In fewer words, Mr. Faber is issuing to student cooperatives an enlistment call in the cause of socialism.

Of all of the sources of criticism with which the co-op in a university society must contend, LABOR ACTION weekly is probably one of the least important. In fact, it might be helpful to be able to show some of our more persistent antagonists that we are being attacked from the very faction with which we have so often been accused of conspiring. However, Mr. Faber has raised a point which hits directly at one of our basic Rochdale Principles, and it might be appropriate at this point to reexamine briefly some of the purposes and philosophy under which student co-ops were first organized, and under which they have been kept alive through war and peace for the past quarter of a century. Those few who are versed in the Rochdale Principles will immediately recognize the one to which we allude as the principle of non-affiliation in political matters; of luxurious abstention, as Mr. Faber would call it. This principle was included by the original Rochdale weavers, and has been retained almost universally by cooperative organizations. It has been found, through the years, that our various purposes can best be served by complete avoidance as a group of political entanglements and the consequent full time battle which they involve. Of course, this is not in any way to be construed as a damper on the activities of our members as individuals.

Yet how, if, as Mr. Faber says, co-ops "have an 'ideological' basis without which they have no reason for existence," can we afford to remain completely out of contact with political activity? Our answer to this can best be made on the form of a question: What is the purpose of a student co-operative?

We have yet to see a college co-op which was formed with the pursuit of an ideological system as its burning goal. Far from it, the overwhelming motivation for joining co-ops and for insuring the survival of co-ops, is

economic. A student co-op is an organization of students who find that they are currently engaged in activities which may yield richly in the future, but which at present are making the feeding of the stomach and the housing of the body extremely difficult. A student co-op is an organization of intelligent individuals who have seen their way to a group agreement which happily, although quite coincidentally, combines the provision of life's necessities with the very warm sort of companionship which comes only when a group of people are pulling together toward a common end. As it happens, our system of daily organization is in strong coincidence with parts of a system which is currently being advocated under such left wing terms as communism, socialism, etc. For this reason, we regularly attract a few members who see co-ops in the way that Mr. Faber sees them, as a means for promotion of political ideology. Such members invariably either go away disappointed or remain for reasons other than the initial reasons for attraction. To the majority of co-ops, membership in the organization in no way implies an undying desire for extension of our daily co-op procedures into permanent living. Very few of us look forward to a life of eating and sleeping in constant contact with thirty-five or forty others. Most of our members go out and lead normal, well adjusted lives, raising families and earning a very happy livelihood off of our decadent capitalist society. Co-ops are to these people, an intelligent expedient, a happily found means to an end. This, then, is our "ideological basis." Obviously, these purposes are not served most efficiently when impeded by involved entanglements in political affairs. It should also be obvious, incidentally, that the framework for intellectual thought for which Mr. Faber pleads could never be obtained through affiliation with a political organization.

And how about this "period of decline," this "stagnant" existence into which our friend Mr. Faber is convinced that we have fallen? Michigan State opens a \$50,000 house. Kansas opens three new houses in two years. Michigan opens one new house. Oberlin opens two new houses. NASCL expands at nearly \$1000 yearly. NASCL receives advice requests from fifty new campuses in one year. NASCL hires a full time field director, the first in its history. And on, and on, and on. These are not isolated examples. These are examples of a trend. An overall surge has again hit co-ops. Now, to an even greater extent than before the war, students are turning away from university dormitories, with their high prices and lofty regulations, and looking very seriously to the offerings of student owned, student run cooperative associations as a place for inexpensive living and good friendship. We have problems, Mr. Faber, but political affiliation doesn't happen to be one of our sorely needed solutions. We're doing all right the way we are. Mr. Faber, you keep your socialist organization going half as well, and you'll do all right too!