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50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE USSR

USSR: A NEW HISTORICAL COMMUNITY
Editorial Comment

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USSR AND USA: A CONTRAST
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A MIGHTY UNION OF NATIONS
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AN EX-COMMUNIST "CONFESSIONALIST"
Daniel Mason

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USSR: A New Historical Community

December 30, 1972 marks the 50th anniversary of an event unique in the annals of mankind—the birth of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. With this act there came into being a new kind of state, a multinational state formed by the voluntary union of nations coming together on a basis of complete equality. And it laid the foundations for the evolution, in the years which followed, of an entirely new type of community. In the words of Leonid Brezhnev:

A new historical community of people, the Soviet people, took shape in our country during the years of socialist construction. New, harmonious relations, relations of friendship and cooperation, were formed between the classes and social groups, nations and nationalities in joint labor, in the struggle for socialism, and in the battles fought in defense of socialism. Our people are welded together by a common Marxist-Leninist ideology and the lofty aims of building communism. (*Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 24th Congress of the CPSU*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1971, p. 90.)

This new community, says the Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU ("On Preparations for the 50th Anniversary of the Formation of the USSR"), "was formed on the basis of the social ownership of the means of production, the unity of economic, sociopolitical and cultural life, Marxist-Leninist ideology, and the interests of the communist ideals of the working class." Indeed, such a community could come into being *only* as a socialist society; its common interests and aims, its harmonious relationships are impossible in capitalist society, where class exploitation and national oppression generate inevitable antagonism and conflict.

In particular, the union of nations as equals is possible only under socialism. Karl Marx has expressed it in these words:

For nations to unite, they must have common interests. For their interests to be common, the existing property relations must be abolished, since the existing property relations make for the exploitation of some nations by others; the working class alone is interested in the abolition of the existing property relations. And it alone is capable of doing this. The victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie signifies at the same time an end to all national and industrial disputes which at present cause enmity among na-

tions. (Marx and Engels, *Works*, Russian edition, Vol. 4, p. 371. Quoted by E. V. Tadevosyan, *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, No. 5, 1972.)

The establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the abolition of capitalist exploitation does away with class antagonisms and gives rise to a society in which all classes are motivated by common interests drawing them ever more closely together. The abolition of capitalist exploitation lays the basis for abolishing all national oppression, for achieving the equality of all nations and nationalities, giving rise to a society in which all peoples, sharing common interests, are likewise drawn ever more closely together. The victorious October Revolution was the prerequisite for the formation of the USSR; the socialist transformation of social life in all its aspects was the prerequisite for the emergence of today's Soviet society—a historically new community of people.

The very building of socialism and the laying of the groundwork for the transition to a communist society have served progressively to strengthen the ties uniting the various sections of the Soviet people. On the one hand, the advance of science and technology within the socialist framework and the emergence of communism are erasing the distinctions between the two classes of Soviet society—the workers and collective farmers. And as the distinctions between physical and mental labor diminish, the Soviet intelligentsia is becoming more and more closely linked with these classes. On the other hand, the development of an all-Union economy, made possible by the phenomenal economic advances of the formerly backward nations (see the article by Claude Lightfoot), has increasingly cemented the unity of all nations and peoples in the USSR. A unity of cultures has emerged, giving expression to the common endeavors of all the Soviet people in the march toward communism.

We are witnessing, in short, that “amalgamation of nations” of which Lenin so often spoke, as it proceeds under conditions of full equality and in the absence of the antagonisms created by capitalist exploitation. What is envisioned is that the full flowering of communism will bring with it the full unity of the peoples of the USSR. The *Program of the CPSU* expresses it in these words:

Full-scale communist construction constitutes a new stage in the development of national relations in the USSR in which the nations will draw still closer together until complete unity is achieved. The building of the material and technical basis of communism leads to still greater unity of the Soviet peoples. The exchange of

material and spiritual values between nations becomes more and more intensive, and the contribution of each republic to the common cause of communist construction increases. Obliteration of distinctions between classes and the development of communist social relations make for a greater social homogeneity of nations and contribute to the development of common communist traits in their culture, morals and way of living, to a further strengthening of their mutual trust and friendship. (International Publishers, New York, 1963, p. 116.)

Such is the path of development of the Soviet people, a path opened up by the victorious October Revolution, followed by the formation of the USSR.

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It is important to note, however, that the struggles which led to the solution of the national question did not begin with the October Revolution. Nor was this magnificent achievement an automatic consequence of the victory of October. On the contrary, it is the product of a struggle originating many years before the revolution, a conscious struggle led by the Russian Communist Party and based on the Leninist policy on the national question. Indeed, without this struggle, which sought to unite the working people of all nations and all nationalities against tsarism and against capitalism, there could have been no victory of the socialist revolution in Russia.

Lenin's policy was firmly founded on the Marxist principle of proletarian internationalism, and he placed the question of national liberation at all times within the framework of the class struggle, of working-class unity in the struggle for socialism. It was founded on the repudiation of bourgeois nationalism. Lenin said: “Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the ‘most just,’ ‘purest,’ most refined and civilized brand. In the place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity. . . .” (*Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 34.) The prerequisite for solution of the national question, Lenin maintained, is the victory of the working class, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But by itself this does not suffice; the class struggle must be linked with the democratic struggle against all forms of oppression. He wrote:

. . . It is *impossible* to abolish national (or any other political) oppression under capitalism, since this *requires* the abolition of classes, i.e., the introduction of socialism. But while being based on

economics, socialism cannot be reduced to economics alone. A foundation—socialist production—is essential for the abolition of national oppression, but this foundation must *also* carry a democratically organized state, a democratic army, etc. By transforming capitalism into socialism the proletariat creates the *possibility* of abolishing national oppression; the possibility becomes *reality* “only”—“only”!—with the establishment of full democracy in all spheres, including the delineation of state frontiers in accordance with the “sympathies” of the population, including complete freedom to secede. And this, in turn, will serve as a basis for developing the *practical* elimination of even the slightest national friction and the least national mistrust, for an accelerated drawing together and fusion of nations that will be completed when the state *withers away*. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 325.)

Lenin noted that in the fight for the common goal—“complete equality, the closest association and the eventual *amalgamation* of all nations”—the tasks of Communists of oppressor and oppressed countries are not identical. He wrote:

In the internationalist education of the workers of the oppressor countries, emphasis must necessarily be laid on their advocating freedom for the oppressed countries to secede and their fighting for it. Without this there can be *no* internationalism. . . .

On the other hand, a Social-Democrat (i.e., a Communist—Ed.) from a small nation must emphasize in his agitation the *second* word of our general formula: “voluntary *integration*” of nations. . . . he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, seclusion and isolation. . . . (*Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 346, 347.)

Lenin laid particular stress on the responsibility of Communists of oppressor nations to fight unreservedly for the full equality of all oppressed peoples, to display the greatest sensitivity toward their needs and their feelings, and to fight for all measures necessary to compensate for the effects of their oppression and thus to bring about true equality (see the article by A. I. Mikoyan).

Such was the course charted by Lenin. And such was the course followed by the Russian Communist Party in the years leading up to the October Revolution and the subsequent formation of the USSR, and by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the half a century since.

The Soviet experience has special meaning for us in the United States, where capitalist exploitation is intertwined with racial and

national oppression as in no other country. Perpetuated through the promotion of pervasive racism and national chauvinism, such oppression and discrimination, inflicted on some 40 million Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Indian and Asian peoples, serves to divide the working class, to increase the exploitation of all workers and to bring untold billions in added profits to the U.S. monopolies.

In recent years monopoly capital and its political spokesmen have stepped up the fostering of racism. Thus, Nixon has directly allied himself with the most racist elements in the South, and in the 1972 election campaign he made open appeals to racism, particularly on the issues of busing and “quotas.” There is no doubt that in the period ahead Nixon and his cohorts will move further in this direction.

There has been a rise in manifestations of racism in a number of groups. Particularly disturbing is its growth among sections of the Jewish people, most shockingly displayed in the racist actions in Forest Hills and Canarsie in New York, as well as in the disgraceful campaign of leading Jewish organizations against preferential treatment for Black and other oppressed minorities in hiring and college enrollment.

Such developments only serve to emphasize the central role which racism and chauvinism play in the calculations of the class forces of reaction, and to pinpoint the centrality of the struggle against these ideological poisons and against oppression in all its forms as essential to the advancement of the interests of the working class and all working people. In the words of Henry Winston in his report to the 20th National Convention of the CPUSA:

Lessons from history teach us that it is unthinkable that class solidarity can be achieved in the absence of a conscious policy of fighting against the racism of the monopolies. . . .

The Party must play a leading role in the fight to realize the special demands of these oppressed people, and against all forms of discrimination against them. The road to achievement of working-class solidarity and the alliance of the class with the oppressed Black masses and all other oppressed peoples in the country depends on the consciousness that actively develops the struggle for full equality. The securing of equality is dependent upon the elimination of all special forms of discrimination and should become the pivot of struggle, the realization of which is the only guarantee of establishing the solidarity of the class as a whole.

This means that our Party must take the lead in ideological, political and organizational work to help the class find answers to these problems and overcome every obstacle in the path

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towards its forward march. If this is not done, then talk about the development of an anti-monopoly movement, talk about a future anti-monopoly party, becomes idle chatter. (*Black and White* —*One Class, One Fight*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1972.)

Only if this struggle is waged is it possible successfully to combat narrow nationalism and separatism among the Black and other oppressed peoples, and to convince them that the end to their oppression lies in achieving working-class unity in the fight for socialism. The struggle to eradicate racism among white workers and to enlist them in fighting all oppression and inequality is thus the expression of that true internationalism of which Lenin spoke and which provides the only basis for the ultimate victory of the working class.

It follows that the Communist Party must itself be an embodiment of that internationalism—ideologically, politically, organizationally (a point which receives extended treatment in the article by James E. Jackson). Lenin fought for such a party—an all-Russian party embracing all nationalities. He was a relentless foe of the Jewish Bund, which demanded a separate party for Jewish workers, and of all other efforts to divide the vanguard party of the working class along national lines. Correspondingly our Party, the Communist Party of the United States, must in its actions and in its organization embody the unity of Black and white, the unity of white workers with all the oppressed minorities. And such a party is possible only on the basis of a determined, ceaseless struggle against all influences of racism and white chauvinism in its ranks.

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Of special interest for us is the establishment of full equality of the Jewish people in the USSR. In tsarist Russia they were among the most bitterly oppressed and persecuted of all peoples. With the victory of the socialist revolution the transformation of their status was little short of miraculous. Virtually overnight all the tsarist anti-Semitic decrees were abolished. Jews were free to live where they chose and to enter all occupations. Anti-Semitism in word and deed was outlawed. Provisions were made for the widest development and dissemination of Jewish culture. And for those who might wish to build their own communal life a Jewish autonomous region was established in Birobidjan.

But not many Soviet Jews chose to live in Birobidjan. The overwhelming majority opted for becoming a part of the Soviet people, for living and working among them. Today they live in all parts

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of the Soviet Union and are to be found in all professions and trades. They are free of all discrimination, and if instances of anti-Semitism are to be found, they occur as isolated remnants of the past.

Moreover, when the USSR was invaded by the Hitlerite armies, the Soviet government saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews by removing them far to the rear. Soviet Jews are keenly aware of this and are profoundly grateful to their motherland for it.

It is these facts which the obscene campaign to "liberate" Soviet Jews is designed to conceal. And this is but a part of the never-ending effort of monopolist reaction to paint a false picture of the Soviet Union as a "prison house of nations" even worse than that which existed in tsarist days, to "prove" that national and racial prejudice is ineradicable under socialism no less than under capitalism. It is a prime responsibility of Communists and progressives to combat these vicious anti-Soviet slanders and to bring to the people of this country a true picture of the equality and brotherhood of all peoples in the Soviet Union.

The 50th anniversary of the USSR is an occasion for studying the imposing Soviet achievements in the solution of the national question and for drawing more fully the lessons these hold for our struggles in the United States. It is an occasion for popularizing these achievements among the workers and among the Black and other oppressed peoples in our country. It is an occasion for greatly intensifying the struggle against racism and chauvinism and for unifying the masses of working people against the monopolies and for the ultimate victory of socialism.

It is in this spirit that we greet the USSR on its 50th birthday.

Marxism-Leninism has disclosed the role and place the national question has in the revolutionary transformation of the world, and demonstrated that it is subject to the interests of the proletariat's class struggle and to the interests of socialism. The demand for the building up of the Party and other proletarian organizations on the basis of the principles of internationalism was an inseparable component of Lenin's national program. The vital necessity of the unity of proletarians of all nationalities in the struggle against capitalist slavery, in the fight for social and national liberation, was proved both in theory and in practice. (*On Preparations for the 50th Anniversary of the Formation of the USSR*, Resolution of the CC CPSU, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1972.)

How The USSR Was Born*

Under New Historical Conditions

After the October Revolution the Russian Federation became the center round which the young Soviet republics rallied. Soviet Russia set a striking example of a new state system founded on national autonomy.

The transition to peaceful construction and the new economic tasks reinforced the desire of the republics for closer relations and unification. Under the new conditions the relations based on bilateral treaties were proving to be inadequate.

A mass popular movement for the unification of the Soviet republics was initiated everywhere by the Party organizations in 1922.

In the spring of that year Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia signed a treaty of alliance and at the close of the year formed the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic. It existed until 1936 when friendship and trust among the Transcaucasian peoples had been firmly established. The federation exhausted the tasks for which it had been formed and the need for it fell away. . . .

Marx's theoretical premise that national oppression and inequality can only be abolished by destroying capitalism and building socialism was translated into life for the first time in the Land of Soviets. It will be appreciated that it was extremely difficult to solve the national question. There were various opinions on how the national problems of Russia could be resolved under Soviet power in a manner that would be speediest and most favorable for the proletarian class struggle.

In the summer of 1922 the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party set up a Commission under Stalin's chairmanship to draft a plan for the unification of the Soviet republics. Lenin was ill at the time.

In the discussion of the future relations between independent Soviet republics and the principle that should underlie their pending union, Stalin proposed an "autonomization" project under which the independent Soviet republics would accede to the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic as autonomous units.

This plan aroused objections from the leadership of some of the Communist parties in some of the republics. It was obvious that in practice "autonomization" would inevitably lead to a considerable

* The following is an excerpt from an article entitled "USSR: 50 Years," appearing in *International Affairs*, September 1972.

paring of the rights of the sovereign republics, and would in fact weaken their unity instead of strengthening it.

Lenin rejected the project outright, categorically stating his disapproval of the "autonomization" idea in a letter to the Political Bureau of the Bolshevik Party Central Committee in September 1922. He wrote that the task was not to destroy the independence of the Soviet republics but to build "another story," a union of equal Soviet republics. He suggested replacing Stalin's "accession to the RSFSR" formula by the principle of "unification with the RSFSR" on a basis of equality in a single union socialist state. Moreover, he underscored the need for all-Union directing bodies that would stand above the RSFSR to the same extent as above other Union republics.

Upholding the full equality of the uniting Soviet national republics, Lenin wrote: ". . . We consider ourselves, the Ukrainian SSR and others, equal, and enter with them, on an equal basis, into a new union, a new federation." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 421-422.)

Lenin's project was unanimously approved by the Central Committee in October 1922 at a plenary meeting which I attended as an alternate member of the Party Central Committee.

Later, in a letter headed "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomization'" (end of December 1922), Lenin wrote: "I suppose I have been very remiss with respect to the workers of Russia for not having intervened energetically and decisively enough in the notorious question of autonomization." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 36, p. 605.)

Never before had the danger of dominant-nation chauvinism been so sharply underlined by Lenin.

Lenin's Insistence On Attention And Respect For Every Nation

I should like to refer once more to Lenin's letter "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomization'" in order to stress how important it is for all Communists to know and remember the counsel given in it by Lenin that in the national question one had to proceed with "profound caution, thoughtfulness and a readiness to compromise." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 36, p. 608.)

Nothing obstructs the development and consolidation of class solidarity, Lenin noted, as national injustice (manifested in the form of sheer negligence or even jokes) and it is therefore of the utmost importance to consider with attention and patience the opinions of the working people of different nationalities, particularly of the small nationalities.

This caution showed how concerned Lenin was to find the best way to fight the accursed heritage of the past, the survivals of distrust

between nations, and to organize the Party's struggle against all manifestations of nationalism.

The Bolsheviks were aware that the internationalist unity of the working people of all nationalities and their team spirit in building the new society under the leadership of the Party of the working class formed the foundation of the Soviet multinational state.

They realized that to achieve this unity and build socialism it was necessary to surmount distrust between the different nationalities, fight every manifestation of bourgeois nationalism among the working people and unite them on the basis of common class interests, friendship and fraternal unity round the Communist Party and the Soviet power.

They appreciated the significance of successfully repelling the attacks of the class enemy, who, in order to poison the minds of the working people, disunite them and destroy the unity of their class ranks, utilizes any, even the most trivial, facts that may be interpreted as national injustice. For that reason the Communist Party has been and still is waging an unremitting struggle against bourgeois nationalism, which is a weapon of anti-Communism.

At the time the Union was formed Lenin enjoined the Party to pay special attention to the correct solution of the national question and steadfastly abide by the principle of proletarian internationalism. He stressed the significance and danger of nationalism both on the part of the former dominant nation and of the former oppressed nation, saying that "an abstract presentation of the question of nationalism in general is of no use at all. A distinction must necessarily be made between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation, the nationalism of a big nation and that of a small nation." And further: "For the proletariat it is not only important, it is absolutely essential that he should be assured that the non-Russians place the greatest possible trust in the proletarian class struggle. What is needed to insure this? Not merely formal equality. In one way or another, by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, for the suspicion and for the insults to which the government of the 'dominant' nation subjected them in the past." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 36, pp. 607-608.)

This formulation of the question, naturally, did not in any way imply that the Communists of small nations were absolved of the duty to educate their people in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, friendship and fraternity with the other peoples of the multinational Soviet motherland.

Enlarging on a thesis he had propounded earlier, Lenin wrote in his letter "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomization'" that

"internationalism on the part of oppressors or 'great' nations, as they are called . . . must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality of the oppressor nation, the great nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual practice. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question, he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view." (*Ibid.*, p. 608.)

Communists should always remember Lenin's injunction that here any disparagement and indiscriminate accusations of "social-nationalism" primarily hit the true interests of proletarian class solidarity and are prejudicial to proletarian internationalism. "That is why," Lenin noted, "in this case it is better to overdo rather than underdo the concessions and leniency towards the national minorities." (*Ibid.*, p. 609.)

In line with these propositions of Lenin the Russian people have done much to help the backward nations to advance swiftly and reach the high economic and cultural level that we are witnessing today and that astounds the world.

Exceedingly important in Lenin's letter was the prescription that "the strictest rules must be introduced on the use of the national language in the non-Russian republics of our union, and these rules must be checked with special care." (*Ibid.*, p. 610.)

The vital significance of these injunctions and recommendations on the national question is that they clear the way to the consolidation of the multinational socialist state and the further economic and cultural advancement of all the non-Russian Soviet republics. This has been borne out by the half-century record of the Soviet Union.

It is noteworthy that this last and extremely important letter stating his views on the national question was dictated by Lenin on the day the 1st All-Union Congress of Soviets was convened.

Prevented by illness from attending the constituent sitting of the All-Union Congress of Soviets on December 30, 1922, Lenin dictated the letter "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomization,'" finishing it on December 31. He thereby, in effect, took part in the work of the Congress, sharing with the delegates his innermost thoughts on the necessity for uprooting the old, pernicious heritage in national relations, consolidating close bonds of friendship between all the nationalities inhabiting the country, achieving complete trust among them and uniting them in a fraternal union in order to build socialism.

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets Votes For The Union

The drawing up and coordination of the principles for the forma-

tion of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proceeded intensively in the Soviet republics in the autumn of 1922.

With Lenin's vigorous participation the plenary meeting of the Party's Central Committee in October 1922 settled outstanding issues and removed erroneous propositions from the draft prepared by the CC Commission.

After this matters moved forward. The congresses of Soviets of the Ukraine, the Transcaucasian Federation and Byelorussia unanimously voted for unification in a single union state. The All-Russia Congress of Soviets was set for the latter half of December.

Lenin was suffering from fatigue due to overwork and his doctors increasingly limited his hours of work. In spite of this, in November 1922, he addressed the 4th Congress of the Communist International and a sitting of the Moscow Soviet.

He prepared to deliver the Government report at the 10th All-Russia Congress of Soviets and to participate in the Constituent 1st Congress of Soviets of the Union Republics. He wrote the notes and prepared the material for his address to this Congress. The delegates, I among them, arrived in Moscow and all eagerly looked forward to hearing him. To our disappointment he was categorically forbidden by his doctors to take part in these congresses.

The 10th All-Russia Congress of Soviets opened in Moscow in the evening of December 23, 1922, and remained in session until December 27. I was a delegate from the Kuban-Black Sea region. The Bolshoi Theatre was virtually packed with delegates from all parts of the country. There were more than 2,000 delegates with a casting or a deliberative vote. For the first time there were delegates from the Far Eastern Republic, which had only recently been cleared of the last invader.

Moreover, there were 488 guests—delegates who had come from three independent Soviet republics (the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Transcaucasian Federation) for the forthcoming Constituent 1st Congress.

The 10th Congress was opened by Mikhail Kalinin, Chairman of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, who noted in his opening speech that the Congress had been convened six weeks after the fifth anniversary of the Russian Soviet Republic. "The 10th Congress may be considered a jubilee," he said, "and in one field it is to a certain extent completing the work of all the preceding congresses by placing on the agenda the unification of all the Soviet socialist republics in a closer union." These words were greeted with applause, and when cheers were called for Lenin there was prolonged and stormy applause. Everybody rose and the words of *The Internationale* filled the hall.

A proposal was moved for sending Lenin a telegram expressing the hope that the ban imposed by his doctors would soon be lifted. We were greatly disappointed that this important congress was taking place without the direct participation of the leader of the Communist Party, the founder of the world's first socialist state and the initiator of the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It never entered our heads that we were not destined to see him again at congresses and hear his lucid and profoundly argued political speeches which no adversary could refute.

Lenin was elected a member of the Congress presidium.

The Congress heard and debated the Government's political report and reports on industry, education, finance and agriculture, and passed the corresponding decisions.

The report on the formation of the Union was delivered by Stalin. In view of the clarity on this question and the absence of differences among the delegates the report was not debated. Stalin said that a few days before the All-Russia Congress the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee had received resolutions of the congresses of Soviets of the Transcaucasian republics, the Ukraine and Byelorussia calling for unification in a single union state. The ARCEC Presidium had debated the question and found that unification was opportune.

The motivation for this was that the old treaty relations between the RSFSR and the other Soviet republics had played their positive part and were now inadequate.

Stalin analyzed the circumstances—economic and foreign political factors and class solidarity—that were making unification inevitable.

He noted that two independent Soviet republics—Khorezm and Bukhara, which were not socialist but people's Soviet republics—were for the time being outside the union. There was little doubt that with their further progress towards socialism they would also become members of the Union state.

Stalin then read a draft resolution that had been approved by the ARCEC Presidium. It contained propositions that had been adopted at the republican congresses: voluntary union and equality of the republics with each of them retaining the right freely to secede from the Union and receiving a firm guarantee of its national development.

A speech of greetings was made at the Congress by Mikhail Frunze, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Ukraine and Deputy Chairman of the Republic's Council of People's Commissars. The Congress gave him an ovation, the delegates crying: "Long live Soviet Ukraine! Long live Comrade Frunze, the victor over Wrangell!" Conveying greetings from the workers and peasants of the Ukraine,

Frunze said that the latest Congress of Soviets of the Ukraine had unanimously recognized the need for the immediate formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The close ties between the working people of the Ukraine and Russia had taken shape during the struggle against tsarism and had never been broken. The workers and peasants of the Ukraine were clearly aware that the Ukraine owed her liberation from the German invaders to the existence of Soviet Russia. The lessons of the five-year period since the October Revolution had reinforced them in their conviction that they could defend their gains only in the closest union with the working people of the other Soviet republics. There had not been a single vote against the idea of a union of Soviet republics at any of the congresses of Soviets beginning at the volost and uyezd and ending at the all-Ukraine level.

Speeches of heartfelt greetings were delivered at the Congress by Musabekov (Azerbaijan), Tskhakaya (Georgia), Lukashin (Armenia), and Chervyakov (Byelorussia). Cordially received by the delegates, they expressed the fraternal friendship of the peoples of their republics for Soviet Russia. They spoke of their people's ardent desire to unite in a single and equal union and of the enthusiasm with which this question was discussed at the congresses in their republics.

On December 26, 1922 the 10th All-Russia Congress of Soviets unanimously passed the resolution to form the USSR moved by the ARCEC Presidium. This resolution stated in part:

"1. To recognize as opportune the unification of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic and the Byelorussian Socialist Soviet Republic in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

"2. Unification to be founded on the principle of voluntary and equal membership with each of the republics retaining the right to secede freely from the Union of republics." (10th All-Russian Congress of Soviets, *Stenographic Record*, Moscow, 1923, p. 1.)

Such was the decision of this most representative Congress. It took place two years after the devastating Civil War and 18 months after an incredible famine caused by a terrible drought. The famine had been ended by the time the Congress was convened, and the task was now to eradicate the effects of the famine.

All of us, delegates, found the Congress decisions gratifying and were in high spirits. The Communist Party and the Soviet people had withstood stern tests. Soviet power had grown stronger. The economy was being successfully restored. The first encouraging successes of the cultural revolution, achieved in the face of desperate

poverty, had become perceptible.

All the conditions had thus matured and the republics concerned had completed the preparations for the formation of the Union. The final decision was now to be passed by the Constituent 1st All-Union Congress of Soviets.

First All-Union Congress of Soviets

A conference of representative delegations from the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Transcaucasian Federation was held in Moscow on December 29, 1922. The conference debated and approved the draft Declaration and Treaty on the formation of the USSR and the procedure for the 1st All-Union Congress of Soviets.

. . . There was a general feeling of elation as we went to the first sitting of the Congress on December 30, 1922. All of us, particularly those who had worked in the outlying republics, fully appreciated the significance of the formation of a Union state not only for the country's political development but also for its economic advancement and for the strengthening of its defensive capability.

The Congress was opened by the oldest delegate, Pyotr Smidovich, who was greeted with warm applause.

In my mind's eye I can see the arresting figure of this grey-haired man, an esteemed member of the Bolshevik Party.

In his short but vivid speech Smidovich said: "Our states have hitherto stood as separate armies on one and the same combat front. Together we defended one and the same cause: the power of labor, the power of the Soviets—against the combined front of imperialist governments, and built a socialist economy in the face of attacking capital. From the united force of separate republics we drew tremendous strength for resistance whenever danger loomed large. . . .

"This new stage in the unity of the Soviet republics is a source of further enormous powers of resistance and creation—incomprehensible and terrible to the capitalist world but gladdening, wonderful and attractive for the workers of all countries."

To our great disappointment illness prevented Lenin from attending the Congress. To the accompaniment of thunderous applause and cries of "Long live Comrade Lenin, leader of the world proletariat!" we elected Lenin Honorary Chairman of the Congress. Mikhail Kalinin was elected to preside at the sittings.

The floor was then given to Stalin, who read the Declaration and the Treaty on the formation of the USSR, which had been approved on the previous day by a conference of delegations from the four republics that were forming the Union.

"This day," he said, "marks a turning point in the history of the

Soviet power. It places a landmark between the old period, now past, when the Soviet republics, although they acted in common, each followed its own path and was concerned primarily with its own preservation, and the new period, already begun, when an end is being put to the isolated existence of the Soviet republics, when the republics are being united into a single Union state. . . . It is at the same time the day of triumph of the new Russia over the old Russia, the Russia that was the gendarme of Europe, the Russia that was the hangman of Asia. Today is the day of triumph of the new Russia, which has smashed the chains of national oppression, organized victory over capital, created the dictatorship of the proletariat, awakened the peoples of the East, inspired the workers of the West, transformed the Red Flag from a Party banner into a State banner, and rallied around that banner the peoples of the Soviet republics in order to unite them into a single state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

The next speaker was Mikhail Frunze, the delegate from the Ukraine, who used the Declaration and the Treaty on the formation of the Union state to show the fundamental distinction between the state development of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which had come to power. "We have been working on the wording of these basic documents for a long time," he said. "Their foundation was very thoroughly discussed at the national congresses of Soviets. All the propositions put forward at these congresses have been taken into account in the state documents submitted to this Congress. The Conference of representative delegates elected at the national congresses of Soviets has also worked on the wording. It scrutinized and debated each of these documents point by point.

"It would seem that all this is sufficient guarantee that the Declaration and the Treaty submitted to this Congress have been discussed quite broadly and comprehensively.

"Nonetheless, the conference of representative delegations of the four uniting Union republics has instructed me to table at this Congress the motion that the Declaration and the Treaty are to be adopted as a basis and that the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, that we shall elect here, is instructed to turn these key state documents over for additional discussion by the central executive committees for the Union republics so as to make it possible to take into account their final amendments and suggestions, draw up the final text of the Fundamental Law of the Union State and submit it for approval to the 2nd All-Union Congress of Soviets."

This motion was passed.

The Congress then proceeded to elect the supreme organ of the

USSR, the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, consisting of 371 deputies representing all the republics in the Union. I was elected to that body as one of the deputies representing the Russian Federation. There and then, at its first session the Central Executive Committee elected four chairmen (one from each of the Union republics as was recommended by Lenin). They were Kalinin (Russian Federation), Petrovsky (Ukraine), Narimanov (Transcaucasian Federation) and Chervyakov (Byelorussia).

Speeches of congratulations were made by Karim Yoldash-Bulatov on behalf of the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic and by Safayev on behalf of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic. They declared that the working people of their republics were in solidarity with the new Union. These statements were applauded. Further, they expressed the confidence that their people's republics would soon become socialist Soviet republics and would be happy to see themselves members of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Congratulations on behalf of the Comintern Executive were offered by V. Kolarov, who said that the Congress was of historic significance and that the Comintern was keenly watching how the Soviet republics were uniting and forming a new type of state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

S. M. Kirov, then Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, conveyed ardent greetings to the Congress from the proletariat of the Transcaucasus. "The day will soon come," he said, "when there will be not enough room here for the delegates from all the republics united in our Union." "Therefore, on behalf of the workers, I would suggest to our Union CEC that it should in the immediate future erect a building where the representatives of labor could gather in sufficient numbers. In that building, in that palace, which I believe should be erected in the capital of the Union, in its most beautiful and finest square, the worker and the peasant should find everything necessary to widen his horizon."

On behalf of the Ukrainian peasants the Congress was greeted by Odinets. We followed the wise, vivid and, I should say, philosophical speech of this Ukrainian peasant with the closest attention. He declared: "I will tell you what we village folk think of the present Union. Formerly there was a union of robbers, today there is a union of working people." He seconded Kirov's proposal for the building of a palace in Moscow as a monument to the worker and the peasant.

USSR And USA: A Contrast

In December 1972 the peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will observe the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of their multinational state. Most of the peoples of the world will join them. They will participate in this celebration because the lessons from this fifty-year Soviet experience can help them realize their own aspirations and hopes to live in a world free of exploitation, of racial and national oppression. It will be a demonstration in depth as to what the working class and oppressed peoples of all nations can and must do in order to achieve liberation from the yoke of capitalism and imperialism.

This eventful celebration has particular meaning for the people in the United States generally and for Black Americans and other oppressed minorities in particular. It brings to mind anew the history of the American nation and the contradictions within it. There was a time when the United States occupied first place in reflecting the aspirations and hopes of the peoples of the world. The American Revolution of 1776 was hailed by Thomas Jefferson as an act that had been performed on behalf of all mankind. It was one of those great social upheavals which profoundly altered the affairs of mankind for centuries to follow.

The great Lenin, in his message to the American working class following the October Revolution, made the observation that the American Revolution, which was bourgeois in character, was the most deep-going of all the revolutions of its time. Many a person in Europe sensed the importance of it and came here and fought alongside George Washington at Valley Forge and in other battles in which the British were defeated.

U.S.—A Nation of Many Peoples

In 1884 a Statue of Liberty was presented by the French people to the rising American nation. Inscribed on its pedestal in 1903 were the famous words of Emma Lazarus: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door." Emma Lazarus, a Jewish woman born in New York City in the year 1849, is famous for her courageous battles against anti-Semitism.

Tens of millions of immigrants poured in from Europe on promises

of bread to the starving, free land to the poor and freedom to victims of political and religious oppression. Indeed, America has been called "the child of Europe." Between 1820 and 1930 more than 37 million immigrants came to the United States. Working people of many nationalities and races had a share in building the country: Irish, Chinese, Italians, Jews, Germans, Scandinavians, Poles, Russians, Greeks, Mexicans, Japanese, Hungarians, Black people, Spanish-speaking peoples. These were the people who built the railroads, dug the coal, planted the cotton, forged the steel and slaughtered the hogs. These it was who worked in the fields, in the garment shops, on the farms and in the factories of the nation. Through their talents and hard labor the United States was built into one of the most powerful nations in the history of the world.

But these generally progressive advances were marked by a number of contradictions. When the founding fathers and the ideologists who followed preached the equality of peoples and hailed the United States as the dream of all mankind, this was only partly true. When Jefferson proclaimed that the United States had acted on behalf of all mankind, this was only partly true. For these generally progressive trends occurred within the framework of a continuous class battle. From the days of the revolution sharp class battles ensued between the bourgeoisie and other class strata—and whatever democratic advances were made had to be wrested from the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, the United States ruling classes erected a state which conducted the most barbaric and ruthless exploitation and persecution of peoples that the world has ever known. Genocidal treatment of the American Indian was a constant feature of the growth and development of the American nation. Black people were placed in chains and brought here to labor under conditions of slavery exceeding in brutality the worst features of the classical slave states of ancient times. Even to the South of the United States in the Spanish-speaking colonies, slavery, though brutal and barbaric, could not compare with what took place throughout the South of this country.

However, racism and national chauvinism were inflicted not only on peoples of color: Indians, Blacks, Spanish-speaking peoples, but also on many of the peoples comprising what is commonly called the white race. There was anti-Semitism, directed against the Jewish people, and even European people of non-Anglo-Saxon backgrounds—Slavs, Italians and others—found it exceedingly difficult to be accepted fully into the American scheme of things. Wherever a degree of assimilation has taken place, peoples of these origins still encounter prejudice and do not enjoy equal relations in this so-called free

commonwealth of peoples. Furthermore, wherever assimilation takes place, it is based upon adoption of Anglo-Saxon concepts and culture.

Thus, the United States developed as a nation of many peoples, an advancement for mankind, but at the same time it was a system of exploitation, persecution and discrimination that has no rival in history. It is in the struggle to do away with these contradictions that the people of the United States have much to learn from the experience of the Soviet Union in the building of a multinational state, a state which has proven in deeds that all races, all nations comprising mankind can live in peace, harmony and complete equality.

In addition to a long background of bringing together peoples of various nationalities and subjecting most of them to national and racial oppression, the United States today occupies first place in seeking to reverse the trends of the last fifty years during which the majority of the peoples of the world have won their freedom and independence from world imperialism. In contrast, the Soviet Union has followed a policy that corresponds to the needs and aspirations of the various nationalities and races of mankind. Soviet society proceeds in its development without the contradictions inherent in the development of the capitalist United States. The peoples of the USSR have constructed a state which corresponds to the advance of science and technology in the twentieth century, to a world in which these demand an internationalization of the affairs of man on the basis of equality of all peoples. Today's society calls for one world, for the brotherhood of peoples everywhere. And unless this is achieved the survival of mankind will be at issue.

Bourgeois nationalism and racism, byproducts of capitalism and imperialism, have always been costly ideologies. They have injured the perpetrators as well as the victims. But in the twentieth century the continuation of these ideologies threatens the very existence of the human race. Already in this century there have been two world wars resulting in the death of over a hundred million people. And as we near the end of the century, the world lives with the nightmare danger of a thermonuclear war which could destroy civilization as it is presently known.

The development of science and technology today brings with it the necessity for mankind to change the present relationships that exist among classes, races and nations. Unless this is done it will be impossible to use scientific discoveries to ease the burdens of the common people. In the hands of exploiting classes they can produce only misery, poverty and possible destruction for the mass of the people.

USSR—A Voluntary Union of Nations

The experience of the peoples of the USSR in the last fifty years points the way in which mankind can truly use the benefits provided by science and technology. It points the way to humanity's triumph over the forces of nature, to the extension of human life and to the building of a decent world for every human being on this planet. It is therefore in the interests of all working people and all peoples of the world to study very carefully the process the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics went through in order to realize these achievements. Such a study will show that therein lies the future hope of the world.

In October 1917 the Russian workers and peasants and the peoples comprising the more than 200 oppressed nationalities living in tsarist Russia stormed the gates of the Winter Palace in Petrograd and brought into existence the first working-class state in the history of the world. Among the first acts of the new state was a proclamation called *The Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People*—a declaration stating the rights of the peoples that comprised tsarist Russia. A Constitution was drafted which defined these rights. The character of the new multinational state was defined by Lenin in December 1919 in his well-known letter to the workers and peasants of the Ukraine concerning the victory over the White Guard General Denikin. He wrote:

We want a voluntary union of nations—a union which precludes any coercion of one nation by another—a union founded on complete confidence, on a clear recognition of brotherly unity, on absolutely voluntary consent. Such a union cannot be effected at one stroke; we have to work towards it with the greatest patience and circumspection, so as not to spoil matters and not to arouse distrust, and so that the distrust inherited from centuries of landowner and capitalist oppression, centuries of private property and the enmity caused by its divisions and redivision may have a chance to wear off. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 293.)

In the initial stages of the Revolution it was not possible to carry out in full the establishment of the federal form of state as it now exists. The circumstances between 1917 and 1921 dictated the necessity for the highest centralized form of apparatus. This was necessary in order to defeat the counter-revolutionary forces which tried to overthrow the new workers' government. The present multinational structure was formed in December 1922 as a voluntary union of Soviet republics. Today it embraces a total of 15 Union republics,

20 autonomous republics, 8 autonomous regions and 10 national areas. It laid the basis for building a multinational state which insured equality of all peoples concerned.

In order to implement guarantees of equality a Supreme Soviet was set up in the form of two chambers of equal status: The Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities. The Soviet of the Union serves to express the common interests of all citizens, irrespective of nationality, and it is therefore elected on the same basis of representation in all of the Union Republics: one member per 300,000 inhabitants. The Soviet of Nationalities expresses the specific interests of the different nationalities, on the basis of equality. In this body, all Union republics have equal representation, regardless of the size of territory or population. For example, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, which has a population of over 113,000,000 elects to the Soviet of Nationalities the same number of deputies as the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, which has a population of about 1,500,000. Each Union republic sends 32 deputies to the Soviet of Nationalities; each autonomous republic, 11; each autonomous region, 5; and each national area, one.

Advances of Formerly Oppressed Peoples

Experience has shown that political equality is not meaningful without economic equality. The Bolshevik Party was very conscious of this fact and from the very beginning began to take steps to change the economic situation of the peoples who had formerly been persecuted by the tsarist regime. In March 1921 the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party set the next task in national development with the following declaration:

Now that the landowners and bourgeoisie have been overthrown and Soviet power proclaimed by the masses in these countries as well, the task of the Party is to help the working masses of the non-Great-Russian peoples to overtake Central Russia which is in advance. (*Tenth Congress of the RCP(B), Stenographic Transcript*, Moscow, 1963, p. 603.)

Based on this unselfish approach by the working class of the formerly oppressing nations the more backward areas in a relatively short period of time achieved economic equality with the more advanced sectors of the country. The wide scope of these accomplishments is illustrated by data on the growth of industrial production in individual Union Republics in the outlying areas of the former Russian empire.

In 1970 industrial production in the USSR was 92 times that in 1913. Over the same period it grew 101 times in Byelorussia, 146 times in Kazakhstan, 188 times in Kirghizia, 184 times in Armenia, and so on. Even more spectacular changes have taken place in the autonomous republics. For example, in the Komi Autonomous Republic it increased 223 times, in Bashkiria 477 times, and in Kapardino-Balkaria 2,435 times.

This rapid growth of the productive forces in the Union and autonomous republics provided the prerequisites for aligning the material and cultural standards for the country's whole population.

Some of the republics formerly oppressed under the tsar, such as Uzbekistan, have not only achieved equality in the economic complex of the Soviet Union but have greatly outstripped other nations on their borders, such as Iran, Afghanistan and India. They also surpass in many areas such industrially advanced countries as France and England. It is estimated that the number of doctors in Uzbekistan in relation to population is higher than in France or England. The Soviet experience in which the whole country was engaged in a massive program to uplift the former oppressed peoples economically brought greater benefits to the Soviet people as a whole. Prior to these developments the Soviet Union was rated very low as an industrial country. At the time of tsarist rule the country as a whole was economically backward relative to other capitalist countries. Tsarist Russia was primarily an agricultural country based in most cases on the most primitive methods of tilling the soil.

During these fifty years of Soviet power in which top priority was given to economic development in the more backward regions, there were also achieved great cultural and scientific advances in these formerly backward areas. For example, Uzbekistan in Soviet Central Asia has a population of more than 10 million. Before the October Revolution, this population was 98 per cent illiterate. Under Soviet power Uzbekistan has become a highly industrialized modern republic, with a highly educated population. This is miraculous, considering what pre-1917 Uzbekistan was like.

In 1924, the Uzbek SSR was formed as an equal republic with Russia and the Ukraine within the Soviet Union. Hundreds of Russian scientists and technicians volunteered to go to Uzbekistan to help establish centers of science, education and industry in these early years. Today, the Uzbek SSR has 150 per cent more scientists than there were in all of tsarist Russia in 1917. There are more Uzbek students per 1,000 of population than there are in the United

States or Britain. There are 30 colleges and universities and 200 research institutes in Uzbekistan. And so on.

Another outstanding advance is that of the Jewish people. Under tsarism Jews were treated like animals. They had no rights at all and were forced to live in ghettos which were living hells. They were subjected to bloody pogroms. After the Revolution one of the first acts of the new Soviet Government was to make anti-Semitic utterances or actions a crime. Today the Jewish people participate fully in all aspects of Soviet life—economic, social and political—and in many cases far out of proportion to their percentage of the population.

During these fifty years of Soviet power in which top priority was given to the development of the economies in the more backward regions, the country as a whole has prospered. It is a fact that one of the major reasons why the Soviet people were able to withstand the greatest military assault in history by the Nazi armies was the ability of the Soviet Union to get full support from the peoples in the formerly more backward regions. This ability had been enhanced by the genuine expressions of brotherhood by all Soviet republics in the years preceding World War II. Thus, the achievement of equality among all the peoples of the Soviet Union was a major factor in deterring the Nazi warlords from occupying and plundering the whole of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union's economic development was also enhanced as a result of that policy. Even though statistical data show that the highest growth rates took place in the backward areas, the growth rate of the Soviet Union as a whole advanced to such a point that the entire state was transformed from a backward agrarian country to the second most powerful industrial state in the world. And by the end of this century, no doubt, it will be the most powerful industrial country in the world.

These developments, and the prospects of greater achievements to come, show that people of formerly oppressed nations can advance their standard of life while at the same time carrying out measures to undo the harm that had been created by their oppressors over a period of hundreds of years.

The experience generated by Soviet power internally has also had its effects in the world in general. This is observable first of all in the economic relations that have been established among the socialist countries, expressed in the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). The principles applied within the Soviet Union to less developed regions have been applied to the relations between the

Soviet Union and the other nations making up the CMEA. At its 1972 session it adopted a statement which says:

The CMEA member-countries consider that:

The gradual drawing closer and evening out of the economic development levels of the countries in the socialist community is an objective historical process in the development of the socialist world system. This process is determined by the socialist nature of the relations of production in the socialist countries and the development among them of political, economic, scientific and technological cooperation and mutual assistance.

Just as within the Soviet Union, this relationship, which gives priority to the less developed countries, does not retard the growth and development of the more advanced countries.

In addition to the aid the Soviet Union gives to less developed countries in the socialist community, it also has given unselfish aid to the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Countless billions of rubles have been poured into these countries to help them develop their own economic potentials as well as the military means to defend themselves. An outstanding example of this is Vietnam.

What the Soviet Experience Teaches Us

As already indicated, the experience of the Soviet Union in cementing the unity of peoples of diverse levels of social, economic and political development provides an example of how, in the 20th century, mankind can achieve the unity of all the peoples of the world. And this example has special meaning for the oppressed nationalities in the United States—for example, for Black Americans and peoples of Spanish-speaking origin. Due to the intense persecution and exploitation of these categories of people with the rise of the nation, there have developed at various stages of the struggle strong tendencies among them to seek separation from the United States in one form or another. Even though the Black and Spanish-speaking communities do not possess the characteristics of separate nations, as oppressed national groups they experience many similar forms of national oppression and of psychological reaction to them. At the present time there are strong waves and currents of separatism in the Black community and among the Chicano people. While these currents and trends do not represent a majority viewpoint within either people, the forces which expound such views have a powerful influence on the ideology of the people as a whole. Their ability to win converts arises from the lack of confidence that the working

class within the oppressing nation can rid itself of chauvinist and racist attitudes.

Soviet experience proves, however, that the working people of an oppressing nation can be won for putting an end to national and racial oppression. It proves that racism and national chauvinism are not inherent in people but are a product of capitalism and imperialism. It shows that in our time working-class power is the means through which total liberation of oppressed peoples can be effected.

Soviet experience shows that without the coalescence under working-class leadership of relations of equality among all of the peoples formerly oppressed under the tsar, victory would not have been attainable. Thus, in the struggle for working-class power any movement or ideology—racist or bourgeois-nationalist—which tends to weaken the unity of the working class objectively aids the continuation of imperialist rule and the persecution of oppressed nationalities. In this regard, long before the Soviet state was established, Lenin and the Bolsheviks fought against chauvinism among the Great Russian people and at the same time fought against nationalist deviations of a separatist nature among the oppressed peoples. They did so because they realized that victory would not otherwise be possible for either the working class or the oppressed peoples. Similarly in today's United States Black Americans and other national minorities cannot win their freedom and equality except in the context of a struggle by all democratic forces led by the working class.

The Soviet experience further demonstrates that not only will socialism create the conditions for the equality of various races and nationalities but will also provide guarantees for such relations. That is the meaning of the state structure which was erected, of the action in which the "House of Nationalities"—the great Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—was created, thereby giving political equality to all minority peoples within the Soviet Union.

The present government in the United States, despite all the lofty talk about equality of peoples, is constructed in such a way that minority groups could never have an equal voice in the affairs of this nation. Therefore in the battle for socialism, based on Soviet experience, eventually it will be necessary to create a state structure in which the Black people, Spanish-speaking peoples, and all the other peoples of the United States can live in complete equality. It is not possible at the present time to ascertain what form this will take. Life itself will dictate the form.

In this connection it must be kept in mind that Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not conceive in advance of the Soviets as the form

through which the power of socialism would finally come. This form evolved out of the experiences of the struggle for power in the USSR. Nor was a federal form of government established immediately upon the assumption of power by the Soviets because, as already pointed out, the struggle against counter-revolutionary forces required a highly centralized form of government. But this was only a temporary necessity, and if it had been maintained after the defeat of the counter-revolution—the new Soviet state perhaps in time would have eroded.

Therefore, it becomes necessary to establish the federal form of government. It is not possible at all times to predict the zigs and zags that the working-class and people's movements will have to take in order to achieve their goals. But it is of primary importance to understand the content and the conditions that will be required for their achievement. Even now the Soviet people do not hold forth the structure of their state as the form through which peoples in other countries will have to proceed. This point is highlighted by Comrade Nikolai Podgorny, who writes as follows:

The chief international significance of the five-decades-long experience of the Soviet multinational state is not that it has produced model solutions of the national problem which are final and immutable in detail or form, but that our experience is indicative of the correctness and effectiveness of a national policy tested and carried on according to class criteria. After all, it is a fact that the voluntary union and lasting friendship of the peoples of our country developed in the course of a joint revolutionary class struggle and the subsequent transformation of society on socialist lines. The experience of our multinational state is of historic significance because it has shown that socialism is the only basis on which the national question can be settled in every respect. (*World Marxist Review*, July 1972.)

This important lesson of Soviet experience—that socialism is the basic prerequisite for the solution of the national question—must become the guideline for Black Americans and other minorities here in the United States. Any other approach can only lead the masses up a blind alley.

A Mighty Union Of Nations

"One for all and all for one" is a cherished motto, commonplace in the memory of all. The great French writer, Alexander Dumas, made it the slogan of the swashbuckling heroes of his well-known novel, *The Three Musketeers*. But in the land of the Soviets it is no longer a mere ideal but a succinct description of an ever-developing reality in the character of relations between the nations and nationalities which make up the great family of peoples that is the *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*.

More than 100 distinctive nations and nationalities, with representation of practically every racial type, and expressing themselves in some 70 languages, compose the 247 million people who inhabit the expansive territory of the USSR.

The conscious and voluntary cooperation of the members of this great family of nationalities, encompassing some 1/12th of all the people of the earth, forged a union for the attainment of their common goals and to safeguard and attain the fulfillment of their individual aspirations.

The union of the multinational population of the Soviet Union is realized on the basis of the combination of two constituent organizational aspects: *class interests* and *national interests*.

On a Solid Base of Class Unity

The primary foundation of the unity bonds of the Soviet people rests upon the all-nationality common fraternal working-class material interests and commitment to the building of socialism and the realization of communism. It is, above all else, the international (and interracial and intercultural) organizational ties of the working class of all the nationalities which constitute the unseverable links at the foundation level of the unity of the mighty USSR, a "nation of nations." And in the leadership of the system of international working-class organizations of Soviet peoples of all nationalities, stands forth the highest organized formation of the Union-wide vanguard of the class and of all working people, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; this, guided by Lenin's science of Marxism, was the first party of socialist revolution, the pioneer party of the construction of socialism over one-fifth of the earth's surface, the leader in the march of the nations toward the communist future of mankind.

Secondly, the peoples of the Soviet Union are organized as a com-

plex of free and equal national communities, autonomous national regions and sovereign national state formations.

The USSR is a state union, a federation of 15 national republics wherein "the sovereignty of the whole is organically combined with the sovereignty of its components—the Union Republics." (S. Rashidov, "Triumph of National Policy," *Sovietskaya Moldavia*, September 1, 1972.)

In addition to the sovereign republic status of the 15 nations which compose the Union, all nationality communities of people enjoy the right to territorial autonomy in which to exercise their culture and national language, and provide the determining leadership of their own national development. There are in the USSR 53 Union republics, autonomous republics, autonomous regions, and national areas. Every nationality, large or small, with new languages (some 45 nationalities acquired a written alphabet only since the October Socialist Revolution) or old languages, enjoys the full equality, respect and dignity of all others.

The October Revolution, led by the Russian Communist Party headed by the great Lenin, not only resulted in the emancipation of the working class from capitalist exploitation through the overthrow and abolition of capitalism, but it liberated imperialist Russia's "prison house" of its captive nations and oppressed nationalities.

On December 30, 1922, at the First All-Union Congress of Soviets, meeting in Moscow, delegations representing all the formerly oppressed peoples and nationalities of the Soviet Union joined with their revolutionary working-class liberators (first among whom was the Russian proletariat) in the formation of a multinational state of free and equal nationalities, a state of a type new to history—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

This USSR, this voluntary union of friendly working peoples of many tongues and national features, in the course of the last half century has inscribed epoch-changing achievements in the history of the world. It has done so in terms of the vast socio-economic advances made by the Soviet peoples in such an historically short span of time, and in terms of the unprecedented heroic and selfless service rendered to the peoples of the world on the fields of battle for mankind's salvation from fascist slavery, in solidarity with the peoples fighting free from imperialist bondage. It has done so in upholding the cause of peace, equality and friendship of peoples, and in advancing world science and culture.

One of the greatest achievements of the USSR, and probably its most important contribution to the world's peoples, is its own creation. The USSR has been developing and modeling a prototype

structure and living example of a state wherein peoples of different nationalities, races, and unequal material and cultural beginnings, can attain freedom and growth in relationships of mutual aid and interchange of values, as brothers and sisters in a happy family governing themselves on a rational, just and equal basis.

What are some of the material indices of the historically unequalled strides forward registered by the peoples of the USSR which attest to the superiority of the USSR as a state system, as a humane, rational and fraternal people's community?

Fruit of Cooperation and Socialism

Life expectancy of Soviet people has more than doubled since the last decade of the tsar's empire. It is now one of the highest in the world—70 years. But it is not only the number of years of life that has increased; the quality of living has been enormously enriched and at a pace unequalled in the history of any people.

As compared to 1922, the year the USSR took its present state form, the national income has increased 112 times. Between 1950 and 1971, it increased 5.6 times, while the national income of the United States merely doubled. The gross national wealth of the U.S.S.R. is estimated to be over 1,200 billion dollars!*

And there is not one capitalist on the scene to rake off a cut for himself from this wealth, which belongs to the whole people. Indeed, three-fourths of the annual wealth accumulation in the USSR goes directly to the satisfaction of the material and cultural needs of the people. Since the Revolution, the average income of industrial workers has increased 8.3 times, while that of farmers is now 12 times what it was in 1922.

This is in startling contrast to the well-known fact that the lion's share of the wealth of our nation is in the exclusive command of a mere handful of billionaires and that the whole production process is geared to the satisfaction of the profit greed of the capitalist-monopolist clique of robber barons.

Currently, the USSR's share in world industrial production is one-fifth; in 1922 it amounted to a mere one per cent!

In 1922 the Soviet Union's steel production was barely one per cent of that of the United States, whereas today, at 120.7 million tons, it surpasses the U.S. output and that of every other country in the world.

In general, mechanization has replaced the former woefully bur-

* All Soviet statistical data cited are from the publication *Soviet National Economy: 1922-1972* by the USSR Central Statistical Board, Moscow, 1972.

densome toil of man and mules in the agricultural production in the USSR. The 15,500 state farms and the 32,000 collective farms which produce the foodstuffs and industrial raw materials are scientifically operated, electrified, modern, up-to-date establishments. And the technical and cultural levels and resultant sociological changes in the life-styles of the 40 per cent of Soviet people who still work in the countryside, grow closer to and in many areas already approximate, those of the 58 per cent who are urban dwellers. By 1972 the gross output of agricultural produce had increased to five times what it was in 1922.

The Peoples Prosper

In the Soviet Union, "the wealth of the nations" is the riches of the people. Income from wages and salaries is but a smaller part of the whole picture of the steadily rising living standards of the people. The main thing is the collective, social "wages" received by all Soviet citizens without any discrimination or favor. Public funds insure free medical aid, free tuition, pensions, vouchers for sanatoria and holiday homes, and other social benefits.

There are 28 doctors and 111 hospital beds for every 10,000 persons in the whole Soviet Union, as contrasted with only 1.8 doctors and but 13 beds per 10,000 in 1922.

Each year for the past five years, some 10 million people have acquired new housing in the USSR. New housing is increasing at a present annual rate of 92 units per 10,000 of the population. This ratio will increase during the course of realizing the current (9th) 5-year plan.

The rapid rise in production and dramatic gains in the material means for satisfaction of the ever-expanding "creature comforts" requirements of Soviet men, women and youth are accompanied by an ongoing revolutionary advance in providing for the cultural needs of the people. The characteristic feature of Soviet culture is its internationalist, working class, socialist content, manifested in and through a wide diversity of national forms. Soviet culture is a harmonious ensemble of interrelated distinctive national components, progressively undergoing a mutual enrichment of one another, as each part strives for excellence in making its contribution to the whole.

Before the Revolution, some 45 of the 100 nationalities who spoke different tongues had no written languages. And three-fourths of the whole population—including those with the most advanced cultures, like the Russians and Ukrainians—could neither read nor write. In the areas between the largest cities, where the overwhelming

majority of the peoples lived as peasants and poor workmen, illiteracy held sway.

Today, the 50th anniversary jubilee year of the USSR's establishment finds the Soviet people ranking first among the nations of the world in mass educational attainment. Some 80.2 million people attended some educational establishment. At any given time, one of every three Soviet citizens is engaged at some level in academic, scientific or technical studies. Of all the scientific workers in the world, one-fourth (1,002,900) are in the USSR.

The Soviet Union leads the world in book publishing: it prints every fourth book published in the world. Since 1922 some 38.3 billion books have been printed in the USSR, not alone in Russian, but in all of the 89 languages spoken in this unique family of fraternal nationalities, as well as in 56 foreign languages. The Soviet writers continue the rich literary traditions of the past in Soviet times. The concert hall and theatre stage of the USSR enjoy world renown for their magnitude and their artistry.

It would take many more pages simply to catalog the most remarkable socio-economic and cultural attainments of the USSR as a whole over the past 50 years. But the most vivid picture of the USSR's meaning for mankind is seen in the advantages which accrued to the formerly most oppressed peoples under this model socialist state system.

From Last Place to Front Runner

The spectacular advances registered in the life of some of these peoples are summarized in the following passage from an article by the Soviet historian, E. V. Tadevosyan:

To overcome the backwardness of many peoples inherited from the past, the Soviet state, in the process of socialist construction, took measures to insure that the economy and culture of the national regions develop faster than those of more advanced regions. Thus, while the industrial output of the USSR as a whole increased 92 times on the average between 1913 and 1970, the increase in Kazakhstan and Moldavia was 146 times, in Armenia 184 times, in Kirghizia 188 times. In the standard of education the population of these republics have either closely approached or even exceeded the average for the country. According to the 1970 all-Union census the number of employed people with a higher or secondary (complete or incomplete) education per 1,000 in 1970 was 653 in the country as a whole, and 654 in Kazakhstan, 663 in Uzbekistan, 682 in Turkmenia. While the number of college students of Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian nationality increased 26-28

times between the 1927-28 and 1968-69 academic years, the number of Turkmen students increased during the same period 212 times, of Kirghizian students, 220 times, of Tajik students, more than 250 times, of Uzbek students, more than 280 times, of Kazakh students, more than 310 times.

The accelerated development of the national regions made it possible for nations, which only a few decades ago had lagged behind for several historical epochs, to catch up and to enter socialism simultaneously with the other peoples of our country and share in the building of a developed socialist society. ("Soviet People—A New Historical Community," *Voprosi Istorii KPSS*, No. 5, 1972.)

People of Color in the Two Worlds

It is particularly instructive to contemplate the comparison in status between such a formerly oppressed people of the USSR and the Black American people of the United States. The Kazakhs would be classified as "Black" or "colored" or "Negro" if they lived in the USA, as distinguished from the "white"-skinned Americans.

The number of Black American people in the United States is approximately twice the size of the Kazakh population in the USSR. (Black Americans are about one tenth of the total U.S. population, while the population of Kazakhstan is about one-twentieth of the population of the USSR.)

The people of Kazakhstan (being a full-fledged nation) exercise their right of political self-determination as an independent state, a free and equal member of the 15 Union republics which comprise the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It has its own legislative, judiciary and executive branches of government, as well as its own economic, social and political institutions and administrative structures. It has a flourishing culture and its own language. While the 12-million-plus Kazakh people exercise the commanding political power in their national territory and enjoy unchallengeable equality and access to everything everywhere in the entire USSR, such political democracy and total enjoyment of civil rights is not the condition of the 25 million Blacks of the USA.

As for a just participating share in government, much less self-government in the areas of their majority in the population, Black Americans—despite two centuries of bitter struggles—are far from securing this democratic objective.

There is only one Black man in the U.S. Senate of 100 members. In the House of Representatives, where 435 are seated, sit only 11 Black congressmen and one Black congresswoman. One of them, Congressman Louis Stokes, pointed to the fact, during a speech on

the floor, that, "Of the more than 500,000 elected officials nationwide, less than 1 per cent are Black although Blacks are 11 per cent of the total population." And in the southern states, where fully half of the 25 million Black Americans still live, they hold only 40 of the 1,085 state legislative seats.

In the administration of the courts, only a token number of Blacks wear the robes of judges. (But how different it is when the prisoner totals are compiled!) Out of 459 federal judges there are 21 Black men and 1 Black woman. Yet of the prisoners given sentences of death and executed between the years 1930-1967, Blacks accounted for 53 per cent of the total. In the jails of the largest cities, Blacks account for 70 to 80 per cent of the total number of prisoners. "Not that we are more criminal than others," as Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois wrote, "but we are poorer and Black folk and therefore more often arrested."

Though just 11 per cent of the population, Blacks are 20 per cent of the unemployed. Those finding work are customarily limited to the least desirable, hottest, heaviest and hardest toil at the lowest wages. (In 1970, of the low-earning household workers, 42 per cent were Black.)

According to the figures of the Department of Commerce, one of every three Blacks lives in poverty, and in 1970 lived at an average level of \$1,300 below the poverty line. One-half of the total number of Black teen-agers are jobless and out of school.

Of the 300,000 physicians in the U.S., only 6,000 are Black. Where the majority of Blacks live in New York City—in the ghetto areas of Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, etc.—there are only 10 doctors available per 100,000 people. The overall ratio for the city is 278 doctors per 100,000 people.

In New York City, where 55 per cent of the school population is Black, only 10 per cent of the teachers and 5 per cent of the principals are Black.

Kazakhstan, where 98 per cent of the people were illiterate only some 50 years ago, now has over 150,000 of its own teachers. It has a splendid university and a system of 19 colleges. Under the direction of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences are some 165 research institutions engaging the creative labor of thousands of scientists and scholars, among whom are 300 Kazakhs who have earned Doctor of Science degrees. In the Kazakh language alone, there have been published 12,700,000 copies of books of 898 different titles by the Kazakh literary and scientific workers.

Black Americans, though they are twice as numerous as Kazakhs and have been a component people of a multinational state four times

longer than the lifetime of the USSR, know no such status as the Kazakhs have attained. And the reason lies neither in any fault of Black Americans nor in the stars. The reason for the difference in achievements is in the fundamentally opposite nature of the social systems within which these respective peoples live and work.

The deprivation of Black Americans is a resultant of the operations of the class exploitative system of capitalism. The swift rise of the Kazakh people from agonizing backwardness to a people standing shoulder to shoulder with the world's foremost achievers, in the front ranks of socio-economic progress and at the highest cultural levels, is a consequence of the socialist transformation of the political and economic system following from the destruction of the chains of capitalist-imperialist bondage.

Whereas laws and constitutions of capitalist countries such as the United States proclaim "equality of rights," which is given certain formal legal recognition, the reality is that *equality* under capitalism is deprived of any real substance for the masses because they are denied the *material means* to exercise the "equal rights." Frederick Engels stated it long ago:

. . . capitalist production takes care to insure that the great majority of those with equal rights shall get only what is essential for bare existence. Capitalist production has, therefore, little more respect, if indeed any more, for the equal right to the urge towards happiness of the majority than had slavery or serfdom. (*Ludwig Feuerbach*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p. 35.)

Behind such a record of great material accomplishments of the peoples of the USSR in the economic and socio-cultural fields is the unfolding of the politics of social revolution. It speaks to the leadership role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, skillfully and determinedly guiding socio-political development in accord with the ideological heritage of Marxist-Leninist science, and in correct application of the Leninist principles and concepts to the solution of the national question in general, and to the correlation between the national interest and working-class internationalism in particular.

The Light of Lenin's Teachings

What are some of the principle Leninist concepts which guide the practice of the USSR in respect to harmonizing and developing in their interdependence the national and class aspects of this new community of Soviet peoples, the citizenry of the USSR?

The first concept, that contributed most to the realization of the first genuine multinational state of free and equal peoples in history, the USSR, has to do with Lenin's theory of the organizational inter-

national composition characteristic of the Communist Party.

The operations of imperialism itself objectively enlisted the national liberation movements into the world revolutionary process. The struggles of oppressed peoples to throw off the yoke of imperialist domination were allied to the struggle of the working class against the ruling class of monopolists, of capitalist exploiters. The struggle for national emancipation became a specialized form of the international class struggle against the exploitative reign of capital. Lenin enlarged upon Marx's great slogan, "Workers of the world, unite . . ." to encompass this new objective relationship: Lenin's call was—"Workers of the world and *all oppressed nationalities*, unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains."

"The socialist revolution," Lenin wrote in 1919, "will not be solely, or chiefly, the struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie—no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all the dependent countries, against international imperialism." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 159.)

Lenin perceived that the struggle for socialism is inseparably connected with the struggle of the oppressed peoples for liberation from the imperialist chains of national oppression. He saw that the victory of the working class over capitalism required from its vanguard party consistent work to forge a conscious common revolutionary front of the two component aspects—class and national—of the freedom-seeking masses enslaved by imperialism.

To provide the leadership to this historically prescribed combined operation against capitalist-imperialism required a working-class party of a special type in terms of its own composition. *For a leadership party of the working class to carry out historic international tasks, it had itself to be international, not only in concept and principles but in its physical composition.*

The party of the Communists of Russia, before and after the revolution, was ever a model of an association of men and women without exclusion or distinction as to nationality, racial or cultural origin. The fraternal international and inter-racial composition of the Party added to its prestige and authority in waging the ideological struggle and performing massive educational work to overcome the bourgeois heritage of chauvinist and nationalist prejudices in the minds and practice of the masses of toilers.

By the precept of its own example and by ardent political-educational work in the course of leadership of the workers' struggles, Lenin's Communists won the main forces of the organized working class of Russia to the principle of internationalism as the obligatory

form for the trade unions and all the class organizations of the proletariat. Lenin insisted on the inter-nationality brotherhood of the workers, on class unity across all national lines, as *the organizational form as a matter of principle* and an indispensable requirement for waging an effective struggle against capitalism with all of its international aspects. Internationalism of the working class of Russia was promoted internally and externally as the key ingredient in Lenin's prescription for readying the working class and ensuring it the leading role in the social revolution.

At the very beginning of his life's work, Lenin had formulated this guiding concept. "It is necessary to strengthen, despite the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists of any nation—the unity of the workers of *all* the nationalities in Russia." (*Where to Begin*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1958.)

Lenin reared the Communists and, through them, the Russian proletariat, in the spirit of a common brotherhood with the working people of all nations and nationalities. He established in their consciousness not only the humanity of the demand for equality of all peoples of whatever nationalities and for their inherent right to be free, but also the revolutionary need for the closest alliance with them in the common struggle. Such an alliance could be realized only on the basis of the proletariat of the oppressor nation coming out for their freedom and "equality in all things," including, for oppressed *nations*, political self-determination—the equal right to form their own states and to secession if they so chose.

Working-Class Solidarity Key to Unity

Lenin taught, and the history of the rise and flourishing of the USSR has proved, that the firmest bonds of an enduring unity can be welded between the proletariat of the *oppressor people* and the movement of the oppressed nationalities *providing* the Communists, in the first place, work at it. Lenin wrote that "socialists must explain to the masses in the *oppressor* nations that they cannot hope for their liberation, as long as they help oppress other nations. . . ." He said: "This was the point of view adopted by Marx when he taught the proletariat that 'no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations.'" And further: "Only this point of view can lead to a consistent application of the principle of combating any form of the oppression of nations; it removes mistrust among the proletarians of the oppressor and oppressed nations, makes for a united international struggle for the socialist revolution (i.e., for the only accomplishable regime of complete national equality), as distinct from the philistine Utopia of freedom for small states in gen-

eral, under capitalism." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 293, 294.)

Lenin also called for struggle to eradicate practices and attitudes of racism, the ideological poison and "practice of barbarism" that is inspired by the imperialist ruling class to "justify" its enslavement of the oppressed nationalities and to foster division among the toiling masses.

The objective opportunity for realizing in life the coming together into a single allied front of the working class and of the national liberation aspects of revolutionary struggle is not an automatic or easy thing to accomplish. It requires that the Party pursue a firm, principled course in respect to building international relations between the working class and the oppressed peoples based upon the teachings and principles set forth by Lenin and wholly verified in the more than half a century of experience of the CPSU.

In the national question (as in all other aspects of the revolutionary process), Lenin's point of departure was always from the perspective of the international working class interests as against those of the bourgeoisie (national and international). He said:

If the proletariat of any one nation gives the slightest support to the privileges of its "own" national bourgeoisie, that will inevitably raise distrust among the proletariat of another nation. It will weaken the international class solidarity of the workers and divide them to the delight of the bourgeoisie. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 289.)

Lenin taught that the workers of the oppressing nation must be won to a recognition of the fact that:

The policy of oppressing nationalities is one of *dividing* nations. At the same time it is a policy of systematic *corruption* of the people's minds. . . .

But the working class needs *unity, not division*. It has no more bitter enemy than the savage prejudices and superstitions which its enemies sow among the ignorant masses. The oppression of "subject peoples" is a double-edged weapon. It cuts both ways—against the subject peoples and against the Russian people. That is why the working class must protest most strongly against national oppression in any shape and form. It must counter the agitation of the Black Hundreds, who try to divert its attention to the baiting of non-Russians, by asserting its conviction as to the need for complete equality, for the complete and final rejection of all privileges for any one nation. (*Ibid.*, pp. 237-238.)

Without ending national division between the workers of the two largest national components of the class, victory over tsarism was impossible, Lenin argued. He said:

The Great-Russian and Ukrainian workers must work together, and, as long as they live in a single state, act in the closest organizational unity and concert. . . . This is the imperative demand of Marxism. All advocacy of the segregation of the workers of one nation from those of another, all attacks upon Marxist "assimilation," or attempts, where the proletariat is concerned, to counterpose one national culture as a whole to another allegedly integral national culture, etc., is *bourgeois* nationalism, against which it is essential to wage a ruthless struggle. (*Ibid.*, p. 33.)

In general, in respect to the multinational capitalist states, Leninism holds that: "There is only one solution to the national problem (insofar as it can, in general, be solved in the capitalist world, the world of profit, squabbling and exploitation), and that solution is consistent democracy." (*Ibid.*)

Here Lenin, showing the relationship between the struggle for democracy in general and the fight for the special democratic rights of the oppressed nationalities in particular, also takes off from the point of common *class* interests of the toilers of both the oppressed and the oppressor nationalities.

"Working-class democracy," Lenin said, makes "the demand for the unconditional unity and complete amalgamation of workers of *all* nationalities in *all* working-class organizations—trade union, cooperative, consumers', educational and all others—in contradistinction to any kind of bourgeois nationalism. Only this type of unity and amalgamation can uphold democracy and defend the interests of the workers against capital—which is already international and is becoming more so—and promote the development of mankind towards a new way of life that is alien to all privileges and all exploitation." (*Ibid.*, p. 22.)

With the leverage given by a strengthening of the international, common class-bonds between the workers of the oppressed and oppressing peoples, Lenin saw that freedom for the oppressed nationalities would manifest itself in one or another form of territorial political structure. Those oppressed nationalities who were constituted as nations could demand to exercise their right to independent state sovereignty and determine voluntarily their respective relationship to other states.

The Forms of National Political Freedom

Lenin's policy on the solution of the national question calls for support to the *right of nations* to self-determination up to secession. At the same time, he pointed out that within such a new state, "the class-conscious workers do not advocate *secession*. They know the

advantages of large states and the amalgamation of large masses of workers." (*Ibid.*, p. 110.)

The national question, however, is much more extensive than that of the subjugated nation-state; it is also a matter of the oppression and suppression of communities of people in different stages of social development and making up different types and configurations of national formations.

To provide oppressed nationalities, who were not in the category of nations, with an appropriate form of territorial autonomy in which to exercise the power and direction over their own lives and development, Lenin considered as a necessary part of a correct program for the solution of the national question. In this connection he saw raising the demand to replace "obsolete divisions (gerrymandered political-administrative units, such as wards, districts, counties—J. E. J.) by others that will conform as far as possible with the national composition of the population." (*Ibid.*, p. 50.)

As we have seen, the USSR today is composed of not merely the 15 equal national republics, but within the member republics of the Union there exist autonomous national republics, autonomous national regions and national areas—all of which have representation in the Supreme Soviet as well as the Soviet of the respective republic.

While championing *the right* of self-determination of nations, Lenin strongly opposed any "consecration" of nationalism on the part of the proletariat. Always, he put the question: "Which should be put first, the right of nations to self-determination, or socialism?" And always, he answered: "Socialism should." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 27.)

Furthermore, he said: "It is the Marxist's *bounden* duty to stand for the most resolute and consistent democratism on all aspects of the national question. The task is largely a negative one." That is, to "Combat all national oppression? Yes, of course!" But this position does not admit of support to national exclusiveness, or of national egotism, which "converts bourgeois nationalism into an absolute category" and "exalts it as the acme of perfection." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 34, 35.)

"... the Marxist fully recognizes the historical legitimacy of national movements," Lenin has written. "But to prevent this recognition from becoming an apologia of nationalism, it must be strictly limited to what is progressive in such movements, in order that this recognition may *not lead to bourgeois ideology obscuring proletarian consciousness.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 34. Emphasis added.)

The class-conscious workers never come out for separatism or

nationalist divorcement from other peoples. Lenin stresses:

The proletariat cannot support any consecration of nationalism; on the contrary, it supports everything that helps to obliterate national distinctions and remove national barriers: it supports everything that makes the ties between nationalities closer and closer, or tends to merge nations. . . .

For the working class to command the requisite forces for ousting the exploiter and oppressor class from power, establish the rule of the proletariat, organize the economy on the basis of the socialist ownership of the resources and means of production along with abolition of private exploitation of social labor; in short, for the working class to gain the socialist revolution, it must win to its side the oppressed nationalities in battle for their freedom by championing their national liberation cause.

Correspondingly, for the oppressed people to win their national freedom from the imperialists, they need to ally their cause to that of the working-class struggle for socialism.

By helping the Russian proletariat to overthrow the common oppressive ruling class, the prisoner-nations of Russian imperialism participated in creating the socialist socio-economic and political conditions for securing their own national freedom and abolishing all manner of national, racial and cultural inequality, discrimination and humiliation.

To further the process of construction of socialism and to bind closer the ties of unity and fraternity of the many peoples whose cooperation and revolutionary action made possible the victory of the proletariat and the establishment of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party carried out Lenin's principle of rendering to the formerly oppressed peoples every possible material aid so that they could liquidate the evil heritage of under-development in the shortest period of time. By allotting resources in a disproportionately greater share to those nationalities which had been held back and most victimized by imperialist exploitation and oppression, these peoples were able to leap from their former unequal status and take their place alongside of the more developed nations in a relatively short span of years.

The Soviet Example Speaks to Multi-Millions

When one considers that there are some 2,000 distinctive peoples in the world—nations, tribes—and something less than 150 states, it is apparent that the problem of the solution of the national question and its relationship to social revolution is one of the most important social tasks of the contemporary period.

The experience and spectacular accomplishments of the Soviet Union in solving the problem of realizing the aspirations of formerly oppressed national communities to equality, freedom and unfettered material and spiritual development, affirm the power of Marxist-Leninist theory and Party guidance for the solution of the most complex of revolutionary problems.

The great flourishing community of free and equal peoples—the USSR—stands forth as a model and witness to the creative power of the Leninist way to the freedom, happiness and kinship of the nationalities.

For there in the USSR, all-round socialist development has taken place, under the leadership of its Leninist Communist Party, wherein racial tensions, national antagonisms and inequalities between nationalities have become things of the past. In the USSR, which was born only 50 years ago, “new, harmonious relations, relations of friendship and cooperation” have formed “between the classes and social groups, nations and nationalities,” and out of the common victorious struggle for constructing and defending socialism, “a new historical community of people, the Soviet people, took shape,” to the glory and inspiration of mankind. (L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 24th Congress of the CPSU*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1971, p. 90.)

The imperialists resort extensively to fomenting racialism, and try to disunite the various sections of the working people on national grounds in the hope of weakening the position of socialism, splitting the ranks of the international communist and working-class movement. Bourgeois propaganda strives to implant nationalistic views in the minds of the peoples of the socialist states, and to use nationalism to undermine the socialist system. It is necessary to constantly propagate the ideas of proletarian internationalism, of friendship and the fraternity of nations, and to provide a timely political assessment of the hostile attempts to resurrect nationalistic sentiments and views. It is necessary resolutely to denounce the ideologists of anti-Communism, both Right and “Left” revisionism, nationalism and chauvinism. (*On Preparations for the 50th Anniversary of the Formation of the USSR*, Resolution of the CC CPSU, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1972.)

IDEAS IN OUR TIME

HERBERT APTHEKER

Racism and War*

The President of the United States, when asked last week to characterize his general outlook, replied: “My approach is probably that of a Disraeli conservative.” The discrepancy between his utterances and his practices has been so great that the resulting “credibility gap” is notorious; yet, in this remark made to an interviewer from a friendly newspaper, one thinks Mr. Nixon has told the truth.

Disraeli was, of course, prime minister of Great Britain at a time when its imperialist policies were brought to their pinnacle; it was during his terms in office that Britain annexed the Fiji Islands and the Transvaal in Africa; that British troops undertook what were called “punitive expeditions” against Ethiopia and wars against the Afghan and Zulu peoples; that British hegemony was consolidated—temporarily as it turned out—over Egypt and India. While, in a word, Disraeli died before Kipling published “The White Man’s Burden,” it was the Disraeli policy that epitomized the spirit conveyed in that poem:

*Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait, in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.*

* In connection with the officially-adopted Call of the United Nations to make of the 1970's a “Decade of Vigorous Action to Combat Racism,” the North American Section of the International Commission on Racism called a conference on “Racism: A Threat to World Peace.” This was held at the UN Church Center in New York City, November 10-11, 1972. Endorsing the Conference were: Southern Christian Leadership Conference; African Heritage Studies Association; People's Coalition for Peace and Justice (Western); California Black Leadership Conference; Canadian Peace Committee; and Committee for International Peace Action. The Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy served as Chairman, and Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett was its Coordinator. The luncheon speaker at the Conference's final day was Dr. Aptheker; his remarks follow—Ed.

Elsewhere in the same interview, the President of the United States expressed himself as chagrined and even surprised that somehow, "Many Americans got the impression that this was an ugly country, racist, not compassionate"; he means here, obviously, many white Americans, for clearly even Mr. Nixon would not be astonished to know that the approximately thirty-five million citizens of the United States who are Black and Brown and Yellow and Red have the "impression" that this is a racist country.

Many white Americans must have learned that colored peoples in the United States die first, are sickest most often, have the lowest incomes, pay the highest rents for the worst homes, suffer unemployment rates two and three and four times greater than colorless folk, endure the greatest illiteracy, gain the least education, are hired last, are fired first; and they must have decided or come to suspect that these social conditions are socially induced and are not the result of innate deficiencies in the victims. That is to say, they must have rejected a racist explanation for the undeniable facts; but how does Mr. Nixon explain these undeniable facts? If his explanation is not racist—is not that of a Disraeli conservative—why, then, does he announce in this same interview a planned abandonment of massive governmentally sponsored assaults upon the conditions producing those data? Is it because he is a racist and therefore does believe that the people who are victimized suffer because of their own immutable defects?

The President, as we have seen, believes not only that to label the present social order in the United States as racist is wrong; he believes also that the present social order is a compassionate one. But he knows that in accordance with his commands over four million tons of explosives have been hurled upon the peoples of Indochina since he took office in January 1969, which may be compared with the two million tons of explosives employed against the Axis Powers in all theatres of World War II by all the Allies. Is it possible that the President of the United States does not know what I know—and read in the *New York Times* (October 4, 1972)—that sworn testimony before a Foreign Operations and Government Information Committee of the U.S. Congress affirmed that the U.S.-financed "Phoenix" program in South Vietnam had resulted in the murders of 20,587 so-called "Vietcong agents," that this program acted on the policy of killing suspects rather than bothering with "administrative problems and procedures" and that some of these suspects had been killed through starvation and that others "had had rods slowly tapped into their ears until their brains were penetrated"?

How is it possible for the President of the United States to speak of compassion on the one hand and to command a force that hurls millions of tons of explosives upon a small country and tortures prisoners to death through starvation and by piercing their skulls with steel rods? Racism explains this. The victims of such policies are looked upon as less than human and their extermination—whether through the stationary crematoria used by Hitler or the mobile crematoria used by Nixon—may be viewed as a huge sewerage project.

Here is an editorial in a leading newspaper during the period of the "pacification" of the peoples of the Philippines; it appeared in the *San Francisco Argonaut* in January 1899: "The rack, the thumbscrew, the trial by fire, the trial by molten lead, boiling insurgents alive, crushing their bones in ingenious mechanisms of torture—these are some of the methods that would impress the Malay mind. It would show them that we are in earnest. . . . This may seem to some of the more sentimental of our readers like grim jesting. It is not. It is grim earnest."

The next year, this same newspaper—a leading Republican organ of the period—said: "We do not want the Filipinos. We want the Philippines. The islands are enormously rich, but, unfortunately, they are infested by the Filipinos. There are many millions there, and it is to be feared their extinction will be slow." That same year, Senator Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina—representing the same forces as those behind the newspaper and consumed by the same racist poison that permeated the California editors—said on the floor of Congress: "We took the government away. We stuffed the ballot boxes. We shot Negroes! We are not ashamed of it."

. . .

War is as old as history, and opposition to war is perhaps as old. These two realities lead some to conclude that the source of war lies in nature or in human nature, but such a conclusion is erroneous. Wars are not natural phenomena; they are man-made; they are, better, state-made; which means they are made by those who rule states and are made for the benefit or assumed benefit of those dominating the states at war.

Systems based on the private appropriation of profit will seek sources of such profit and will look jealously upon competitors in that search. Fundamental sources of such profit have been the riches and the labor power of the continents and the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The assaults therein have been especially brutal and naked; they have required special rationalizations. Some of the

latter were of a religious character but fundamentally they were of a racist character flowing from the happy fact that the peoples inhabiting the lands whose riches were desired and whose labor was coveted were colored. At first it was insisted that these colored people were not people but rather beasts; when that posture could not be maintained in the face of reality, the lie was fitted to the consequent needs and the people were admitted to be people; but people of a hopelessly, significantly, permanently and innately inferior character (always the assumption being made that the standard—for “inferiority” and “superiority”—was that set by the racists themselves).

To obtain the riches required war. To obtain and then hold the laborers meant war. To rationalize the entire ghastly business meant racism. The rationalism grew upon what it fed and became not only a rationalization for events but also the source of events. Racism not only justified making war; it was the reason for making wars of extermination, of genocidal proportions. It has been a motivating force—second only to the fundamental socio-economic force at the base—which has made war and preparation for war the most constant and most lucrative business in the four-hundred-year history of capitalism.

Of course all this evoked wars of resistance, wars of liberation, wars to affirm one's dignity and one's humanity. Oppression always induces resistance and as ignoble as is a Jefferson Davis, so noble is a Nat Turner; as ignoble as is a Richard Nixon, so noble is a Ho Chi Minh.

It is President Nixon, who in the same interview to which reference already has been made, remarked that those who thought the United States was racist tended to mistake a mole for a cancer. I fear it is Mr. Nixon whose diagnosis is faulty. It is his system which is indeed cancerous; and he—with his words about compassion and his deeds of torture and mass extermination—is a suitable advocate of such a system.

Oppression not only induces resistance; in inducing resistance it helps forge people's leaders of genius. So it is in the United States. The special oppression of the Afro-American people explains the fact that the leaders of their resistance in the 19th century and in the 20th century were the two foremost figures in the history of the United States: I refer, of course, to Frederick Douglass and to William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. To explicate fully this seeming paradox would take us too far afield for this paper—though its reality undercuts the heart of racism. But the name of Du Bois reminds us that

there is the person who devoted his marvelously long life to the struggle to transform a society based upon human exploitation and buttressed by racism. It is Du Bois who saw very early and with marvelous clarity the relationship between modern war and colonialism and between imperialism and racism. It was he who, very early and with enormous persistence, emphasized that the exploitation of the dark peoples of the earth by the masters of so-called White Civilization was at the root of the wars tormenting the earth and was leading to the decay and death of that oppressing civilization.

It was he who, back in 1917, warned the racist masters “that the integrity of your souls and minds is at stake.” “You cannot,” he then continued, “thus play with a human problem and not spoil your own capacity for reason.”

In the midst of the First World War, back in 1915, Du Bois wrote: “The domination of one people by another without the other's consent, be the subject people white or black, must stop. The doctrine or forcible economic expansion over subject peoples must go.”

And as World War II was drawing to a close, in 1944, he insisted:

The hope of civilization lies not in exclusion, but in inclusion of all human elements; we find the richness of humanity not in the Social Register, but in the City Directory; not in great aristocracies, chosen people and superior races, but in the throngs of disinherited and underfed men. Not the lifting of the lowly, but the unchaining of the unawakened mighty, will reveal the possibilities of genius, gift and miracle, in mountainous treasure-trove, which hitherto civilization has scarcely touched; and yet boasted blatantly and even glorified in its poverty. In world-wide equality of human development is the answer to every meticulous taste and each rare personality. (Essay in: R. W. Logan, ed., *What the Negro Thinks*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1944.)

His ultimate conclusion—and the logic of his life and work—is well known and sticks like a bone in the throat of the likes of Nixon and his servitors: in his 90th year and in an autobiography posthumously published he wrote with characteristic directness: “I now state my conclusion frankly and clearly: I believe in communism. . . . After earnest observation I now believe that private ownership of capital and free enterprise are leading the world to disaster.”

It is characteristic of our society that while Kipling's “White Man's

Burden" is well known and was originally published in leading journals here and in Europe and has been reprinted a million times, the reply to it by Henry Labouchere was published by its author in an obscure magazine owned by himself and has since faded from almost all the books and anthologies that matter and that are studied in schools. Still, here is a stanza from that parody of Kipling, also published in 1899:

*Pile on the brown man's burden;
And if ye rouse his hate,
Meet his old-fashioned reasons
With Maxims up to date.
With shells and dum-dum bullets
A hundred times made plain
The brown man's loss must ever
Imply the white man's gain.*

While Lyndon B. Johnson was still in Congress and had not yet assumed the mantle of President, he remarked that it was necessary for the United States to maintain an air force superior to any other in the world. Specifically, in the House on March 15, 1948, Mr. Johnson said: "No matter what else we have of offensive or defensive weapons, without superior air power America is a bound and throttled giant; impotent and an easy prey to any yellow dwarf with a pocket knife."

Well, the "dwarfs" now have the support of all enlightened Man-kind; moreover they have more than pocket knives now and neither Texas Rangers nor "compassionate" mass murderers have been able to conquer them. Both these inter-related realities not only refute racism; they assure the defeat of that system which fathered the monstrosity.

A Reply to Art Shields

Art Shields' review of my Mike Gold anthology (*Political Affairs*, July 1972) requires comment. The differences between Shields' position and mine are of some significance, for they reveal our rather different approaches to the writing of history, and specifically the history of the American Left. I should like to explore some of these differences in an attempt to clarify for the readers of *Political Affairs* just what I have to say about Mike Gold's life and work, and why my book does not deserve the opposition of Mike's good friends.

Shields says that I offer a "false picture" because of my "negative tone" and my "failure to understand the political sources of Mike's strength." On the contrary, I would argue that Shields' view of the past is romanticized and simplistic. What he calls "negative" is mostly the observation of facts which he wishes would evaporate, or the exercise of a critical method which sometimes leads to uncomfortable conclusions.

One of the main problems in talking about Mike Gold's career is that he himself was a romantic who often wrote uncritically and misleadingly of the past, his own especially. An example of what I mean is this: Shields repeats the story from *Jews Without Money* about how Mike's father was a house painter who became an invalid as a result of lead poisoning and a fall from a scaffold. My

Introduction points out that Mike's father was *not* a house painter, not a worker employed by someone else, but a small businessman—a very poor one, to be sure—and I argue that the father's hopes and failures at making it in capitalist America had an important effect on Mike's career. Whatever reasons Mike may have had to change the facts of his life and work, we have no license for repeating such misinformation.

Shields' method of speaking only "positive" things of Mike and his movement would render us unable to learn much of any value from experience. Mike had a lot of flaws. The Communist movement has made a mistake or two in fifty years. Indeed some of those mistakes hurt Mike. (Politics can be a source of weakness as well as strength.) But one reads Shields' review in vain for an indication of such understanding or awareness. One finds instead querulous attack upon attempts to deal with unescapable problems on the Left.

For instance, Shields is distressed that I say the Communist movement was in "disarray" in 1954. But it plainly was, as he himself speaks of "the comeback of the Party" which "came later." Likewise, Shields does not like the observation that Mike was talking "buncombe" when he wrote an article about how a new "people's front" was gathering in the depths of the McCarthy period.

But consider what Mike later wrote in his memoirs about the same period (I am quoting from the unpublished manuscript):

For years the most disheartening thing I knew was when . . . I would come to one city after another and find myself speaking to an audience of people all of whom were people with lined faces which had seen trouble and white hair as the result of sleepless nights over McCarthy. The audiences were old. We had lost all our youth and no movement lives and continues for a year without the youth.

It is not "negative" to say that Mike tried unconvincingly to put up a brave front in rotten times when privately he was feeling "disheartened." It is simply the truth. Likewise with Mike's touch of cynicism. It does no good for Shields to be "indignant" and "outraged" at me for saying Mike was "a little cynical" in his old age. I base that observation on scores of lengthy interviews with Mike during the last years of his life, and I must stick by it. Certainly Mike had good moods. I am sure that Shields has letters from Mike written during the last decade of his life which show him to be cheerful and optimistic about the world. (I'd very much appreciate having copies of these letters for inclusion in Mike's papers.) Indeed the sketch of Mike's life in my Introduction concludes by describing how the political and cultural events of the 1960s gave Mike new hope, in spite of his declining health. But I want to

show and talk about what is tough and dispiriting about the life of a literary Communist, as well as what is gay and fulfilling and heroic. We must see the whole picture.

Similarly with the story about Hemingway cussing Mike out. As to its veracity, I purposefully cited my source so that the reader would know wherefrom I spoke, and judge independently whether or not to take the tale seriously. My reason for including it at the beginning of my Introduction is that it effectively emphasizes my central observation that Mike's continuing commitment to the Communist movement resulted in his alienation from the mainstream of bourgeois liberal literary opinion after the Second World War. I think it a mistake to continue to exploit sometime friendly relations between the Communist movement and big-name non-Communist cultural figures, when enmity is often the outcome. Shields adduces the *New York Times* obituary of Mike as counter-evidence that Mike had cordial relations with many literary figures. Alden Whitman, who wrote the notice, is a sympathetic man who always does his best to speak well of the Left-wing dead. (Incidentally, he got most of the information Shields approves of from me.) It is true that Mike was in thick with people like Hemingway when such people were open to the Left in the 1920s and 1930s. But they did not remain friendly. That is the point.

To Art Shields, Mike Gold remains very much an insider, a

beloved old comrade. But to most of the people who are the potential audience for a new anthology of Mike's work, Mike seems all the way outside, a pariah, as I call him. To say that Mike was detested by his enemies in the realms of American literature is simply to state the necessary truth. It is the place to begin an inquiry into his embattled career.

As for the "filth" Shields finds in the Hemingway anecdote, one may point out that it is no longer a breach of etiquette in publishing to quote obscenities. I quote the story—and its language—from a book by a Princeton professor, after all, and I doubt that the Communist press need be more old-fashioned than he.

Shields reminds me of some remarks I made in the *National Guardian* five years ago about Mike being ill-rewarded by the radical movement. I would write more specifically today. But I do continue to wonder what considerations led the Soviet Union to give a Lenin Prize to the prosperous Howard Fast, who soon defected, while Mike Gold remained as poor as he was faithful to the end.

It is important to clear up a possible misunderstanding about the publishing of this anthology. Shields mentions his efforts to raise money for Mike, and he speaks of Mike's family's decision to use the money to finish Mike's work after his death. No money Shields raised was spent by me or on me for the preparation of the anthology, nor has any been used in my work on the memoirs. The small publisher's advance I was

paid for the anthology did not begin to cover my expenses.

Shields adds to his review of my anthology an attack on Michael Harrington's Afterword to the most recent edition of *Jews Without Money*. Shields criticizes Harrington for failing to grasp the political impetus behind Mike's best work. Shields also levels this charge at me, and it might seem that I agree with the Right-wing social democrat on this matter. This would, however, be very wide of the truth. Among other things I wrote a review article on the republication of *Jews Without Money* (*The Nation*, February 28, 1966) in which I criticized Harrington for this very fault. Perhaps Shields' uneasiness about this point means I should have dealt with the matter more thoroughly and analytically, but it did not seem necessary to me to go out of my way to stress things like Mike's lifelong support of the Soviet Union and his commitment to the Communist party of the United States in a book published by the Communist press and filled with writings which make such support and such commitment plain.

I feel a little "stung" by the animus of Shields' discussion of my work, especially after the *Daily World's* reviewer was at least equally critical. The issues are much too important to take the whole thing personally, but I want to set the record straight on one point about the nature of my personal involvement in Mike Gold's affairs, which Shields misunderstands. In the affair of the botched republication of *Jews*

Without Money, it was not Mike, but I, who "fought back" and had the amputated lines replaced at the end of the book, and I can prove this with voluminous files of correspondence with editors and publishers and lawyers. Mike was glad to get justice, but he was too tired and discouraged to do the fighting himself.

One last point. Shields is justified, I think, in wishing this anthology included more of Mike's journalism. Were I starting over again, I would figure out how to include more. But the topical nature of much journalism often demands extensive editorial remarks to elucidate the work, and I felt that I had obtruded myself into the book quite enough already. Besides that, I put this book together with the knowledge that the memoirs were still to come, and that there Mike's journalism would get full play in a more appropriate format. Still it

Differences With Folsom

Michael Folsom is right in saying that our differences are of "some significance." These differences are political. They have clouded the outlook of many progressive intellectuals during the cold war. And they are reflected in a negative attitude towards Mike Gold's party and a chilly one towards the Soviet Union.

I will not regard Folsom's attitudes as final, however. He is willing to discuss differences. Discussions can be fruitful. And his

is too bad that Shields had to attack the editor at length for the contents of this anthology, in the face of the fact that the Introduction states that the contents of the book were essentially of Mike's own choosing. Nothing he planned to include was left out.

I am sorry that Art Shields and I cannot agree about the best ways to serve Mike Gold's memory. Shields' long dedication to the radical movement and his fond friendship for Mike deserve our respect. But so do my efforts to come to grips with Mike's career and to present the best and most significant of his work to new readers. Should I be even so dreadfully mistaken as Shields makes me out, my part in this book is a small one, and the main thing is to go ahead with open eyes to appreciate and understand what Mike had to say, rather than getting mired down in squabbles with me.

ART SHIELDS

outlook may become closer to Mike Gold's when the book of Mike's memoirs appears. But I must deal now with the record before me.

I regret that he had nothing good to say about the Communist Party in his Introduction to the *Mike Gold Anthology*. He referred to it only in a negative way. And I noted in my article in *Political Affairs*, that his "only references to the last forty years of the Soviet Union are chilly ones about

'Stalin,' the 'Molotov-Ribbentrop pact,' and the 'Moscow trials.' The latter are dragged in three times. But the U.S.S.R.'s liberation role in Cuba and Vietnam, which thrilled Mike, and its immense socialist progress, are ignored."

I'm sorry that Folsom ignored this fundamental criticism in his reply. He is listed on the cover of the *Mike Gold Anthology* as a specialist in "American Radical Literature" for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A scholar in this field can hardly be ignorant of the vital role of Mike Gold's party in building the big industrial unions that changed U.S. history. Mike often wrote about it. Nor can he be unaware of the Communists' heroism in Spain and in the war against the fascist Axis, and of their fearless struggle for peace and democracy in the McCarthy years and since. They fought alone for peace in the most difficult witchhunting times. Why then did he make only negative references to Mike's party in his study of Mike?

The editor of the *Mike Gold Anthology* must also know—as Mike knew—that the Soviet Union saved him and the rest of the world from fascist slavery. I also doubt whether he is blind to the fact that the first land of socialism is the supreme example of the victory and power of the working class and that it is the biggest force for world peace. It is leading the march to the future. And I must remind him that Mike Gold wrote enthusiastically about "the great Soviet Union" not long before his death.

Folsom chides me for "speak-

ing only positive things of Mike and his movement." He says the Communists made mistakes that hurt Mike. These mistakes are no secret, however. Every group of human beings makes mistakes at times, and the Communists have not hidden their mistakes. Their biggest mistake was Browderism, with its theory of class peace. This wartime mistake not only hurt Mike. It hurt every worker as well.

If Folsom will reread my essay he will find that I quoted Mike against Browder. And if he will study the Party press he will discover that this mistake was corrected, and that the Party benefited by analyzing this unfortunate history. Other mistakes are also criticized and corrected. But I did not think it necessary to enlarge on such matters in a tribute to our great people's writer.

I am accused at the same time of putting exclusive emphasis on the "positive" qualities of Mike himself, although Mike had "a lot of flaws" in Folsom's opinion. But I don't apologize for this. I was not hunting for "flaws" when I was expressing my admiration for the author of *Jews Without Money*, *The Strange Funeral in Braddock* and other works of genius. I wanted to awaken our youth to the beauty and strength of this splendid Communist writer.

Nor do I apologize for regarding Mike as a "beloved old comrade," although I'm not sure what Folsom means by the term "insider." But he will find, in rereading my essay, that I did not criticize his assertion that the

Communist movement was in "disarray" when Mike toured the country in 1954. I do not think that his term, "disarray," gives an accurate picture of the situation. The Party still functioned in an organized way. But I did not quibble. I knew that the Party suffered heavy losses when its leaders were framed under the fascist Smith Act and the anti-Communist hue and cry was sounding in the land. I saw those losses in my travels as a reporter, and Mike lists some of the casualties in the lines that Folsom quotes. But I indignantly rejected the crack that Mike was "talking buncombe" and "knew it" when he predicted a people's comeback.

Mike could become discouraged at times. But he never lost faith in the future. And I suggest that Folsom reread the closing part of Mike's report of his trip. His report, "The Troubled Land" appeared in *Masses and Mainstream*, the Party's cultural magazine, in July 1954. It said in part:

I believe in the American people. Nothing in this trip made me change my belief. Slowly, in confusion, groping in the fog of malice made by opportunists and saboteurs, the People's Front is being born in America. . . .

I can repeat that I felt better about the country after seeing it again at close range. An image from a certain cartoon by Daumier occurs to me. It was made after the betrayal by the tinpot dictator, Louis Napoleon. Daumier drew a majestic tree trunk that had been stripped by a blast of lightning. "Dear France, the

trunk is shattered but the roots are still sound," wrote Daumier.

Mike's faith was fulfilled. The people's comeback began in 1955 when Senator Joe McCarthy, the arch-witchhunter, was discredited.

The worst thing Folsom said about Mike was that Mike became "a little cynical." This charge is repeated in Folsom's letter and he is rather scornful of me for objecting. I doubt, however, whether he realizes the implications of his words. But Webster's *New World Dictionary* is quite precise. "Cynical," it says, means "inclined to question the sincerity and goodness of people's motives and actions or the value of living." It also means "morose, sarcastic, sneering, etc." No other definition is given.

Cynicism is the disease of the soured bourgeois or petty bourgeois. It has embittered the old age of many capitalist journalists I knew. But it is alien to one who is full of love for the working people and full of confidence in their victory.

Folsom attributes this alleged cynicism to "many a disappointment, like the truth about Stalin, the 'Moscow trials,' the defection of many old comrades." But there was nothing cynical in Mike's tributes to the Soviet Union in the middle 1960's, not long before his death. In his *Change the World* column in *The Worker* on May 30, 1965, Mike denounced the "filthy morass of the anti-Soviet cold war," and lauded the Soviet Union for saving the Jewish people.

"If it were not for the Soviet

Union," said the author of *Jews Without Money*, "Hitler would have slaughtered every Jew of the 15,000,000 then alive. It has always seemed disgraceful to me that any Jew, however infected with the current distrust of Russian Socialism, should forget for a minute to be grateful to the Soviet hero-martyrs who gave their lives to crush Hitler."

I'll be disappointed if this tribute is not included in Mike's memoirs, which Folsom is editing.

The Jewish people were saved while Stalin was leading the Soviet Union. In another paragraph in the same column, however, Mike says that Stalin in his final years "developed a pathological suspicion of minority people, including Jews." But Mike added that after Yiddish publications and books "were restored to Soviet life, the anti-Soviet reactionaries still continued their slanders."

These slanders, said Mike, were answered by Paul Novick, editor of the *Morning Freiheit*, after a long Soviet tour in 1964. "His facts showed that the damage done by the cruel accident of history was not a permanent part of the Socialist system."

I think the reader will agree that this column does not fit in with Folsom's charge that Mike had become "a little cynical" in his old age as the result of the "truth about Stalin."

Mike also denounced the anti-Soviet slanderers in a *Change the World* column in *The Worker* on May 31, 1964. His subject was John Reed, the author of *Ten Days That Shook the World*,

among the finest examples of reportage from a U.S. pen. Mike dealt with Max Eastman's lie that John Reed soured on the Soviet Union before his death in Moscow in October, 1920. Then Mike said: "Such slanders have ever been the familiar weapons of the enemies of the people. . . . The great Soviet Union itself, how foully it has been slandered since the first enormous day of judgment when it was born."

Eastman's slanders are rejected by the Soviet people. John Reed's masterpiece has been published in millions of copies. A play about it packed a Soviet theater recently. And Mike's column joyfully refers to a festive John Reed day in the city of Serpukhov. *The Worker* story about it came from my wife Esther and myself.

I do not know what Mike and Folsom talked about in the period when Mike was writing these columns. It is possible that Folsom unwittingly misinterpreted some things that Mike said.

Some of Folsom's other differences are based on misunderstandings. For example he objects to my referring to Mike's impoverished father as a house painter rather than a suspended shop owner. But I was discussing *Jews Without Money* as a magnificent work of social art. I therefore stuck to the material in this autobiographical novel.

Another point: I was not thinking of Michael Folsom when I criticized Michael Harrington's *Afterword* in the Avon edition of *Jews Without Money*. And I welcome Folsom's declaration that he

disagrees with this "Right-wing social democrat."

I also welcome the information that Folsom made the fight to restore the revolutionary conclusion of *Jews Without Money*. But I do not agree that the revolutionary ending seemed to be "tacked on," as he said in his Introduction to the *Anthology*. I think it is a logical climax to what went before.

Another point: I did not "attack" the *Anthology* editor for his selection of Mike's works. I praised many of them, but expressed disappointment that some of Mike's best things were left out. I explained, however, that: "My disappointment is not based

mainly on differences of opinion about *Anthology* items. I am most disturbed by the negative tone of some of the editor's comments and by his failure to understand the political sources of Mike's strength."

Finally, I will not argue whether it is a "breach of etiquette . . . to quote obscenities." I will only say that I do not like dirt on my front door, and that if there is a place for obscenities it is not on the opening page of the Introduction to a *Mike Gold Anthology*.

I close with the hope that the publisher will bring out another volume of Mike Gold's writings.

BOOK REVIEWS

DANIEL MASON

An Ex-Communist "Confessionalist"

A key aspect of U.S. monopoly capital's continuing struggle to maintain its rule is psychological warfare, not only against the peoples of other capitalist countries and of the socialist world, but also—and most vigorously—within our own country. The basic elements of this psychological warfare are anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism. That is only natural from monopoly capital's viewpoint. Communism and particularly the Soviet Union, because of its magnificent develop-

ment as a socialist society, are the greatest peril to the maintenance of power by U.S. monopoly capital. The monopolists know that if the people of the United States become aware of the facts—that the Communists offer a viable alternative to the exploitation and oppression of capitalism and that this alternative has become a reality in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries—they will turn toward the Communists. Therefore, U.S. monopoly capital mobilizes all its

ideological and police powers to instill fear of Communism, fear of the Soviet Union, in the minds of the people. Their objective, since 1917, has been to quarantine the U.S. from Communism.

A New Tactic

Among the instruments U.S. monopoly capital uses in its anti-Communist, anti-Soviet campaign are stoolpigeons and ex-Communists. Originally, these elements were employed to present a picture of the Soviet Union as the main enemy of our country, and of the Communist Party as a conspiratorial, subversive organization, the agent of the Soviet Union. The objective was to jail leaders and members of the Communist Party in efforts to destroy the Party and to frighten people away from it.

But in recent years this tactic has failed. Such books as *I Spied for the FBI in the Communist Party*, or *I Led Three Lives* no longer have any impact. People have learned that the lies of the stoolpigeons and government informers have been used only to victimize some of the best people in the working class and among the progressive forces in the country, and that they endanger the personal liberties of all the people.

This has forced the ruling class to turn to a new tactic, namely, to "prove" that the Communist Party and its program cannot make the changes that the people feel, however inchoately, are necessary, if exploitation and oppression are to be ended. For this a different type of agent is

necessary, the ex-Communist who has been in the Party for some time and has left in "disillusionment." The latest specimen of this type to be pushed into the limelight is Joseph Starobin, who had been in the Communist Party for 20 years and who had been for a part of that time foreign news editor of the *Daily Worker*. Starobin has just published a book in pursuance of this tactic.*

But while the tactics may have changed, the character of those employed to promote the ideological anti-Communist campaign is not greatly different. Starobin is just as much a "witness" for the prosecution of the Communist Party by U.S. monopoly capital as any lowly stoolpigeon. He unconsciously admits this in the preface to his book, when he states: "Although I wrote this analysis so that many tens of thousands like myself might have a better clue to our past and wrote it also for as large an audience as may be interested in 'dead sea scrolls' or fossil drawings in obscure caves, I also wrote it for a new generation" that "it might benefit from a sober reassessment of the American past as seen by someone who believed in socialism, never concealed this belief, tried to make a go of achieving it, and was defeated by the inability to distinguish between what *could* be accomplished and what *could not* be" (p. xiii).

* *American Communism in Crisis, 1948-1957*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1972, 331 pp., \$12.95.

Is this not a clear expression of the present tactic of the anti-Communist campaign? And who paid for it? Starobin tells us of his gratitude to Columbia University's "Research Institute on Communist Affairs [which] was generous with an eighteen-month fellowship" (p. xvi). This "research" institute is one of the big outfits through which U.S. monopoly capital carries on its ideological warfare against Communism and the Soviet Union.

Starobin lists as "advisers" for his book, among others, Alexander Dallin, Wallace Sayre, Harvey Mansfield and Marshall Shulman, all leaders in the anti-Communist campaign. But Starobin's stellar "adviser" was Zbigniew Brzezinski, who is in the top echelon of anti-Communist ideologues. He writes for government use such items as "Political Controls in the Soviet Army" and was in Czechoslovakia in 1968 conferring with anti-Communist elements just before they embarked on their attempted counter-revolution. His presence there served obviously to further Henry Kissinger's pronouncement that "a test of our strategy is . . . its ability to bring about situations which accentuate potential differences within the Soviet bloc." (*Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, Harper, New York, 1957, p. 148.)

That there is a link between the old, discredited stoolpigeon-informer types and the present "confessionals" is indicated by Starobin himself when he reports that at a conference convened by

the Institute of International Studies, University of South Carolina, in September 1969, ex-Communist John Gates, one of the "confessionals," met with John Lautner, an expelled stoolpigeon who had been the most-used government "witness" in frame-ups of Communists. Lautner's presence at such a conference is strange, since he was never noted for having been an intellectual or scholar. According to Starobin, Gates "apologized for his part in the treatment of Lautner in 1951" (p. 306).

Starobin also acknowledges help in the preparation of his book from a number of ex-Communists practically none of whom now plays any role in the mass struggles of today. And he indirectly threatens those former Communists who rejected his efforts to enlist them in his crusade, writing that "the temptation must be resisted to mention those who declined to be helpful for reasons best known to themselves" (p. xvi).

Most of Starobin's book deals with the period of the Communist Party's history between the early 1930s and 1957. It is significant that he confined himself to this period. Apparently, he and his friends who left or were expelled from the Party toward the end of that period believe that the Party was born when they joined it and died when they left. The book concerns itself with the struggles within the leadership over strategic and tactical "lines," and ignores almost completely the role and effectiveness of the Com-

munist Party in the mass and class struggles of the period, except to boast about what he and his friends did.

There is nothing "new" in what Starobin writes about the period, as he offhandedly admits. What appears has been dealt with much more extensively by the professional anti-Communist "scholars." As a matter of fact, he resorts to these when he seeks to analyze what took place in the Party during those years.

The Communists themselves were constantly reappraising their policies and tactics, analyzing their mistakes in a most self-critical manner, but with the aim of correction and improvement. One of the best of these analyses was made by William Z. Foster in 1956, in answer to Starobin's friends, who were then engaged in their final attempt to liquidate the Party. This appeared as an article entitled "On the Party Situation" in *Political Affairs*, October 1956, and is worth reading in connection with Starobin's book.

Starobin's own "contributions" are few and, to say the least, arrogantly naive. Because of space limitations, we can cite only one or two examples.

On page 27, he writes: "In 1932, the same year that Hitler turned Germany toward fascism, Roosevelt turned America toward reform." One is led to believe from this that Roosevelt did so voluntarily. Starobin conveniently forgets the great struggles of the unemployed, led by the Communists, which were climaxed by the

magnificent hunger marches of 1930-1933. He forgets the fight for Black liberation, also led by the Communists, which reached its apex in the Scottsboro March. Starobin cynically dismisses the Scottsboro case as "a routine effort at judicial hanging of the Scottsboro boys" which the Communists were able to turn "into a national, even international *cause celebre*" (p. 30). He ignores the hundreds of workers and Blacks who were beaten, maimed, slain and jailed in the 1930s in the struggles for relief, jobs, unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, unionization and Black liberation, to force the enactment of the reforms Starobin so blithely credits to Roosevelt.

A basic thesis in Starobin's book is that the Communist Party was wrong in warning about U.S. monopoly capital's plans for war and the danger of fascism. But was there not a Korean war, which involved millions of U.S. and Asian youths? And did not President Truman, in 1950, with the excuse of the Korean war (which Starobin shrugs off as a mere "adventure" or "affair"), declare a state of national emergency and assume dictatorial powers?

CP "Victims"

Starobin is upset about the "mistreatment" and "victimization" of Communists and sympathizers both at home and abroad. He cites the case of Anna Louise Strong, who in 1949 "was declared *persona non grata* in Moscow and labeled by high Soviet authorities as a 'notorious spy'" (p. 204).

That there may have been some basis for the Soviet suspicion is revealed by Starobin himself in the curious statement that she "had unusual access to the State Department and other Washington agencies, where her eyewitness testimony on both Soviet Russia and Chinese Communist development was received with respect and attention" (p. 204).

Among other unfortunate choices by Starobin of "victims" of the Communist Party in late 1940s and early 1950s were Donald Henderson, who had been a CIO union president, and Rob F. Hall, who, as a leader of the Communist Party in the South, had advocated the liquidation of the Party in that area, and who later became Washington correspondent for the *Daily Worker*.

"One of the victims of these changes, Donald Henderson, soon disappeared from the scene (of union activity—D.M.)." So writes Starobin. But Henderson's difficulties began long before then—in the 1930s, with a problem of drinking and mistreatment of his family. And Hall's "victimization" was also self-imposed. He had abandoned his wife and family to marry the daughter of a high U.S. government official and sought whatever excuse he could find to run away from the Party to the obscurity of ownership of an upstate New York country newspaper.

But the most unfortunate of Starobin's choices of victims is John Lautner. This choice is difficult to explain unless one infers that the fraternization between

the stoolpigeon-informer types and the "confessionals" had created a passion for "vindication." Starobin spends almost a page and a half on this "vindication" (pp. 218-219), describing the "maltreatment" this "most-trusted" comrade had received at the hands of the Communists. To buttress his advocacy, Starobin cites Herbert L. Packer's study, *Ex-Communist Witnesses* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1965), claiming (p. 306) that according to Packer "the witness against Communism who comes off best in a careful examination of veracity and consistency is Lautner."

But when one reads Packer's book itself, the conclusion is different from Starobin's. Packer, a law professor, tells us that Lautner, who had been expelled from the Communist Party as an FBI spy, had as a youth been drafted in the Home Guard in Hungary after World War I. He writes: "In the confused period that followed, Lautner was arrested as a Czech spy by the Rumanian army . . ." (p. 179).

On page 182 of his book, Packer writes that after the Smith Act indictments in 1948, "Lautner's main work was preparing the New York Party to go underground. . . . In carrying out his task of guarding against spies and traitors to the Party, he aroused suspicions about his own reliability. . . . Rightly or wrongly, and this later became a matter of some controversy (with the truth, as it was so often in those trying days for

the Communists, hidden in the clatter of charge and counter-charge) he was suspected of being an FBI informer. According to Lautner, it was only *after* the inquisition and expulsion that he contacted the FBI." Packer apparently is hesitant to credit Lautner's claim.

Packer reports (p. 159) that the first suspicions of Lautner came when the telephone number of an FBI agent was found in his possession. As to Lautner's veracity, which Starobin asserts, Packer writes: "On balance, however, a favorable judgment as to Lautner's 'reliability' must be put in proper perspective. Reliability does not automatically ensure significance" (p. 220).

So much for Starobin's "vindication" of this unsavory character who, by his "testimony" in 25 government proceedings, victimized many Communists.

Rise of Opportunism

Starobin calls his book *American Communism in Crisis*. But the crisis he is really writing about is that of his friends and himself in relation to the Communist Party. These people were a tiny minority the Party's membership, a group of young lower-middle-class elements, who had been declassed by the Great Depression of the 1930s. Some of them were intellectuals. Others had been barred by the economic crisis from white-collar or professional jobs for which they had been trained. They came to the Party because it was the only political force that offered a pro-

gram of change, of solutions.

During the 1930s and the 1940s, they contributed to the struggles of the people for immediate demands. Because they played significant roles in these struggles and because of their articulateness, they achieved leadership in the Party. But they were ill-schooled in Marxism-Leninism, infected on one side by the worst aspects of dogmatism, and then succumbing readily to its reverse, the revisionism of Browder. Their aim became to make Communism acceptable to the petty bourgeoisie.

Therefore, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when it became clear that they could not thus make Communism "respectable," they capitulated to the pressures of the state power of U.S. monopoly capital, which at that time was seeking to destroy the Communist Party of the U.S. to guarantee its home front while it pursued worldwide struggle to dominate the world. Harried by the FBI and police, in prison and underground, these petty-bourgeois elements, approaching the age of 40, began to reassess their position in society and to consider how their Communist activity would affect their future. Their thinking can be epitomized in the words of Norman Podhoretz, the middle-class intellectual, who wrote:

"I am a man who at the precocious age of thirty-five experienced an astonishing revelation: it is better to be a success than a failure. Having been penetrated by this great truth concerning

the nature of things, my mind was now open for the first time to a series of corollary perceptions. . . . Money, I now saw . . . was important; it was better to be rich than poor. . . ." (*Making It*, Bantam Books, New York, 1969).

The critical year for them was 1951, the year they made their Podhoretzian decision. To register this decision, they began their drive to liquidate the Party for all time. (In his book, Starobin claims that he broke with the Party in 1954. But in a communication, published in *Political Affairs*, January 1957, he boasts that in 1951 he had already begun to write letters to other Communists and members of the *Daily Worker* staff concerning his position.)

The objective of these elements was to transform the Communist Party into an educational society to influence reforms in capitalism, an objective of which Starobin approves in his book. Whether they were sincere in their proposal is open to question. Certainly, there is no evidence that since they left the Party they have tried to form such a society.

But the efforts of Starobin and his friends failed. The Communist Party's history did not end in 1957. Instead it has gone forward along the path of Marxism-Leninism, playing an ever-increasing role in the immediate struggles of the people and preparing the way for socialism in the United States.

Precisely because this has happened, Starobin and his friends

are still engaged in trying to set up an ideological "cordon sanitaire" around the Communist Party. Starobin's book is one portion of this effort, one that is addressed primarily to the "New Generation."

Sons and Daughters

This reporter does not like to obtrude upon another person's personal grief. But Starobin makes this unavoidable by his invocation of his son's suicide to make an appeal to the new generation to turn away from the Left. He writes: "Would it have helped Bob if this book had been written as it should have been, a dozen years earlier? Could some saving, healing transfer have been made from the tragic remnant of the past?" (P. xv.)

But Starobin and others of his friends who have lost their sons and daughters to the extremism of anarchism and individual terror cannot thus salve their consciences. It was indeed the program and policies that these elements had sought to impose upon the Communist Party that their sons and daughters rejected, a program and policies espoused by Earl Browder in these words: "If anyone wishes to describe the existing system of capitalism as 'free enterprise,' that is all right with us, and we frankly declare that we are ready to cooperate in making capitalism work effectively in the postwar period with the least possible burden upon the people." (Quoted by Starobin, p. 57.)

The sons and daughters of

"CONFESSIONALIST"

Starobin and his friends wanted no part of such a policy. They wanted to change our society, abolish capitalism and usher in socialism. But their way to the Communist Party, the only instrument effective for this, was blocked by the picture of the Party as their fathers had tried to make it. So, sadly enough, in their confusion and desperation, they turned to such paths as anarchism and individual terror.

But the healthy new generation will not be swayed by Starobin, who has now abandoned all pretence of advocacy of socialism and has plumped wholeheartedly for capitalism, as can be seen in his conclusion: "Suppose society's ills did not require a *total* change. Suppose change did not proceed to *total* means without becoming totalitarian. Perhaps the adaptability of American capitalism and the flexibility of democracy were greater than the Communists realized. Perhaps the contradictions were soluble . . ." (p. 236).

Starobin has the gall to write this at a time when U.S. monopoly has involved our nation in the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese, when it has inflicted upon the people of the United States some of the worst horrors of oppression and exploi-

tation in its history.

If the reader of this review should decide to get Starobin's book, he should take seriously the old English common law axiom, *caveat emptor* (let the buyer beware). He or she should take into account Packer's judgment after having examined carefully the "testimony" of Lautner and other government "witnesses" against Communists:

"All four of these witnesses, to say nothing of the many other ex-Communists whose testimony has been peripherally examined appear to have forsaken one set of absolutes for another. The urge for self-vindication appears to be so strong that anyone who is not with them must be against them. This tendency is most notable in Budenz's case, but it afflicts the others as well. Then there is the troublesome matter of pecuniary motive. All these witnesses have admittedly profited financially from their roles as denouncers of the Communist conspiracy. While they cannot be blamed for wanting to salvage what they could from the wreckage of their lives, their interest in being 'useful' witnesses is obvious. And 'useful' has meant, all too often, useful to the immediate political purpose of their interrogators . . ." (p. 226).

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