
October 1944

Fourth International

THE REAL SITUATION IN FRANCE

By Our Paris Correspondent

**Stalin's Counter-Revolutionary Role
in Eastern Europe**

By The Editors

The CIO Auto Workers Convention

By Art Preis

TROTSKYISM IN INDIA

**Documents of the Indian Trotskyists on the Present
Political Situation, Gandhi's New Betrayal,
The August 1942 Struggle, and the Famine in India**

Twenty Cents

Manager's Column

Reports from our agents show a steady increase in the sale of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**—

San Francisco: "Please send five additional copies of the August F. I. We are completely out of this issue. Also please increase our monthly order by five copies."

"We have now placed the F. I. on two newsstands in Berkeley, Sather Gate Book Shop and Whitey's Smoke Shop. We hope we can get these places to take the magazine on a regular basis and I believe we can do this if we make an effort in this direction."

* * *

Our New York agent reports that the sale of the August F. I. (Trotsky Memorial Number) reached a new peak, that the increase in sales over the preceding month amounted to almost fifty percent. Several newsstands, one of which sold sixty copies, sold out two weeks before the September issue came out. Our agent feels "that the sales of the F. I. can be greatly increased if the magazine comes out earlier in the month. Whenever an issue appears late in the month, we receive many loud complaints from the newsstand dealers who report a constant clamor of our New York readers."

(We are working to push up the date of publication one week each month so that soon the magazine will be going to press in time to reach our agents by the first of each month.)

* * *

A letter from our agent in Chicago shows that back issues of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** are being preserved as well as utilized:

"We have decided to have our back issues of the F. I. bound here, which we can do quite cheaply. We assume that, in view of the prices quoted by you for the bound volumes, you do not have many on hand. We lack a few back issues and request that you send them to us if they are available."

(We urge all agents who have files of back issues to follow this procedure. We will be glad to furnish indexes for the various years and also single issues which may be missing upon request.)

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Editor: **FELIX MORROW**

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We still have in stock a few bound volumes, as listed, for those readers who do not have files of back issues or who do not wish to get the binding done themselves:

1938	\$8.00
1939	8.00
1940-41	7.00
1942	7.00
1943	4.50

* * *

Some excerpts from letters received this month follow:

New Haven: "Will you kindly send me a copy of the April 1944 issue of your magazine? I understand that there is a discussion in it of social reconstruction in Japan."

(The article referred to is "Japan Faces The Abyss" by Li Fu-Jen, a series in the February, March and April issues of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**.)

* * *

St. Paul: "One comrade was selling pamphlets door-to-door when he ran into a worker who had been getting the F. I. from a friend of his. Had them all for two or three years back. His child, when asked questions such as 'Why is there segregation and

Jim Crowism," replied in memorized answers from our party line. We'd had no previous contact with this man."

* * *

Plentywood: "I am sending money for the August F. I. It sure is good this month."

* * *

Bellport, L. I.: "Thank you for the sample copy. Enclosed is \$1 for a six-month subscription."

* * *

Chicago: "I am very interested in your magazine and also in all your publications so I am requesting information. I have read a few numbers of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** since I have been in this country."

"I am enclosing herewith \$2 to pay my subscription for this year, including all the copies of the previous months."

"I wish to tell you that I am a Peruvian-born citizen of this country. I came here to study. In 1930-32 I was a militant in the Communist Party of Peru, but I was excluded because of my Trotskyist tendencies."

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933 OF **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1944.

State of New York)
County of New York)

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Reba Aubrey, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING ASSN.**, 116 University Place, New York City; Editor, Felix Morrow, 116 University Place, New York City; Managing Editors, James P. Cannon and Vincent R. Dunne, 116 University Place, N. Y. C.; Business Manager, Reba Aubrey, 116 University Place, New York City.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.) **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING ASSN.**, 116 University Place, New York City; Felix Morrow, 116 University Place, New York City; James P. Cannon and Vincent R. Dunne, 116 University Place, New York City; Reba Aubrey, 116 University Place, New York 3, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.) None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the twelve months preceding the date shown above is — (This information is required from daily publications only.)

REBA AUBREY.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of September, 1944, **CARNIG AJAMIAN** (My commission expires March 30, 1946)

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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NUMBER 10

The Month in Review

By THE EDITORS

The Kremlin's Counter-Revolutionary Role In Eastern Europe

THE MILITARY POWER OF THE SOVIET UNION The Soviet Union has emerged as a first class military power as a result of its sensational military victories over the armies of Nazi Germany. Despite all the crimes and blunders of the Kremlin bureaucracy, the economy nationalized by the October revolution, proved its superiority in action. The Soviet masses rallied to the defense of the remaining conquests of the revolution and performed miracles in beating back the German imperialist assault. Today the Soviet Union is the dominant power of Eastern Europe, towering over all the neighboring states.

The states of Eastern Europe are rotten ripe for the socialist overturn. They are burdened with a double exploitation: the exploitation of modern capitalism grafted on to the exploitation imposed by the parasitic semi-feudalist land-owning class. And agriculture still remains the backbone of the economy of Eastern Europe.

All the evidence, in addition, points to the fact, that the masses in Eastern Europe, as in Western Europe, are in a furiously revolutionary mood; they ardently desire to throw off the yoke of the capitalist and landlord exploiters, to take over the factories and the land, just as did the workers and peasants of Russia in 1917. The victories of the Red Army have inspired these masses with hope that with the entrance of the Red Army they too would be able to put through their revolution and set up the Soviet power.

Is there any question that if today the Soviet leadership remained true to the principles of the founders; is there any question if Lenin and Trotsky were leading the Soviet Union, that the revolutionary impulsion supplied by the Soviet victories and the Red Army occupations would result in the firm consolidation of Soviet power throughout Eastern Europe? Is there any question that the revolutionary flames would spread like a prairie fire right into the heart of Europe—Germany—and that Hitler and his gang of criminal cut throats would be quickly consigned to the garbage can of history? Is there any question that the establishment of Soviet states throughout Europe would assure peace to the Soviet Union, establish the fraternal relations of the European peoples and guarantee the socialist future of the Soviet Union?

STALIN UPHOLDS THE STATUS QUO

But the Kremlin gang, nationalistic and reactionary through and through, is pursuing the exact *opposite* policy. The Bolshevik peace terms under Lenin and Trotsky explicitly declared: *No annexations and no indemnities!* Stalin's policy is one of forceful annexations and the imposition of war reparations. Under Lenin and Trotsky, the Red Army helped the proletariat settle accounts with the hated capitalists and landlords and encouraged them to carry through

their socialist revolutions. Stalin employs the Red Army to uphold the capitalist *status quo*, to bolster reactionary dictatorial regimes, to crush all attempts of the masses to take their fate into their own hands, to oppose every effort towards Sovietization. As the Red Army began moving into the Balkans, Stalin again reassured the world capitalists: on September 20 the CBS picked up a broadcast from Moscow which declared:

"The Soviet Union will not introduce its order into other states and it does not change the existing order in them. All the acts of foreign policy pursued by the USSR have completely exposed the fascist slander of the Bolshevik bogey..."

Last April, when the Red Army first entered Rumanian territory, Molotov issued a statement assuring the capitalists that "the existing social structure of Rumania" would not be altered. Stalin has faithfully kept his promise. The Red Army military authorities are preserving the totalitarian filth of Rumania and propping up on their bayonets a Badoglio-like regime. Headed by a reactionary army general, Constantin Lonatescu, the new Rumanian government, typical of the shadow coalition governments being set up and propped up by foreign bayonets throughout Europe, today includes representatives of the Peasant Party, the liberals, the Social Democrats and the Stalinists. The new government assumed power after a military coup d'etat engineered by a small clique of officers and politicians.

THE EVENTS IN BULGARIA

In Bulgaria, the entrance of the Red Army troops was the signal for a mass uprising. We read in the dispatches of the Red Flag waving over the government buildings as well as over thousands of homes. We read of the immediate arrests of the fascists by the armed people and the holding of huge mass demonstrations in the cities; of a railway strike that paralyzed the government; of the military authorities losing effective control. Civil war had obviously started; the Bulgarian masses were preparing for the new Red dawn.

All the revolutionary hopes aroused in the masses were immediately dashed to the ground. The Kremlin bureaucracy employed their local Stalinist leaders as well as the Red Army as a counter-revolutionary force to stamp out the fires of the civil war. The *New York Times* correspondent, Joseph M. Levy, telephoning from Sofia on September 21, reported that "In a few of the provinces . . . pillaging and even killing of the suspected Fascists occurred, but these acts were soon stopped by the militia, composed of strictly disciplined young men and women." We are further informed that "Communist (read Stalinist) leaders are doing everything they can to prevent extremists in the party from agitating for Sovietization of the country." As for the Red Army we are told that:

"On several occasions when local Communists in the provinces tried to displace city officials and take matters into their own hands they were ordered by the Russian military authorities to return the jobs to the old officials until orders were received from the Fatherland Front government in Sofia."

A shadow coalition government, similar to the one in Rumania, is being propped up, headed by a Bulgarian Badoglio. The backbone of the new Bulgarian government is the Sveno group, which is made up of the Officers' League. This military clique engineered a coup d'etat in 1934, suspended the constitution, abolished all political parties and established a military dictatorship. The present so-called Fatherland Front government is headed by Premier Kimon Georgieff and War Minister Damian Velcheff, both members of the Zveno group and includes, of course, representatives of the Agrarian party, the liberals, the Social Democrats and the Stalinists.

COUNTER-REVOLUTION AT WORK IN BULGARIA

The new government immediately undertook to "pacify" the situation and re-establish "order." John Chamley, special correspondent of the *London News Chronicle*, reported that the government printed an appeal ordering soldiers to return to their barracks. They announced that part of the militia would be absorbed into the regular army while all armed civilians were ordered to report to designated places and surrender their arms. Thus the new government, propped up by the bayonets of the Red Army, began its work in the classic manner of all counter-revolutions—the campaign to disarm the insurgent masses and to restore capitalist "law and order."

The role of the local Stalinist leaders is exclusively reactionary. As everywhere, they form the very spearhead of reaction inside the labor movement, the prime internal disrupters of labor insurgency. Their role is particularly sinister and pernicious because they clothe themselves with the authority of the October Revolution and make use of their prestige among the masses to sow illusions, head off the struggle and thus attempt to destroy the forces of the awakening revolution.

Anton Yugoff, Bulgarian Stalinist Minister of Interior, in charge of the internal police(!), made clear to the capitalists that they had nothing to fear; their Stalinist watchdogs were on the job. He said:

"This government of which I am a member and on whose behalf I speak, categorically denies that it has any intention of establishing a Communist regime in Bulgaria. There is no truth in rumors that the government intends to nationalize any private enterprise in the country."

HAND-PICKED GOVERNMENTS

These Kremlin-backed governments have the following features in common—they are hand-picked governments which are propped up by the bayonets of the Red Army, they are subservient to the Red Army occupation authorities and supposedly "friendly" to the Soviet Union, they are coalition regimes, with Stalinist and Social Democratic representatives participating, they are outspokenly dedicated to upholding and rehabilitating capitalist rule.

The Stalinists and to a lesser degree, the Social Democrats, undoubtedly exert tremendous influence over the masses at this stage. The presence of these misleaders in the government, however, does not testify to the "democratic" or "popular" character of these handpicked cabinets, but solely to the degeneration and foul treachery of these working-class misleaders. The fact that the Kremlin bureaucracy, just as the imperialists in the West, is forced at this early stage, to utilize the Stalinist and Social Democratic agents in the coalition cabinets set up in the countries under military occupation, is only proof of the terrible decay and shakiness of the capitalist structure and of the revolutionary temper of the masses. This brazen collaboration of the Stalinist and Social Democratic agents with mon-

archist and fascist generals, their joint labors to uphold tottering capitalism will help immeasurably to expose their true role to the masses who are now in revolutionary ferment and will facilitate the task of the revolutionary vanguard.

MAINSRING OF STALIN'S POLICY

The Kremlin bureaucracy understands that the Anglo-American imperialists cannot tolerate or reconcile themselves to the spread of Sovietization in Europe, as that would represent the beginning of the end to their own system. Furthermore, so far removed today is the Kremlin bureaucracy from the Soviet masses and their true needs and aspirations, that it, just as the imperialists, fears mass uprisings and socialist revolutions anywhere in Europe. The Stalinist gang understands that such revolutionary upheavals would strike a responsive chord in the Soviet masses, who would then move to lift off their shoulders the murderous Kremlin bureaucracy. Hence, Stalin's alliance with the Anglo-American imperialists in a conspiracy to strangle the European revolution. Hence, the joint conspiracy to dismember the continent and prop up on their bayonets regimes dedicated to the preservation of capitalism. The Stalinist bureaucracy has so completely degenerated, it is in such a conflict with the system of Soviet economy and its needs, it is in such a blind alley, that its continued existence demands the destruction of the European revolution. The Kremlin bureaucracy is today the gendarme of the capitalist property in Eastern Europe.

Stalin understands full well, however, that once the Axis powers are defeated, his ability to maneuver between the rival imperialist camps will be sharply limited. The Soviet Union will then be face to face with the vast military colossus of American imperialism in alliance with its British junior partner. That is why Stalin seeks to secure the defense of the USSR and reinforce its military power by his policy of ringing the Soviet Union with "friendly" states, whose governments are subservient to the Kremlin authority.

IT IS A MORTAL DANGER TO USSR

This program is not only thoroughly reactionary but bankrupt as well. It represents a mortal danger both for the European revolution and for the Soviet Union. The capitalist classes of Eastern Europe have always been in the forefront of anti-Soviet intrigues and have on more than one occasion provided the jumping off places for military intervention against the USSR. Their hatred for the Soviet Union derives, not from this or that anti-Soviet cabinet or government; it flows from the property relations inside the Soviet Union. Their proximity to the Soviet Union only increased their fear of Sovietization in their own territories. These basic class contradictions are far more important in determining relations between the Soviet Union and its neighboring states than the propping up of a dozen jerry-built capitalist puppet regimes. Deep-going, fundamental class considerations will always impell the capitalist rulers of Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, etc., to ally themselves with the imperialists against the Soviet Union. And so long as the nationalized property relations remain in the Soviet Union, these fundamental class considerations will retain their compelling strength.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, for the sake of acquiring second-rate military advantages and for the sake of preserving its alliance with the Anglo-American bandits, is strengthening and upholding the hands of the Balkan, Polish, Czecho-Slovak capitalists and landlords, who in the event of future conflict, will forget overnight their platonic "friendship" for the Soviet Union and ally themselves, as dictated by their class interests,

with the imperialist forces. The Kremlin bureaucracy seeks to shackle, demoralize, terrorize and atomize and turn over to their traditional class oppressors, the masses—the only real defenders and only true friends of the Soviet Union.

This policy is bankrupt. It will not avail the Kremlin bureaucracy. **WHAT WILL DECIDE THE FATE OF USSR** Outside of the alliance with the insurgent masses of Europe, there is no salvation for the Soviet Union. Either the triumphing European revolution will raise again the Soviet masses to their feet and in joint struggle, settle accounts not only with the imperialists, but also with the murderous Stalinist bureaucracy. Or the European continent, as the vassal of Anglo-American imperialism, will plunge into the abyss, with the Soviet Union conquered by capitalism either by internal counter-revolution or external military intervention or by a combination of both.

Ten years ago, Trotsky declared that:

"The extremely difficult conditions under which the Rus-

sian Bolshevik-Leninists work exclude them from the possibility of playing the leading role on the international scale. More than this, the Left Opposition group in the USSR can develop into a new party only as a result of the successful formation and growth of the new International. The revolutionary center of gravity has shifted definitely to the West where the immediate possibilities of building parties are immeasurably greater. . . . The light will come not from the East but from the West."

The light is today coming from the West, from the insurgent masses of Europe. Europe is in a revolutionary situation. The development, the crystallization, the organization and consolidation of the forces of the European revolution, in all countries, represents the most important, the most immediate, the most unpostponable task of all revolutionary fighters. The triumph of the European revolution is the only salvation for the peoples of Europe and the only safeguard for the preservation and revival of the Soviet Union.

The Real Situation in France

By OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT

Although the bourgeois groups, and especially the Stalinists, succeeded in canalizing the Paris uprising of August 19-24 into nationalist lines and making it a "national" insurrection, the class lines, although superficially hidden, exerted their influence all the same. The general slogan was the purely nationalist one: "Out with the Boche;" and the general idea in the minds of the insurrectionists who fought and died on the barricades was that the sole purpose of the uprising was the ejection of the Germans from the city. In fact, the French Communist Party (CPF), which no doubt exerted the greatest influence in the Resistance Movement (in Paris the Stalinist-controlled FTP—*Francois Tireurs et Partisans*—formed the major part of the FFI) deliberately fostered this mood. *L'Humanité* appeared one day with the headline: "*A chaque Parisien son Boche*" (Let Every Parisian Get His Boche). However, while the class issues were momentarily confused in the minds of the masses, the character of the movement revealed the underlying class issues.

The actual street fighting was done largely by the FFI (FTP and others) in the city itself, aided on the barricades by elements of the petty bourgeoisie (the local shopkeepers, functionaries, housewives, etc.) and workers in the proletarian districts (XIth, XIVth, and other districts).

The workers of the banlieue, of the big factories, Renault, Citroen, SNAC, Gnome et Rhone, etc., did not in general descend into Paris. They intervened in quite another way. They occupied the factories, arrested or forced the arrest of the collaborating directing factory personnel and in the most advanced cases prepared the given factory to start production again under their control.

In most factories the initiative was taken by Communist Party factory militants, and the Trotskyists. For example, at one factory employing over 1,000 workers, about 15 workers assembled at the plant. Among these were some 10 CP members and supporters and two or three Trotskyists. These 15 occupied the deserted factory, sent messages to call the workers to a factory meeting in order to elect a workers' committee. A "*Commission d'Epuration*" (Purging Committee) was set up to "try" all the collaborating managing personnel, directors,

managers, etc. Supply committees were likewise elected to take over the factory canteen.

The food situation being acute, the factory canteens had begun to play an important role. Not only the workers but their families ate there. A large proportion of the disputes and strikes that had taken place in the weeks prior to the capture of Paris were related to feeding and canteen arrangements, the quality and quantity of the food, the prices, etc. Thus, during the insurrection, the canteen and the control of it became a vital issue. To obtain food the workers had recourse to direct requisitioning. Black market stocks were requisitioned by organized detachments sent out by the factories to supply the canteens. In the districts housewives' committees sprung up to fight the black market and ensure the distribution of captured German food stocks.

Factory Militias

In many factories the nuclei of workers' militias had already been built up secretly under the German occupation. The CP had called for the formation in the factories of "*Milices Ouvrieres Patriotiques*" (Patriotic Workers' Militia), but in two ways their growth was obstructed. First, whatever arms were available to the Resistance Movement were distributed mainly to the reactionary elements, *Organisation Civile et Militaire* (OCMO), the *Armee Secrete*, etc. The FTP and workers had to arm themselves mostly from arms captured or stolen from the Germans. Secondly, the Stalinists urged the workers to leave the factories and join the Maquis, where invariably the workers were integrated under the leadership and control of ex-officer cadres. The Trotskyists, on the other hand urged the workers to stick to their factories which were their stronghold and not allow themselves to be dispersed and thus lose their class coherence.

In some cases the workers when they came to occupy the factories, found these already guarded by FFI formations, including the reactionary bosses' *Organisation Civile et Militaire* (OCM).

In many factories in the Paris region, similar conditions as in Italy in 1919 and in Spain in 1936 existed, where the

whole of the managing and technical personnel of the works had either fled or were arrested. The workers' committees appointed new directors, foremen, technicians, etc., to work under their control and prepare the factories for the resumption of production; and they sent delegates to de Gaulle's Ministry of Production, Ministry of Labor, etc., asking permission to start work and laying out detailed plans. They were told that it was impossible to start production as there was no power for the machines. The Government, they were told, would appoint *administrateurs-delegues* (administrator-delegates) to take over the factories whose directors had been arrested. In the meanwhile, nothing was to be done.

Even in the Paris Metro (subway) the staff on their own initiative drew up a plan and time-table for the trains, made the necessary repairs and said to the authorities, "Let us run the Metro."

Production Under Workers' Control

At the same time, the workers in the factories drew up "*Cahiers de Revendications*" (lists of demands) which varied from factory to factory, but included commonly wage increases, workers' control and inspection of the books, workers' control of employment and exchange, control of the canteen, etc.

In some suburbs the different factories joined forces and called inter-factory delegates' meetings representing several factories in the district, democratically elected by secret ballot.

The "illegal CGT" (French Confederation of Labor) and the returned trade union officials from Algiers tried to bridle this spontaneous creation of factory committees. One example will illustrate the mood in which they were received. At a meeting of district factory delegates in a Paris suburb, an official of the CGT intervened and declared that the meeting had no authority, was not properly constituted and represented nothing. And so forth and so on. Whereupon one delegate, not belonging to any party, jumped up and exclaimed:

"And who the hell do you represent? I represent—the factory, I was elected by so many workers. Who elected you? I have paid my trade union dues for 15 years and it (the CGT) has done nothing for us at all."

He was loudly applauded by the rest of the meeting. The CGT official had to withdraw.

Thus, although the Paris insurrection took place under nationalist, "classless" slogans, and although all tendencies in the Resistance Movement, from ultra-reactionary royalists to the Communist Party, tried to give it a national and classless character, from the very beginning the working class, basing itself on the factories, "spontaneously" threw up its own *class* organs—factory committees, factory militias, etc.—and began to put forward class demands, thus creating the elements of dual power.

In the districts (*arrondissements*) of Paris, a form of dual power as between the Resistance forces (mostly Stalinist FTP) and the de Gaulle authorities exists. During the fighting, detachments of the FFI, FTP, etc., took the local *mairies* (town halls) by storm and once the Germans were ejected, contrived to occupy them and to assure the municipal services. At the same time housewives' committees sprang up to control the food rationing.

The reactionaries are already trying to liquidate this duality of power which exists between them and the Stalinists who control the FTP and the *mairies*. The headquarters of the FTP has been raided and searched by the police! The formations of the FFI are either being integrated into the regular army

or dissolved. De Gaulle in his speech at the Palais de Chaillot was certainly referring to the FFI and FTP when he warned "France must have a *united* army which belongs to France *only*."

Undoubtedly the French Communist Party had a decisive influence on Paris and on the course of the insurrection—in the factories, the FFI—through the FTP and in the districts. If it had pursued a policy of "Les Soviets Partout!" (Build Soviets Everywhere!) and actively pushed the workers' committees, etc., and called upon the workers to build up their committees as the basis of workers' power as an alternative to the Provisional Government, the insurrection would have very quickly developed into a workers' revolution.

In fact, all the necessary conditions for a revolutionary situation existed, except for the presence of a sufficiently strong revolutionary party. The CP, by its very nature, and the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy *could not but play* an altogether different, counter-revolutionary role. By pursuing a "Popular Front," national unity policy, and calling for a purely "national" insurrection, by exciting to the highest pitch the nationalist and chauvinist sentiments of the masses, it confused the class issues in the minds of the workers. It now finds itself on the horns of this dilemma: It is faced with an offensive by the reaction to liquidate—"legally" and peacefully if possible—the duality of power, and it is equally afraid of leaning on the support of the masses. The Trotskyist organization, on the other hand, calls for the strengthening of the workers' committees in the factories and their coordination on first a local and then a regional and national plane. It points out that the only way of legalizing the power of the municipal councils is to base them on the "*comites de Quartier*" (district committees), on the housewives' and factory committees, through democratic elections, thus confirming them as the real expression of the will of the masses.

It is because these demands correspond to the needs of the situation and the real interests of the masses that they are being followed even by rank and file members of the CP in the factories. In several big factories of the Paris region, the initiative in occupying the factories and forming the workers' committees was taken by the Trotskyists who received the support of CP militants. *In such fluid conditions as existed in Paris, it has been shown by the experience of the French Trotskyists that a small body with a correct orientation, can definitely contribute to the development of the situation.*

Conclusions

The problem that poses itself in France is — *who will triumph?*

Will it be the workers and peasants through the development of their own class organs, workers' committees, peasants' committees, etc.—into a Soviet Government—or will it be the bourgeois reaction in the form of a military Bonapartist dictatorship? There is no middle road possible.

A Constituent Assembly might be elected, but the internal contradictions and antagonisms in France are too acute to permit of France going through a more or less lengthy period of parliamentary democracy. Even before the elections for a Constituent Assembly can be held, it is quite possible that the contradictions will have developed to a stage that makes the holding of "free" elections impossible. However, the struggle for all the democratic liberties—freedom of organization, freedom of the press and of speech, right to strike, etc.—these are in France today of paramount importance and must be fought

for and defended vigorously against all attacks. In the long run all these democratic liberties can be guaranteed only by the class organizations of the working class allied to the peasantry and the lower middle class.

The developments in France, of course, are not separate, but part of the developments in Europe itself. The French ruling class, expressing itself through de Gaulle, is staking its claim to a share in the peace settlement, the partition of Germany and the policing of Europe as a great power. As a matter of fact, however, France no longer has the power to play such a role in view of its economic, political and military weakness and the preponderant power, economic and military, of the U.S.A. But in an attempt to stake his claim, de Gaulle plans—as his speech at the Chaillot Palace shows—to rebuild the French army and gear the whole economic life of France to the war effort. Such a burden will prove too heavy. France will be like Balaam's ass. The imposition of such a burden upon the already weary masses after four years of German

occupation and exploitation can only be achieved by dictatorial methods. De Gaulle, perhaps, has hopes of becoming a new Napoleon.

The fate of France cannot be separated from that of Europe. Either it will become a Bonapartist state in a Balkanized Europe, or its social revolution, bringing into power the Soviet government, will be but one part of the European revolution for a United States of Europe.

Paris, September 1944.

P.S. When Jacques Duclos, in a speech at a big mass meeting in the *Vel. d'Hiv.* said: "We all know that the proportion of two Communists in the Government does not represent the real relation of forces in the country," he was very vigorously applauded.

If in Britain the question for the coming period is "Labor to Power," then in France one might similarly say: "*Thorez au pouvoir*," (Thorez to Power), and let the masses in each case learn from their own experience.

The CIO Auto Workers Convention

By ART PREIS

American capitalism faces a new labor crisis in the period ahead. That crisis was foreshadowed last month by the stormy events of the Ninth Annual Convention of the CIO United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America. The UAW convention, representing over 1,200,000 of the most advanced and politically-conscious workers in the trade union movement, gave clear expression to those militant moods and ideas which in one degree or another are beginning to pervade the ranks of all labor.

Three decisive facts stand out from the events of the UAW convention. The first is that the organized American workers are emerging from the past period of enforced retreats and unfended blows with numbers not merely intact but increased, and with an undiminished spirit of confidence, militancy and resistance. That spirit lifted the UAW convention to its feet and ran roughshod over the conservative leadership which sought to harness it. The UAW delegates fought the defeatist moods of their leadership at every turn. If the auto workers are any indication—and they are—the American workers are getting ready for battle.

Secondly, the bitter struggle against the no-strike pledge, dominant conflict of the convention, signified that a decisive sector of the auto workers has passed beyond the stage of directing their discontent solely at individual anti-labor consequences of Wall Street's war. In grappling with the basic issue of the no-strike pledge, the auto workers demonstrated their desire for a more fundamental solution to their problems.

The magnificent and still uncompleted battle to scrap the no-strike policy, waged by the ranks against both the entire top leadership of the UAW and CIO and the Roosevelt government, testifies to an advance in the *political* awareness of the auto workers. In seeking to dislodge the main prop of Roosevelt's labor policy, the auto militants have embarked on a struggle leading inevitably into head-on conflict with the government and all the political agencies of capitalism. That struggle will pose ever more sharply before the auto workers the whole question of independent labor political action.

Thirdly, the UAW convention revealed that the coming general labor crisis will constitute a crisis as well for the labor bureaucracy. The conflict which raged at the UAW con-

vention was a struggle between the ranks and the top leadership. The relationship between program and leadership for the first time received wide-spread recognition at this convention. This was demonstrated by the powerful beginnings of a newly organized rank and file group opposed to all the old leaders and factions and built upon an advanced, militant program. Making the first complete break from all old factional ties during the election for union president, the new group pointed the way to the coming struggle for union control against the present leadership on the basis of fundamental issues.

Unbearable Conditions

These major developments at the UAW convention have their roots in the conditions of American capitalist war economy. Less than three years of American direct participation in the imperialist war have sufficed to bring to the fore in potentially more acute form the basic capitalist contradictions which appeared to have been ameliorated by the monstrous expansion of war production. Elements of a new, devastating economic crisis are appearing.

Prices ascend, while wages remain frozen. Plants are being shut down owing to war-contract cancellations; cut-backs are eliminating overtime pay; the widespread practice of downgrading is reducing hourly wages. All this results in a steady decline of living standards. While the war is still in progress, the workers view the looming specter of mass unemployment.

The economic squeeze on the workers has found its reflection in the arena of open class struggle. Each year of the war has seen a progressive increase in strikes. During the past six months, save for a momentary slight decline following the invasion of France, strikes have been steadily increasing in number and scope. A large number of these strikes have been occurring in what the capitalist press calls the very "strike center," Detroit and Michigan, heart of the automotive industry and the UAW-CIO. These strikes symptomatize not only limited grievances but a growing opposition to the war labor policy of Roosevelt and his union lieutenants.

This new girding for battle and the beginnings of open class struggle by an undefeated, and intact labor movement in

reality constitutes a serious setback for Wall Street in the attainment of one of its major war objectives. With the unleashing of its war for world domination, American capitalism unfolded its program for crippling and paralyzing the labor movement. "National unity," the watchword of the entire bourgeois camp, meant above all unity between the conflicting interests within the capitalist class against a working class disarmed by its own leadership. Thus, under Roosevelt's leadership, Democrats and Republicans collaborated in the furtherance of capitalism's common war aims at home and abroad.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor was the signal for labor heads to rush pell-mell to perform the shameful rites of surrender before Roosevelt, as the chief representative of American imperialism. CIO President Philip Murray was constrained to boast of this fact before the unresponsive UAW-CIO delegates, declaring that "on the 17th day of December, 1941, ten days after our country had become involved in the war . . . *without formal request upon the part of the President of the United States*, we all voluntarily agreed to give our Commander-in-Chief, and through him to the people of our country our No Strike commitment."

Labor Disarmed

Through this conspiracy of Roosevelt and his servile labor lieutenants, the workers were deprived at one blow of their most effective weapon of union struggle, the right to strike. The disarming of the labor movement was further effected by compulsory arbitration through the capitalist government agencies. Soon, fortified by executive orders, the War Labor Board and other government agencies were imposing the demands of Big Business on the unions by decree, backed by the exercise of police and punitive powers.

The auto workers, like the rest of labor's ranks, were largely stunned and disoriented by the initial impact of the war. They were without leadership and program which might have continued to keep them securely anchored to their own class interests. Thus, for the moment, they passively acquiesced in the surrender of the strike weapon, especially since they were solemnly assured that this was part of an "agreement" of "three parties, labor, management and government," all carrying reciprocal obligations. Only gradually did the labor bureaucrats transform this "agreement" into a "voluntary sacred pledge" of labor alone.

Immediately, the corporations seized advantage of the no-strike policy to violate contractual obligations, ignore collective bargaining procedure and reinstitute onerous plant rules and conditions. The WLB became the repository and burial vault of workers grievances, small and great.

Within four months, Roosevelt felt the time was propitious for his program of extorting major economic "concessions" from the unions. Advancing behind a corporation-Congressional barrage against all overtime pay, Roosevelt "requested" the unions to give up "voluntarily" their contractual rights to overtime pay for week-ends and holidays as such.

There was immediate wide-spread resistance to this proposal among the workers generally, and especially among the auto militants. The UAW leaders hastened to convene a national "emergency" conference in April 1942 to gain a semblance of formal endorsement for both Roosevelt's new "request" and their previous acceptance, without membership consultation, of the no-strike policy.

At this conference, a stubborn but unsuccessful rank and file fight was waged against surrendering "premium" pay.

The entire top leadership, previously torn by unprincipled clique feuds, united in pushing through endorsement of the no-strike policy and ramming the President's subsequent "request" down the delegates' throats.

The decisive weapon used to beat down the ranks was *political*. The conclusive argument used to put over the surrender of "premium" pay was the roaring challenge of UAW Vice President Frankenstein: "Are you going to tell President Roosevelt to go to hell?" The delegates were further hornswoggled by the leadership's fraudulent 10-point "equality of sacrifice" program, whereby the auto workers were persuaded to give up immediately certain of their basic gains on the assurance that Roosevelt would control prices, limit war profits and executive salaries, tax the rich and give labor a "voice" through "labor-management" committees.

Before another four months had passed, the dissatisfaction of the auto workers rose to new heights. Roosevelt had enunciated his 7-point "equality of sacrifice" program as a cover for his introduction of wage "stabilization"—that is, wage freezing. The War Labor Board stalled all wage demands in the face of soaring living costs.

At the August 1942 convention, the UAW workers once more demonstrated their militancy, their mistrust of the leadership and their jealous regard for union democracy. They fought bitterly against ratifying the leadership's resolutions on surrendering "premium" pay and "strengthening" the WLB. But after rejecting these resolutions and sending them back to committee for "teeth," the delegates finally adopted "compromise" resolutions embodying the essential contents of the originals. The "teeth" were "demands" that Roosevelt enforce his "request" on overtime pay against all unions "impartially" within 30 days and that the WLB establish "regional boards" to "expedite" the handling of grievances.

Rising Discontent

Thus, save for a few voices, the auto workers directed their opposition largely against the isolated consequences of the war and Roosevelt's anti-labor program. Only on the organizational issues of union democracy which they fully understood, did they overwhelmingly reject the leadership's attempts to pass constitutional measures intended to give the officialdom greater bureaucratic powers.

Roosevelt formalized wage freezing on the basis of the Little Steel formula by executive decree. Congress followed through with the Smith-Connally anti-strike law and the 20 percent payroll tax, while brushing aside all bills to limit profits, executive salaries and prices.

When the October 1943 UAW convention opened, the delegates were seething with discontent. But again they were unable to hurdle the political obstacles and come to grips with the basic issues. Moreover, it was at this convention that Vice President Walter Reuther played most effectively his traditional role of "left" cover for the leadership. Because the most advanced militants were aligned with Reuther's caucus, he was able to behead the struggle over basic issues, confining the opposition to a fight against the Addes-Frankenstein-Stalinist unpopular proposal to approve the speedup "incentive pay" system. Once "incentive pay" was overwhelmingly rejected, Reuther joined with the rest of the leadership in side-tracking the fundamental questions, such as the no-strike policy, in favor of an unprincipled struggle over posts between the two top cliques. Then the two leadership factions demonstratively resolved their "differences" by uniting on all major resolutions,

including support of a Roosevelt fourth-term and the no-strike policy.

The best of the militants left the convention thoroughly disabused of any illusions they had held about Reuther, who had ended up in a programmatic embrace with the very elements he had fought against for posts. The point had at last been driven home to many thinking delegates that what was needed was an organized fight for a whole new leadership committed to a new, militant program.

Events leading up to the 1944 convention deepened the cleavage between the ranks and the leaders and accelerated the development of an independent militant grouping. Unsettled grievances were piling mountain high. Collective bargaining had broken down. The corporations, emboldened by the continued retreat of the union, began a campaign of open provocations to wipe out local militant leaderships and undermine the unions. Roosevelt and Congress at the same time were busy squeezing the workers tighter in the vise of wage freeze and rising prices.

The auto workers found conditions increasingly intolerable. They began to take what appeared to be the only defensive course left, strike action. By April and May 1944, so-called "wild-cat" strikes were occurring in one plant after another. The UAW International Board moved with all haste to smash these strikes. At its meetings, it demonstratively reiterated its policy of unconditional surrender to the corporations and adopted threatening measures for punitive action against striking militants. The companies, thus further encouraged, intensified their provocations. Strikes, however, particularly in the Detroit and Michigan areas, continued to increase.

The top leadership responded by expelling local union officials from office and establishing dictator-receiverships over the locals. The companies eagerly followed up these bureaucratic acts by firing leading local union representatives.

The most experienced militants increasingly realized that isolated, sporadic strikes, which seldom ended in gaining the objectives fought for, were not the effective solution. Not infrequently such strike actions resulted in the victimization of the best union fighters.

This final impasse directly stimulated the organization of the new rank and file caucus. The search for basic solutions brought the militants to an acceptance of the program originally advanced by the Trotskyists alone: 1) rescind the no-strike pledge; 2) smash the Little Steel formula; 3) withdraw the labor members from the WLB; 4) build an independent labor party.

Coincident with the emergence of this new militant UAW caucus, came vital developments on the political field. The auto militants provided the impetus and base for the formation of a third party in Michigan, the Michigan Commonwealth Federation, as an important step in the direction of organizing an independent labor party.

With the formal organization of a militant caucus, the auto workers were able finally to come to grips with fundamental issues. At a recent UAW convention, the new caucus appeared as a powerful force. No longer bound by factional loyalties to Reuther or Addes, the militants could proceed boldly to the preparation and conduct of a show-down fight against the no-strike pledge, a fight directed, in essence, at the whole cowardly policy of the leadership and the labor program of Roosevelt himself.

That conflict ensued for four days. It was waged against the whole top leadership of the UAW and the CIO, with Philip Murray drawn into the fray for the express purpose of wielding

the whiplash of his prestige and CIO power against the recalcitrant delegates. One parliamentary maneuver, one shoddy trick after another, was attempted by the leadership to prevent, side-track or disorient the fight. But for the first time, the leaders were contending with an *organized* opposition, which had a clear-cut *program* and *experienced leadership*, and which would not subordinate its program to factional fights over "posts."

The very fact of the struggle and the primary position it occupied in the convention deliberations was of profound political significance. This issue swept aside the plans of the leadership to place the emphasis of the convention on preparations for the CIO-PAC campaign for the reelection of Roosevelt. That matter was dealt with almost in passing, largely as an apathetic reflex of past political conditioning.

The attack of the leadership against the insurgent ranks contained the usual flag-waving appeals, pleas to patriotic sentiments, exhortations for loyalty to "our Commander-in-Chief." But, except for the speeches of the discredited Stalinists, who invariably were booed as soon as they took the floor, there was a significant restraint in the exposition of these types of arguments. There was no red-baiting, no slanderous references to "Hitler agents."

The most effective arguments advanced by the leaders were those which appealed to the *union* sentiments of the delegates and their desire to safeguard their organization. Thus, from Murray on down, the leaders sought to arouse the fear of the delegates that to rescind the no-strike pledge would bring an avalanche of reprisals against the union and place its existence in jeopardy. The delegates were solemnly warned that if they scrapped the no-strike pledge they would "provoke" new Congressional anti-labor legislation, "isolate" themselves from the rest of the CIO, invoke the enmity of the soldiers, turn the "great majority of unorganized common people and middle class against you."

But even these arguments, the most potent the leadership could muster, could not beat the militant opposition into submission. For what stood out especially in this convention was that quality which is so uniquely and highly developed in the UAW ranks—the *consciousness of their own organized power, their confidence in their own united strength*. It was this superb awareness and confidence in their own power which the leadership sought in vain to shatter and destroy.

In an attempt to disorient the fight, Reuther again played his shabby role of "Judas Goat" to lead the militants back into the slaughterpen of the no-strike policy. But it was a measure of the development of the auto delegates and the principled firmness of the new caucus, that Reuther could trap no more than a relative handful into support of his treacherous "compromise" resolution of the no-strike pledge.

Reuther presented his resolution with the obvious intent of preventing the introduction of a resolution calling for immediate unconditional scrapping of the no-strike pledge. His purpose was to confine the debate to a "majority" and "minority" resolution both reaffirming the no-strike pledge. This move was frustrated on the very first day of the convention, when the aroused delegates compelled a revision of the rules to permit the introduction of a "super-minority"—which almost proved to be a majority—resolution against the no-strike pledge.

Reuther's miserable efforts to divert and circumvent the issue were thoroughly exposed. He was ground between the millstones of the right-wing Addes-Frankensteen-Stalinist fac-

tion and the new Rank-and-File Caucus. His reputation as a "militant" was considerably tarnished.

It was only after the Rank-and-File Caucus rolled up an impressive 36% of the convention votes to scrap the no-strike pledge and the majority resolution for reaffirmation had been defeated, that Reuther combined with the rest of the top leadership to push over a motion for reaffirmation by a shyster trick. Seeking to get a formal vote reaffirming the no-strike pledge on any basis, the resolutions committee majority, composed mainly of Stalinists, and joined by Victor Reuther, Walter's brother, proposed a "procedure" to "resolve" the "impasse." They put a motion to vote "up or down" a straight statement unconditionally reaffirming the no-strike pledge to be followed by a vote to hold a membership referendum within 90 days on the no-strike issue.

By means of a deceptive "explanation" on the part of Victor Reuther, who deliberately fostered the impression that a vote for reaffirmation was tied with a vote on the referendum, a 60 percent majority vote was finally secured to reaffirm the no-strike policy. Reuther joined with the whole leadership in supporting this motion. Then the Addes-Stalinist spokesmen stepped forward with a surprise motion not to hold a referendum.

The storm which broke loose from the delegates was a demonstration of rage at the attempt to trick them. They proceeded to throw the issue full-blown once more into the hands of the membership by an overwhelming roll-call vote in favor of a referendum. For the ranks at least, the motion to reaffirm, put over by deceit, did not settle the question; it merely brought the issue forward with renewed force.

On the sixth day of the convention, the leaders were finally able to focus their attention on their chief concern, getting back into office. That aim they achieved, but not because of any secure and loyal support from the ranks. Indeed, the suspicion, disgust and hostility of the ranks toward the leadership, individually and collectively, had been repeatedly demonstrated.

While the new militant caucus had been able to rally tremendous support of a fundamental issue, it recognized that a large section of the delegates was still unprepared to reject the old leaders. The time was not yet ripe for an all-out fight for the leadership. Many of the delegates would hesitate to throw out the old leaders, despite their program and record of betrayal, in favor of still largely *unknown* and *untested* new aspirants.

The Rank-and-File Caucus therefore deliberately confined itself merely to a single demonstration projecting the idea and laying the basis for a future struggle for leadership, elected not on narrow clique grounds but because it represents a genuine fighting policy and program.

The caucus supported the candidacy of Robert Carter, President of the Greater Flint Industrial Union Council, who ran for president on a program of opposition to the no-strike pledge and for withdrawal of labor members from the WLB, against R. J. Thomas, who had been reelected five years in a row without opposition. Carter received the unexpected backing of almost 20 percent of the convention. That vote constituted clearest evidence of the trend of the auto workers—toward a complete repudiation of the old leadership and the creation from the ranks of a genuinely new type of leadership, militant fighters for a program of struggle against the corporations and against the capitalist government.

That the auto militants were still unable to defeat the no-strike policy decisively and secure a new leadership at this

convention is due, in the final analysis, to the *political* contradictions which remain the most formidable obstacle in their path. Their disillusionment with Roosevelt is profound, but not yet complete. They still support the imperialist war, although with increasingly sharp misgivings concerning the aims of the war rulers and the anti-labor consequences of the whole capitalist war program.

Moving to the Left

Politically, the auto workers are in a transitional stage, moving steadily to the left toward a complete break with capitalist politics, but still confused. That confusion was reflected in the fact that a large section of the auto workers are prepared to come into head-on collision with the capitalist government on a basic labor policy, but not to challenge the political power of the ruling class from which that policy stems. Thus, except for the most advanced section of the militants, the auto workers who fought against the no-strike pledge did not do so by resolving their political contradictions. While reconciling themselves to these contradictions, they tried to interpret them in favor of their own *class interests*. That, however, is but a step removed from a final definitive turn from the old capitalist parties and politics on the road to their own *class party*, a labor party.

No small indication of the political development of the auto workers is reflected in their wholesome rejection of Stalinism, which received further discredit at this convention. The Stalinists, who in the formative stages of the UAW exercised tremendous influence, have been steadily losing ground, especially since their 1941 turn to the extreme right.

They remain a force in the UAW only in so far as they can hide behind the cover of the official leadership. Each time they sought to assert themselves independently at the convention they were roundly rebuffed. They lost considerable ground in the top leadership, when their West Coast UAW director and International Board Member, Michener, was placed under charges before the convention. A scandalous picture of Stalinist malfeasance in office was presented to the convention. Not even their own spokesmen could offer a defense. The convention voted against the election of a board member for the region and established a committee to take over the organizational conduct of the West Coast organization. This was a major setback for the Stalinists.

The coming period of increasingly acute economic dislocation can serve only to deepen the cleavage between the ranks and the leadership and accelerate the political development of the auto workers in the direction of independent labor political action against all the capitalist parties and leaders. The no-strike issue is bound to merge with the struggle for a new political program. The UAW leadership already is aggravating the hostility of the ranks still further by maneuvers to prevent or stall the no-strike referendum in brazen violation of the clear cut mandate of the convention. The pre-election political finagling of Roosevelt around the question of the Little Steel formula is adding its weight against the remaining balance of the auto workers' illusions about the "friend of labor" in the White House.

The time is not far distant when the auto workers will be taking their rightful place in the vanguard of a new, great upsurge of American labor. The impending struggle will not be limited to the "economic" field. It will raise fundamental political issues and be fought out under political slogans and by political means.

Trotskyism in India

The Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India, Burma and Ceylon, the all-Indian Trotskyist party whose documents we are proud to publish in this issue, was officially launched in May 1942 at a conference in which the assembled delegates represented the Revolutionary Socialist League of Bengal, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of the United Provinces and Behar, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon, and other Trotskyist groups. Documents relating to this fusion and the 1942 Founding Conference will be found in the March, April and October 1942 issues of the *Fourth International*.

All the activities of our Indian cothinkers are conducted under conditions of bestial repression and illegality comparable to those existing under the regime of Nazism. British colonial despots not only trample on such elementary rights as those of freedom of speech, press and assembly, but, like the Gestapo, do not hesitate to pick up any individuals on the street who are singled out by their stool-pigeons. Once arrested the individuals are incarcerated and held without trial. If and when a trial is held and a sentence is passed, the victim has no assurance whatever of being released upon the termination of the sentence. The common practice is immediately to rearrest and reincarcerate the revolutionists either upon some other charges or without any charges whatsoever. Those who do not succeed in escaping must await the action of the masses to effect their liberation.

The experience of the leaders of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon is a case in point. This was a legal party, with a legal press, and with representatives in the Ceylon State Council. When the second imperialist war broke out in Europe in 1939, the Ceylonese authorities moved at once. They confiscated the party's printing plants, arrested the members of the State Council, in violation of their parliamentary immunity, and seized other members of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, throwing them into concentration camps without trial or hearing of any kind. The party was thus driven "unofficially" into illegality. The work nevertheless continued. In April 1942 the Ceylonese leaders succeeded in escaping from the clutches of their imperialist jailers and participated in the work of the merged Trotskyist movement.

The Indian Trotskyists through their underground press were able to publish a theoretical organ, *The Bolshevik-Leninist*, and another magazine, intended for broader circulation, *The Permanent Revolution*. Both of these were published in English which is the language of the educated section of the population, including the advanced workers. In addition the Indian Trotskyists have issued leaflets in English and in Tamil.

The main field of the party's activities is the labor movement, especially the trade unions. The party, while not yet a mass organization, has its roots already in the Indian proletariat. By its participation in the August 1942 struggle, the Indian Trotskyists were able not only to demonstrate their vitality, but to emerge as the recognized extreme left-wing of the Indian labor movement.

This led the authorities to redouble their repressive activities. In July 1943 they succeeded in dealing the Trotskyists the heaviest blow they had yet suffered. Through the instrumentality of a Stalinist stool-pigeon, who had managed to worm his way into the Trotskyist ranks the police was enabled to stage a series of raids.

Reporting these raids, the July-September 1943 issue of

Permanent Revolution states:

"In July 1943, the police in Bombay and Madras raided the residences of a number of Bolshevik-Leninists. While their plan was to round up the entire membership and smash the whole organization, yet the vigilance of our comrades averted a major catastrophe to the Bolshevik-Leninist Party.

"In Madras the comrades arrested were: R. S. V. Senanayake and L. Cooray who were 'wanted' by the Ceylon Government under the Defense Regulations since April 1942. (In March 1942 after years of 'unofficial' hounding of the Trotskyists, the British Governor of Ceylon, Sir Andrew Caldecott, finally officially proclaimed the outlawry of the Trotskyist movement.—*Ed.*) In Bombay the police raided the residences of practically all comrades including those of Ashokumari, K. Tilak and C. R. Govindan. But these raids, except one, proved abortive. The only arrests made in Bombay were: Comrades Kusuma, D. P. R. Gunawardene and N. M. Perera, leading members of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, Ceylon Unit of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party. The last two comrades detained since June 1940, escaped from prison with Comrades Colvin R. de Silva and E. Samarakkody and their warder in April 1942.

"In addition to these comrades a number of other political workers associated with the BLPI were arrested in the latter half of July."

The statement issued by Comrades Perera and Gunawardene in the magistrate's court at Kandy, Ceylon, on February 8 of this year, has arrived in this country and was published in *The Militant*, October 14. This statement is in the best tradition of the Marxist fighters for Socialism.

After these police raids, the BLPI was compelled temporarily to merge its theoretical organ, *The Bolshevik-Leninist*, with the popular magazine, *Permanent Revolution*. But the party was able to go through with its publications program which in addition to several pamphlets, among them the speech delivered by Leon Trotsky before the Czarist Court in 1906, includes the issuance of a 175 page book: "From the First to the Fourth International," by K. Tilak, one of the prominent party leaders.

The most eloquent proof of the indomitable spirit and viability of the BLPI is the fact that it has just held its National Convention which adopted a rounded political resolution along with an elaborate program of action designed primarily to build up strong party sections in the main industrial centers of India. Our Indian co-thinkers are firm in their knowledge that only a proletarian party will lead the Indian struggle of liberation and they are taking the necessary steps to guarantee this character to the BLPI.

The documents which appear in this issue center around the political resolution of the BLPI, which takes as its starting point the imperialist war and its impact on India, especially the August 1942 struggle and the famine.

The 1941 political resolution and the other documents of our Indian co-thinkers hardly require commendation to the readers of the *Fourth International* who are already acquainted with the high standards set in the previous resolutions, articles and analyses by the trained and brilliant Marxists who are in the leadership of the Indian section of the *Fourth International*.

We take this opportunity to express our solidarity with our Indian co-thinkers and to salute the intransigent revolutionary fighters who have once again fallen into the clutches of the British imperialists.

The Permanent Revolution, in the sense which Marx attached to the conception, means a revolution which makes no compromise with any form of class rule, which does not stop at the democratic stage, which goes over to socialist measures and to war against the reaction from without, that is a revolution whose every next stage is anchored in the preceding one and which can only end in the complete liquidation of all class society.a national revolution is not a self-sufficient whole; it is only a link in the international chain. The international revolution presents a permanent process, in spite of all fleeting rises and falls.

—Trotsky.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

(INCORPORATING THE "BOLSHEVIK-LENINIST")

VOL. 2.

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No. 1.



FEATURING IN THIS ISSUE :

Articles by Leon Trotsky, D. Dutt,
S Livera and Krishna Menon.

British Bolshevik-Leninist's Interview
with Leon Trotsky.

Editorial Notes on :

Britain at the Cross Roads.

The Russian Offensive.

A Blue Print for Capitulation.

The Stalinist-Police Alliance—
the summit of Popular Frontism.

People always were and always will be the stupid victims of deceit and self-deceit in politics until they learn to discover the interests of some class behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises.....The Asiatic revolutions have revealed the same spinelessness and baseness of liberajism, the same exceptional importance of the independence of the democratic masses, and the same sharp line of division between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of all kinds. After the experience both of Europe and Asia, whoever now speaks of non-class politics and of non-class socialism simply deserves to be put in a cage and exhibited alongside of the Australian kangaroo.

—LENIN. *March, 1913.*

ORGAN OF THE BOLSHEVIK-LENINIST PARTY OF INDIA
& CEYLON, SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

EIGHT ANNAS

Reproduction of the front page of PERMANENT REVOLUTION, theoretical organ of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India, which appears under British illegality. The editors of PERMANENT REVOLUTION state: "As we enter the second year of our existence we can look back with legitimate pride at the progress made in 1943. In spite of the many difficulties the PERMANENT REVOLUTION has established itself as the leading Marxist theoretical journal in India and Ceylon. It occupies the foremost place in the underground press of India."

The Present Political Situation in India

Theses of the Political Committee of Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India and Ceylon, Adopted August 4, 1944

The second imperialist world war has been the governing factor in the Indian situation in a very direct sense, especially since the entry of Japan into the war. On the one hand, there has been a readily discernible correlation between the major developments in the military situation internationally and the main developments in the political situation in India. On the other hand, the general development of the military situation—adversely to Anglo-American imperialism for a long period, and favorably thereafter—has had a direct bearing, though with a greater time lag than in the case of the political situation, on the rate of deterioration of India's economic condition.

The most dramatic and significant event in India during the last year was the Bengal famine, which wiped out several millions of landless and the poor sections of the peasantry. It was the tragic culmination of that accelerating process—of which inflation and the denudation of the country of essential food supplies were the most marked features—by which British imperialism transferred onto the backs of the always poverty-stricken Indian masses an intolerable proportion of the burden of its war effort in North Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia. It was the dramatic highlight of an All-India food shortage which, worsened as it was by maladministration and maldistribution, led to actual famine conditions also in Malabar, Orissa, Kashmir, Andhra (ceded districts) and certain smaller areas; and extreme stringency in every province save the surplus producing provinces like the Punjab and Sind. It was the measure, in terms of actual human suffering of the intolerable "sacrifices" imposed by a steadily weakening British imperialism on the one major area of imperialist exploitation, outside Africa, which is still left in its unchallenged control. And it was the mark of the extreme economic dislocation (reflected in the tremendous growth of hoarding and of the black market) and administrative disorganization (leading to actual breakdown in Bengal) which accompanied the feverish process of rapidly and heartlessly transforming India's economy into a war economy, subserving the military needs of British imperialism.

During the last year too, the process of transforming India's economy into a war economy has continued to go forward. But the pace has slackened both by reason of the fact that the process itself. Famine among the peasantry and a wide-spread any attempt to advance the process much further without consolidating the advances already made would have imperilled the process itself. Famine among the peasantry and a wide spread series of short-lived strikes among the workers in connection with the intolerable shortage—amounting to scarcity generally and an absolute lack of supplies frequently—of elementary consumer's commodities drove the government to a series of measures which, coupled with certain facilities for importation that the turn in the military situation provided, enabled it belatedly, from the beginning of 1944, to arrest the catastrophic rate of deterioration which threatened India with economic collapse. The inflationary process has been considerably slowed down, though not completely arrested (the paper currency is being added to still by one to two crores a week).

Food and other elementary articles of consumption are being more effectively distributed, if even at bare subsistence level, through more wide-spread rationing in the principal cities and towns. A more general, if yet considerably ineffective, system of price control has helped to arrest somewhat the upward flight of prices of a fair range of articles of civilian consumption. At the same time, an increase in imports, primarily of grain as also of certain articles of civilian consumption, coupled with the sharp reduction (as a result of the Anglo-American victory in North Africa) of the need for supplying the Middle East, has increased the actual quantity of supplies available and so has helped to ease the scarcity of these commodities. The general economic and administrative dislocation consequent on the rapid transition from a peacetime to a war-time economy has thus been substantially reduced, although it still continues to prevail in important ways in various areas of the country (of which Bengal is still the chief) and in various branches of the economy (e.g. coal). The prospect of a deteriorating economic situation leading rapidly to the precipitation of mass struggles, a prospect which seemed immediate in the middle of 1943, has thus receded in the course of 1944; and there is no reason to anticipate a sharp change in this respect in the period immediately ahead.

The Peasantry and the Urban Petty Bourgeoisie

The ever-increasing burden of the intensified war effort falls on the backs of the masses. The acute shortage of necessities, resulting from the diversion of goods from civilian to military consumption, continues, although there has been some little easing of the situation in this respect. Moreover, although the inflationary process has been retarded and therewith also the steep rise in the cost of living, the retardation itself has been at the point of such a fall in the currency value (the rupee is worth only five annas today) and of such a rise in the price level (the price index is treble the pre-war) as to represent no improvement in the condition of the masses, but merely a retardation in that rate of deterioration which had already brought broad strata of the population to the point of utter destitution. Rationing cannot bring food to the pauperized; nor price control, supplies which are not available. Despite various half-hearted government measures, therefore, the black market continues to flourish, as also hoarding, speculation and profiteering—and will continue to flourish so long as the scarcity and uncertainty induced by war continue to exist. As British imperialism, weakened by war, intensifies its exploitation, the already pauperized strata of the masses either fall into beggary or literally perish.

The conditions summarized above have struck the urban petty bourgeoisie with devastating force. Many petty traders are no doubt flourishing, and there has also been a relative increase in the volume of middle-class employment, particularly in the civil and military administrative departments of government. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the standards of living

among the urban petty bourgeoisie have been shattered and the process of their pauperization accelerated. The objective conditions are thus driving this stratum onto the revolutionary road as was demonstrated during the "August struggle" (1942) in which they, and in particular the students, were everywhere in the forefront. Their subjective attitude has, however, undergone a transformation since that period. The utter defeat of the struggle has demoralized them completely and save for a thin stratum whose political consciousness is highly developed, they have turned their backs temporarily to politics.

The overwhelming majority of the peasantry has not reaped the benefits of the increase in the price of agricultural products. The main weight of the war burden has indeed fallen on the poor and landless peasants, that is to say, the section of the population least able to bear it. Caught in the "scissors" of well-nigh stable, if somewhat increased, agricultural prices, and steeply rising prices of industrial products, the poor and landless strata of the peasantry, as also the lower sections of the middle peasantry, have been driven to destitution, starvation and misery. Even in the famine areas, where food prices soared to 10-25 times the pre-war level it is the upper strata of the peasantry, especially the rich, who have benefited from the rise in prices of agricultural products. As a result of these various factors there has been a sharpening of the differentiation among the peasantry. The poor and lower-middle peasantry have had to sell their lands to the upper-middle and rich peasants and traders, not only in famine stricken Bengal but also, for instance, in agriculturally prosperous Sind, on such a scale that legislation had to be introduced in these provinces in an endeavor, which would be vain even if it were not deceitful, to arrest the process. Objective conditions are thus driving the poor and landless peasantry to the revolutionary solution of their problems; but their conditions today are so sub-human as to deprive them of even the power of action, let alone the will to it. The starving cannot fight—any more than the overfed. It is to the middle peasant that we must at this stage look for political action—as was demonstrated during the "August struggle" which, in the areas where the peasantry moved into action, drew in largely this section of the peasantry. Here too, however, the crushing of the August struggle has led to general demoralization. Other processes must intervene before the peasantry will move again.

The Proletariat

The working class has been directly affected by the increase in prices and the shortage of necessities, but not to an extent that is comparable with that of the urban petty bourgeoisie. For this fact there is a two-fold reason. In the first place, the fall in real wages, which has only been partially offset by the dearness allowance, has been compensated for in a real sense by the increase in aggregate family earnings. Industrial employment has increased sharply and steadily during the war; the volume of general working class employment has probably doubled. Most adult members of working class families are therefore today in active employment.

Secondly, the government, interested as it is in uninterrupted war production and anxious as it is to avoid general working class unrest which might well be a prelude to another mass uprising, has followed a deliberate policy of appeasing the industrial proletariat by providing to them, though often tardily, minimum supplies of elementary necessities at controlled prices. Grain shops, later extended steadily to other necessities, have been opened in the principal factories and

workshops, and the government has given to supplying these a priority which aims at preventing either unduly prolonged or excessively acute shortages. Coupled as this policy has been with prompt suppression of every kind of militancy (arrest of strike leaders, etc.); and aided as British imperialism has been by the traitorous support of the trade union bureaucracy and the Stalinists, who everywhere act openly as British imperialism's agencies within the working class, the government has succeeded in avoiding general or prolonged working class action.

Sporadic economic struggles, principally on the food, dearness allowance and bonus questions, have, however, taken place in every industrial area, and the total of workers involved in these struggles during the nine months following November 1942 reached a very high figure. Moreover these struggles have generally been short and of a protest character. Hence their failure to develop into a connected or systematic series of integrated struggles on some general issue like the food, dearness allowance or bonus questions, on which working class feeling is certainly wide-spread if not very deep-going. At the same time, they have paved the way to certain concessions on these very issues and have served to show that although the demoralization consequent on the August defeat has had some influence on the working class, nevertheless the prevailing demoralization among the petty bourgeois masses has not also caught up the working class decisively in its sweep. The reason for this mainly is that the working class as a whole, although it was sympathetic, did not go into militant action (save in certain isolated cases, e.g., Tata, Nagar) during the August struggle. This fact was no doubt the principal cause of the August defeat; but it has at the same time prevented that defeat from exercising a deep-going influence on the working class outlook and attitude to struggle. Thus, the working class is certainly not quiescent: it is even restless. But the restlessness does not as yet go so deep as to lead to the determined action which is necessary today even in partial economic struggles, since even these tend to rise rapidly, in war-time conditions, to the political plane. With the temporary easing of the economic situation, there is no immediate prospect of deep-going working class struggle, unless other processes, which cannot be concretely anticipated, intervene to change the situation.

The Indian bourgeoisie and landlords have amassed and—despite the excess profits tax and the increase in the tax on income and government's largely ineffective anti-black market measures—are continuing to amass vast profits due to the war. But this increase in their capital resources does not reflect itself in anything like a corresponding rate of industrial expansion. Although the exigencies of war have compelled British imperialism to permit a certain expansion in some branches of industry to subserve war needs, this expansion does not correspond even to its military requirements. The long term interests of British finance capital stand in the way of permitting any significant expansion of Indian industry. Consequently the government deliberately prevents any such development through the use of such instruments as control of the flotations of companies, forced loans, the excess profits tax, the setting up of monopolistic corporations of a semi-government nature, limitations on trade, blocking of supplies either directly or by denial of transport facilities, exchange control, importation of consumers' goods which Indian industry can now well supply instead of capital goods which Indian industry badly needs, etc., etc.

The attitude of the Indian bourgeoisie to British imperialism during this war has largely been governed by their estimate of the military situation. This is best demonstrated by the

developments in the war time policy of the political party of the Indian bourgeoisie, the *Indian National Congress*.

The outbreak of the war found Congress in office in 7 out of the 12 provinces of India. These Congress Governments which had gone into office in 1937 on the declared policy of breaking the Constitution from within, found themselves caught up instead in the steel frame of the imperialist administration, and were seen not unwillingly working this very Constitution in active cooperation with the Viceroy, Governors and the Civil Service. Congress policy in office, if a little less reactionary in many respects than that of imperialism's own administrations in the past (concessions to the peasantry, release of political prisoners, etc.), proved in essentials to be no different from that of imperialism itself, particularly in relation to the working class.

The Indian Bourgeoisie

In Bombay, Madras and the United Provinces (Cawnpore), the Congress Governments showed no hesitation in shooting down strikers; and the Bombay government introduced and rapidly passed, despite organized working class opposition, a reactionary trade union bill which struck directly at the fundamental working class right to strike. There can be no doubt that these bitter memories played a part in determining the working class attitude to the August struggle, which, though spontaneous, was conducted uniformly in the name of the Indian National Congress.

The outbreak of the war therefore found the Congress Governments, and therewith Congress itself, considerably stripped of prestige and decreasing in mass influence. It also found these governments in an impasse. With their limited powers and limited finances, they found themselves unable to go forward with even the mildly liberal measures that they knew were necessary to lull the masses. Instead they found themselves engaged substantially in the day-to-day administration of a regime they were supposed to oppose.

The war gave the Congress High Command a way out of the developing impasse. Acting on the plea that India had been dragged into the war unconsulted—which, of course, was true, but not surprising—the High Command ordered the Congress Governments to relinquish the reins of office; which they did, with varying degrees of reluctance and delay, taking every care to smooth the way for direct administration by the British imperialists.

Having thus gained the necessary freedom of maneuver, the Congress High Command set about implementing the Indian bourgeoisie's war aim, viz., the utilization of the wartime difficulties of British imperialism with a view to improving their own position within the partnership of British Imperialism & Co., by calling on British imperialism to define its war aims, particularly in relation to India. It was a maneuver designed to evoke a statement of British imperialism's bargaining terms. The British imperialists easily countered the maneuver with—platitudes.

Congress was therefore forced to come out with a statement of its terms. This it did in July 1940 by a resolution passed at the Poona meeting of the AICC. By this resolution admittedly influenced by the German victories in Europe, Congress offered cooperation on condition of an unequivocal declaration of India's independence and the formation of a National Government at the center. Preparatory to this demand, and as a demonstration of Congress sincerity in its offer to support the war, Mahatma Gandhi, proclaimed pacifist, was relieved of the

leadership of Congress. To the Poona offer of Congress, the only reply given by British imperialism through the mouth of Viceroy Linlithgow (in August 1940) was an offer to expand the Viceroy's Executive Council and a haughty reiteration of Britain's determination to remain in power in India on the plea of its self-imposed role of "protector" of minority interests."

In this situation Congress was compelled to look for means of bringing pressure to bear on her recalcitrant partner. Here Congress came up against a difficulty. It is important to note that whether at this stage or later, Congress never characterized the war as imperialist and the Congress leaders openly declared their sympathy with the Allied powers. The Congress had therefore to seek a way of going into opposition in a way that would not embarrass the British war effort. The solution to this problem was found, as was to be expected, by Mahatma Gandhi.

The solution was—"individual *satyagraha*." It was designed expressly to prevent mass action and any embarrassment of the war effort. Chosen Congressmen from October 1940 onwards went out to shout slogans *after* informing the authorities of their intention. They were, of course, promptly arrested. Nevertheless, the policy was continued till December 1941 when it was allowed to die off after the release of all *satyagrahi* prisoners from jail. Congress was searching for another move—when Pearl Harbor intervened.

Gandhi's Tactics

The rapid advance of the Japanese through the Pacific regions and to the very gate of India transformed the political situation in India. The prestige of British imperialism was severely shaken; the sense of unshakable British power was undermined. The mass needs rose; and with it the bourgeois sense of opportunity. Proportionately British imperialism's former need of intractability also visibly softened. It sought a settlement with Congress as a means of consolidating itself.

This was the background of the Cripps mission. Although the Cripps proposals were in form an offer of "Dominion Status" after the war, they were in fact hedged about with conditions which made the offer itself unreal. In particular, it was made a condition precedent to any "transfer of power" that a treaty be signed which "*will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands . . . (and) will make provision, in accordance with the undertakings given by His Majesty's Government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities.*"

Under this vague and far-reaching clause, British imperialism retained a maneuvering power which would enable it to insist on almost any terms it chose to impose, and even to find a way out of the proposal altogether. Further, no change whatsoever in India's status was contemplated during the war. On the contrary although "leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people" were to be invited to participate in "the counsels of their country," this was no different from the former offer of an expanded Viceroy's Executive Council, inasmuch as the Council continued to be advisory and the Viceroy's powers remained as absolute as ever. On this question of the Viceroy's powers the Cripps negotiations with Congress broke down.

The real reason for the failure of the negotiations, however, was the sharp change that had taken place in the military situation. The threat of the application of a "scorched earth policy" in the case of the expected Japanese invasion had caused important sections of the Indian big bourgeoisie to

take a sharp leftward turn. Further, Japan's advance had not merely hardened the attitude of the Indian bourgeoisie towards British imperialism but radically changed it. Contemplating the possibility of a successful Japanese invasion of India, the Indian bourgeoisie began to consider the possibility not merely of altering the terms of their partnership with British imperialism but even of changing partners; i.e., the possibility of Japanese imperialism replacing the British. In other words, the bourgeoisie were preparing to climb the fence so as to be in a position to decide which way to jump at the proper time.

Thereafter events moved swiftly. The Congress Working Committee met in July and announced its current terms for a settlement with British imperialism. These were "withdrawal of British rule in India" immediately and the negotiation of a treaty between "free India" and Great Britain "for the adjustment of future relations and for the cooperation of the two countries as allies in the common task of meeting aggression." Coupled with these terms, however, there was, for the first time, the open threat of a non-violent *mass* struggle in case they were not granted. An AICC meeting was called for August to endorse this decision. Congress had moved with the worsening military situation for Britain from conditional support to open opposition. The next move lay with British imperialism.

British imperialism's answer was categorical and dramatic—not words, but action. On the very morning after the AICC session of August 8th at Bombay, where Congress authorized mass action under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership as a means to forcing British imperialism to accept the Congress terms, the government struck at Congress with a wide-spread series of simultaneous arrests which completely paralyzed the Congress organization.

August 9 Movement

Government's action evoked an unexpectedly prompt widespread and violent mass response, namely, the mass uprising which began on August 9, 1942. This uprising had the character of a spontaneous rebellion against the British power. It is important to note, however, on the one hand, that it did not draw in important provinces like the Punjab at all; and, on the other, that save in certain areas like North Bihar, Eastern UP, Orissa and Midnapore district, the upsurge never went beyond the proportions of a violent demonstration. This derived from the perspectives which the bourgeoisie themselves had set before the masses through the Congress generally and Mahatma Gandhi in particular. These perspectives were exactly comprised in the latter's slogan, "Quit India," which was more an invitation to the British to quit than a call to the masses to drive them out. In other words, the Congress perspective was not the overthrow of imperialist rule and the seizure of power, but at the most, the paralyzing of the government administration as a means of bringing about an agreed devolution of power.

This analysis of the Congress perspectives in August is in no way invalidated by the Gandhian slogan of August 8, viz., "Do or Die." Read in the context of non-violent action and "open" rebellion in which Mahatma Gandhi put it forward, the "Do or Die" slogan was itself not a call for an organized mass onslaught on British imperialist power but for individual action of an anarchist type—let each man consider himself free and act as if he were free; that was Gandhi's own advice.

The basic reason for the August movement not outstripping in any significant manner the bounds of the bourgeois perspectives was the failure of the working class to move into

militant class action on a decisive scale. This failure was due principally to the absence of a revolutionary working class party to lead the workers. No doubt the Communist Party acted as a brake upon the working class. And no doubt there was working class suspicion of the bourgeois leadership, particularly in Bombay. But in view of the fact that the working class did demonstrate its solidarity by an actual widespread stoppage of work, there can be little doubt that they would have gone into *militant* action had there existed a working class party to provide it with an alternative and militant leadership. As it was, with the lack of militant working class participation, the movement was bound to fail.

It failed disastrously. The movement was violent but government met it with a himalayan display of organized violence unexampled in India since the great Mutiny of 1857. The movement rose in places to revolutionary heights, e.g., Bihar; where little statelets were actually thrown up for little periods like foam on the crest of a rapidly advancing wave. And the very height to which the struggle arose resulted, in complete defeat, in the depth of the subsequent fall. Above all, the petty bourgeois who led and the petty bourgeois who fought—it was mainly a petty bourgeois uprising—lacking the leadership of the working class with its consistent revolutionary perspectives, and bound by the bourgeois perspective of "pressure politics" as distinct from revolutionary politics, bound up, that is to say, by a narrow horizon of violent action without clear revolutionary aim, fell away from the struggle on its defeat, nonplussed and confused. Passing from a sense of frustration to a feeling of futility, he fell away ultimately not only from the struggle but from politics itself. In other words, the petty bourgeoisie became generally demoralized.

Meantime the bourgeoisie have once more changed front. Hard on the heels of the collapse of the mass struggle has come also a sharp turn in the military situation. The Japanese, are, no doubt, still at the gates of India, but they are no longer knocking on them. The Germans have been pushed from El Alamein and Stalingrad right across North Africa on the one side and Russia on the other, back into "Festung Europa." Russia is nearing the Eastern borders of Germany. The Anglo-American armies have landed and advanced in Italy and landed and consolidated a bridgehead in Normandy. Away in the Pacific, Japan is being pushed from her outer island screen back onto her first line of inner defenses. Everywhere the Axis is on the defensive and in retreat; and Anglo-American imperialism, conscious of its overwhelming power, looks triumphantly forward to victory and unchallenged world-domination.

Post-August Developments

The Indian bourgeoisie have reacted rapidly to this change in the military situation favorable to British imperialism. They have come down once more from the fence they climbed, come down on the side of Anglo-American imperialism. Though they still cast covert glances in the direction of the American imperialists (they have long appealed to Roosevelt to solve the political "deadlock" in India) they have for the present at least plainly decided to throw in their lot openly once more with British imperialism. Hucksters that they are, however, they still look round to see whether some little concession cannot be salvaged from the wreckage of the 1942 hopes.

The first sign of this turn in the bourgeois attitude came in fact during the August struggle itself. Scared by the violence of the masses, they quickly tightened the purse-strings of Congress on the receipt of a private government assurance

that the "scorched earth" policy would not be applied to India in case of a Japanese advance. The open signs of the change in the bourgeois attitude came later, however, in the form of a vociferous press campaign for a resolution of the political "deadlock." This was in fact, a demand that imperialism itself should take the initiative in restarting negotiations with the very Congress it had just smashed, as Churchill had always held it should be smashed. Imperialism was adamant. It demanded "unconditional surrender." The newspaper tune thereupon underwent a significant change. From the demand for the release of the Congress leadership as a preliminary to negotiation, the demand became one for the government to provide facilities for the Congress leadership in jail to meet in order to propose new terms. Imperialism still remained adamant; it was not prepared to negotiate at all. It demanded that the Congress leadership should come in sackcloth and ashes to accept the terms that it (British imperialism) was prepared to impose. The deadlock therefore continued.

The Bombay Plan

Meantime, political agreement or no, the bourgeoisie were actually entering intimate cooperation with the government. Economics determines politics. The bourgeoisie were not only making profits out of the war but they were also looking ahead to the post-war world. Having failed in their bid for power, they were concerned at least to occupy certain strategic positions in the administrative machinery as a means of safeguarding and, if possible, advancing their interests to some little extent at least. In other words, they wanted Congress in office once more. The problem was how to pave the way for a political settlement.

The bourgeoisie, or rather the dominant section thereof, the big bourgeoisie, e.g., the Tatas and the Birlas, solved this problem with a masterly maneuver—the Bombay Plan. This plan, which in form is a blue-print for the industrialization of India, is in fact, a scheme for the more thoroughgoing exploitation of India by a combination of Anglo-American and Indian capital. It is also a propagandist device for swinging mass opinion once more behind the bourgeoisie by lavish promises of future prosperity under bourgeois leadership (the plan stresses the raising of mass standards of living as its aim, though it does not indicate how this is to be achieved except as a putative by-product of the bourgeois search for profit). Above all, it is the basis for the reopening of negotiations by Congress for a surrender-settlement. The planners stress the need for a "National Government," i.e., a government of the native exploiters under British imperialism, as an indispensable instrument for implementing their scheme.

The maneuver is bold—and it has succeeded. By diverting attention from "politics" to "economics" its authors have succeeded in creating the atmosphere for a surrender by Congress which can look something like a "peace with honor"—going back to office in order to "serve the people." And in this atmosphere, the master-tactician of the Congress, Mahatma Gandhi is back in action once more.

Since his release, Mahatma Gandhi has taken three significant steps in the direction required by the bourgeoisie—and the imperialists. He has announced that the sanction clause of the August resolution has lapsed; that is to say Congress had abandoned the role of active opposition. He has condemned the violence of his followers and called on those who are "underground" to surrender to the government. He has thereby condemned the August mass struggle itself, for it was univer-

sally violent; organized, insofar as it was organized at all, and sustained by underground workers. And finally, he has proposed fresh terms as a basis of negotiation with the government.

The terms now offered by Mahatma Gandhi have a two-fold significance. They abandon the demand that British imperialism should quit India; and they offer full cooperation in the war. All he demands for today is a "National Government" at the center, which is to handle the civil administration in such a manner as to subserve the imperialist war effort (the military administration, including transport, etc., is left outside its purview).

British imperialism has already announced through the mouth of Mr. Amery that these terms do not provide a sufficient basis for immediate negotiation. Though Wavell has abandoned Linlithgow's "sackcloth and ashes" demand, he still demands unconditional surrender in substance. Will Congress agree to the demand?

This is the immediate question of Indian politics. And there can be only one answer to it. Congress will surrender—only an appropriate face-saving formula remains to be found. Congress will then have turned full circle, along with the war situation. It will be back in office once more, and this time, not even supposedly to break the Constitution from within but to work it.

What are the likely consequences of the coming Congress-Government settlement (a) on political parties, and (b) on the masses?

As to political parties—Congress itself will, on settlement and taking of office once more discredit itself both before the masses and before the more radical sections of its own membership, especially as those who really fought during the struggle are likely to be left to rot in imperialist jails. This radical section is already showing open discontent with the moves towards surrender that Mahatma Gandhi is making. When settlement comes, therefore, some portion of this section is likely to break away from Congress itself in search of some alternative organization, be it one that exists or one that is to be created anew. Once Congress is back in office, moreover, and thereby, on the one hand, takes on its own shoulders the responsibility for the repressive war-time measures of the imperialist government and, on the other, becomes directly associated in the minds of the masses with the intensified exploitation and consequent misery that imperialist war entails; the already disillusioned masses will turn away from Congress in search of an alternative leadership. In short, the radical intellectuals and the petty-bourgeois masses who have hitherto followed Congress will not only fall away from Congress but turn against it.

What of the Congress Socialist Party? It is important to note that the official leadership of the August struggle came from this hybrid organization of petty-bourgeois radicals who cling to the coattails of the Indian bourgeoisie. The struggle showed the distinctive stamp of their limited ideology and futile methods, especially after the mass movement began to ebb. The CSP leadership realized the need for violence, but did not know how to direct it in an organized fashion to a revolutionary purpose. Hence the orgy of negative destruction unaccompanied by a constructive attempt at a seizure of power.

The CSP leadership—recognized, belatedly, the need for working class action; but it did not know, or knowing, did not dare use (because it would bring down on their heads the condign displeasure of their bourgeois masters) the class appeal for militant action. On the contrary, when the struggle was

already ebbing it called on the working class to leave the factories and go back to the villages, thus seeking to use them as mere pawns in its scheme artificially to sustain the struggle. It is no wonder, therefore, that the working class failed to be moved by the ultimatum appeals of the CSP.

The CSP leadership found itself directing a peasant upsurge of remarkable militancy which, however, it could not develop further because it clung to the Congress perspective of no threat to landlordism. Consequently, the only method of deepening and widening the peasant struggle was never used—"Land to the Peasants" was never advanced anywhere by the CSP, but only "Refuse to Pay the Land Tax." "Against the Government but Not Against Landlordism"—that was the content of its policy for the peasantry.

The Congress Socialist Party

Above all, when the mass movement began to ebb from the impasse created by limited perspectives and government repression, the only manner in which the CSP could think of trying to continue and revive the struggle was adventurism. The partisan band of guerrilla fighters, who not only fought the government but also forced, by threats, the now reluctant peasantry into helping them, became its characteristic method in the countryside. The saboteur group of casual bomb-throwers became its characteristic method in the city. But these methods of "continuing" the struggle individually and of "electrifying" the defeated masses once more into a struggle, failed, as they were bound to fail, miserably. The mass movement was dying—and no CSP methods could revive it. Thus the CSP leadership, which had by force of circumstances (the official bourgeois leadership had been put away by imperialism into its jails) received an unexpectedly complete opportunity for putting its "revolutionary" talk into practice; proved completely, in action it was simply unable to outstep the bounds of bourgeois "pressure politics" perspectives, and that, though "socialist" by label, it was merely Congress in fact.

Despite these facts, however, the CSP has gained in prestige and influence among the younger radical adherents of Congress by reason of its breach with the Congress tradition of non-violence and its determined effort to give the struggle both organization and leadership. But with the defeat of the August struggle and especially with the return of Mahatma Gandhi to active politics and the attendant strengthening of the Congress Right Wing, the CSP finds itself in an increasingly anomalous position within the Congress. And when the Congress-Government settlement comes it will find itself in a dilemma.

Such a settlement will carry with it Congress cooperation in British imperialism's war and Congress participation in the suppression of the masses. It is impossible for the CSP, if it is to remain true to its August tradition, to support such a policy; and it is extremely doubtful that the Congress High Command will, in such event, tolerate its functioning as an organized opposition within the Congress fold. The CSP will thereby be forced to a choice—and this choice can only lead to the political demise of the CSP as a distinctive organization, for it will have either to surrender to the reactionary Congress Right Wing or to leave Congress altogether. The most probable outcome is a split in the CSP ranks. The CSP Right Wing has already surrendered to the reactionary Congress High Command. It is the CSP Left Wing, therefore, that will be really forced to the choice. If it surrenders, it is politically doomed. If it walks out, however, the question is whether it can carry with it enough adherents to launch a new political organiza-

tion which would constitute an entirely new development in Indian politics inasmuch as it would connote the appearance of an Indian equivalent of the Social Revolutionary Party of Czarist Russia (such mass influence as the CSP has possessed has always been among the upper strata of the peasantry and not the lower strata or the working class). It is impossible at present to determine the probable outcome, especially as the Left Wing leadership and most of its active adherents are in the imperialist jails and unable to do anything regarding the present moves towards surrender. In any event, the CSP as such has no political future, even if it has a past.

The Communist Party of India, pursuant to its policy of unconditional support of the British imperialist war effort, openly and actively opposed the mass struggle, thus making themselves the tool of British imperialism in India. The confusionist and diversionist role that the Stalinists played during the height of the mass struggle was invaluable to British imperialism, particularly as they played an important part in holding back the working class from making that bid for leadership which alone could have carried the mass struggle forward to an effective onslaught against imperialist power.

The rank treachery of their role has resulted in the entire loss of such mass political influence as they had acquired in the days of their illegality. But they are still able to act as a brake on the working class in its economic struggles by reason of their bureaucratic control of a considerable number of trade unions and the opportunities for legal propaganda and activity which British imperialism finds convenient to accord them. Today they are active in the service of British imperialism. In the economic field they are carrying on a campaign for increased and uninterrupted production. In the political field they make feverish attempts to divert the discontent caused by the shortage of commodities and the rise in the cost of living away from its true cause, the imperialist war and imperialism, by suggesting that it is all due to "Fifth Column agents," or hoarding, or the stupidities of the bureaucracy which they divorce from its imperialist context. Their main political activity, however, is the organizing of the most shameless class-collaborationist "Unity Campaign" directed towards gaining mass support for a "National Government" under imperialism, which could only represent an alliance of the feudalists, the Indian bourgeoisie and the imperialists against the masses themselves. With the signing of a Congress-Government settlement the Stalinists will also take on fully the task of doing coolie service for the Indian bourgeoisie. There is every probability that they will seek entry into the Indian National Congress; but whether the CP is accepted within the Congress fold or not, it will in fact make itself an agency within the working class for the Congress far more effective than the CSP has been or could ever be.

A Congress-Government settlement is likely to have important consequences on the feudal political organizations, viz., the Muslim League and the Hindu Maha Sabha. In the "August days," British imperialism, faced as it was with a mass revolt and the opposition of the Indian bourgeoisie, leaned more heavily than ever on these feudal organizations. In pursuance of this policy it used every device, especially to strengthen the Muslim League and to jockey it into political position and office. At the same time, the ebb of the mass struggle as well as the pauperization of the petty bourgeoisie also resulted in a certain drift of petty bourgeois elements into these organizations and a certain increase in their influence among the petty bourgeoisie. In recent months, however, a certain change has taken place in their position, especially in that of the Muslim

League. With the mass movement smashed and the Congress drifting back towards a surrender, the value of the Muslim League as a political weapon of the imperialists has been sharply reduced and therewith the strength of government's support to it has visibly declined. The failure of Mr. Jinnah to browbeat the Muslim Premier of the Punjab was clearly due to imperialism's support of the latter. Moreover, imperialism, while using the "Pakistan" demand as a stick with which to beat the Congress bourgeoisie, has nevertheless also declared its opposition to the vivisection of India—a British Imperialist-Indian bourgeois alliance of exploiters wants a consolidated India for exploitation and not a Balkanized India. The Muslim League is therefore on the decline. But it is no negligible factor in Indian politics.

There can be no doubt that, for various reasons, it has today obtained a genuine following among the Muslim masses. Whether it can hold it long is, of course, doubtful, for, as the Muslim League reaches the pinnacle of office in the imperialist administration, it tends to split in its leadership (e.g., recently in the Punjab, UP and Sind) on the one hand, and to lose its mass following, through disillusionment on the other. It is the consciousness of this fact which probably has moved Mr. Jinnah to agree to meet Mahatma Gandhi with a view to discussing the latter's recent proposals for a settlement. Whether a settlement between Congress and the Muslim League will come, it is impossible to prophecy, but the cooperation in opposition recently of their respective wings in the Central Legislative Assembly is an important pointer to the future. Should a Congress-League settlement come, however, the position of the League among the masses will, after some temporary strengthening, continue to decline, especially as it will no longer be able as effectively as before to use the Pakistan issue as a means of diverting attention from its reactionary and repressive policy.

Possible Variants

What will be the likely consequences among the masses of the coming Congress-Government settlement? Will it release any forces that will change the present mass mood?

The present situation in India is one of wide-spread mass apathy consequent on the August defeat. Among the petty bourgeoisie it amounts to demoralization and a turning away from politics. Any perspective of a resumed mass movement is thus pushed away into an uncertain future. There are, however, two important saving features.

In the first place, the prevailing demoralization, though it has influenced the proletariat too, has not caught it up to the same extent. It is significant that the wave of strikes on the food question followed the August struggle; that there have since been important strike struggles (e.g., the Karachi Docks strike) which in some cases have been very prolonged (e.g., the Nagpur textile strike); and that, even recently, sporadic strikes on such questions as food, bonus and the dearness allowance have taken place. Although the working class too, is politically apathetic, it certainly is not demoralized and is even ready to take action on economic issues that affect it vitally and interest it directly.

Secondly, there has never been a greater hatred of British imperialism among the widest masses than there is today; a hatred so deep that it would actually welcome (and this is its reactionary aspect) a change of imperialist exploiters because a change would entail the end of *British* imperialism. This hatred reflects itself also in the mass attitude to the war,

an attitude which, if it is not one of active opposition, is definitely one of complete indifference, namely, that it is not their war at all. And not all the propaganda of the National War Front, the Stalinists and the Royists put together has been able to accomplish any significant change in mass opinion in this respect.

The present political situation is thus deeply contradictory. It is largely a question of the subjective factor and not of objective conditions. And this subjective factor can undergo a rapid transformation in the event of a sharp change in the correlation of forces internally or externally. Whether such a sharp change will take place in the near future it is impossible to foretell; but the setting of the imperialist world war in which the Indian political situation is developing makes swift changes always possible. Until a change takes place, however, the present mass mood will not lift. And until the mass mood lifts, whether as a result of slow molecular processes within the masses, or rapidly as a result of some sharp change in the correlation of forces, mass work must necessarily proceed on the basis of the program of elementary democratic demands.

The return of Congress to office is likely to initiate a change in the mass mood. The opportunity that will arise for engaging in "constitutional" politics will arrest the demoralization of the urban petty bourgeoisie and cause a return by them to political activity. In particular, the demand for the release of all political prisoners will undoubtedly provide a strong plank for general agitation among them. Among the peasantry, especially in the areas where the "August repression" did not strike with its heaviest force, partial struggles on elementary issues are likely to arise. Most of all, among the working class, by reason of the relatively higher level of morale, partial economic struggles are likely to break out. In participating in these struggles, the task of the party will be to extend their sweep when they are based on general issues like wage, food, dearness allowance, and bonus questions, and to raise their level by linking them up through such questions as the arrest of strike leaders, with more general political issues like the release of all political prisoners.

Further, a sustained agitation on such questions as the right of independent trade union organization, free speech and meetings, the right to strike, etc., must be systematically conducted as a means of reviving militant trade unionism. Insofar as such revival takes place it is bound to lead also to a revival of the general working class movement, for there cannot be, in present conditions, any militant trade union activity which will not immediately pose political issues. Above all in all its agitational and propaganda work, the party must ever keep to the fore the issue of imperialism and the imperialist war. The setting up of a "National Government" at the center and constitutional governments in the provinces will provide imperialism with a facade behind which to operate and thus reduce the sharpness with which the anti-imperialist issue was posed by reason of the bourgeoisie's going into open opposition. In this situation, the party must help the masses not only to withstand the treacherous role of the bourgeois Congress but also to see behind the facade the real power it actually faces, viz., imperialism. The party must, therefore, in all its work, clearly and concretely, relate all issues to this question by bringing home to the masses the all-pervasive effect on economic and political conditions of the imperialist war and the intensified exploitation it entails.

Gandhi on the Road to Betrayal

Gandhi has announced his bargaining terms for a settlement with British imperialism. The most material facts about these terms are that British imperialism is to continue in power in India and Congress is actively to support the war of the imperialist bandits. Of what value against these facts is the setting up of a so-called National Government which is to be responsible for the civil administration? Such a government would only be a screen behind which British imperialism could operate more freely and an instrument for drawing the Indian masses behind the imperialist war effort.

What do these terms mean when compared even with the compromiser August resolution of the AICC? In that resolution Congress declared that it was fighting for a free India which would ally itself with the Anglo-American imperialists. Now Gandhi offers a subject India which is to serve the British imperialists. This is not even honorably to compromise. This is abjectly to surrender.

It is also more. To agree to the continuance of British imperialist power in India is to betray the struggle for Indian independence. To agree to support the British imperialist war effort is not only to betray the struggle for Indian independence but actually to help in its suppression. For this war is being fought by the British precisely to hold India and their other colonies in continued slavery. He who helps Britain's imperialist war helps to fasten the chains of India's slavery. And, for instance, also of Burma's slavery. Is India then to fight to reconquer for Britain?

The road of Gandhian compromise is thus not only a road to surrender but also a road to a two-fold betrayal of the Indian masses. It is the road to continued colonial slavery and participation in imperialist butchery. What a startling come-down for the author of the "Quit India" slogan and apostle of peace and non-violence!

A startling come-down indeed: but it does not surprise us. For, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is not only a Mahatma. He is also the chosen political instrument of the Indian bourgeoisie and the accredited boss of their political party, the Indian National Congress. His primary task therefore is not to serve the interests of the masses but to conserve the interests of the bourgeoisie. Nay more. Holding, as a Mahatma, the imagination of the masses, his specific task is to bring mass pressure to bear on the government in the interests of the bourgeoisie, and to dam and divert the mass movement when it threatens to overflow the boundaries of the bourgeois interest.

How Gandhi dammed, diverted and betrayed the mass movement in 1922 and 1931 is too well known to need repetition. How he swung it again into action in 1942 with his "Do or Die" slogan is also public knowledge. But what the masses did not realize in 1942, in spite of their experiences of 1922 and 1931, was that the Mahatma was once again at his old game. What he wanted was what the bourgeoisie wanted, namely, not the overthrow of imperialist power but an advantageous settlement with it. This settlement he hoped to get, even as the bourgeoisie calculated on getting, by capitalizing the international difficulties entailed to British imperialism by its repeated defeats in the military field. He hoped; but he could not. Despite a mass upsurge of unprecedented violence, the British refused either to quit India on the Mahatma's invitation or to compromise with the Mahatma as the bourgeoisie desired. Instead, they put the Mahatma, and

with him the entire Congress leadership, into jail on the one hand, and bludgeoned and shot down the attendant mass movement into submission on the other. Meantime, the military situation, and with it the international situation, took a sharp turn in favor of British imperialism. The bourgeoisie thus failed in their move, and the Mahatma had to find a way out for them.

This he is now doing—over the heads of and against the interests of the masses. The Indian bourgeoisie long ago gave up the struggle. They have been cooperating increasingly and intimately with British imperialism these many months. All that the Mahatma has to do is to cover their surrender with a deceptively agreeable formula. This he has found in the treacherous Stalinist slogan of "National Government for National Unity and National Defense," i. e., a government of the united oppressors of the Indian masses which is to cooperate with British imperialism and Britain's imperialist war. This is what his present terms precisely mean.

That he will get from British imperialism even these abject terms is extremely improbable. British imperialism is on top today. It has both the Indian bourgeoisie and the Mahatma exactly where it wants them, that is, with the begging bowl at the door of the Viceregal lodge. Will the Mahatma be allowed to enter? Only Wavell knows and—Mr. Rajagopalachari. This notoriously slippery gentleman is back in Gandhi's most intimate councils. Which is not strange. For it was precisely in order that he might play his present role of go-between for Congress with the Viceroy that he was left out in the August days. Rajaji's desire for cooperation with British imperialism on any terms or no terms is common knowledge, even as also the hankering of the entire Congress Right Wing for another taste of the sweets of office. This is the man who is Gandhi's agent in the present negotiations. This is the man who has Gandhi's ear today. Can we then doubt that even Gandhi's present abject terms will be reduced further and that the settlement which will come may yet be on the restoration of so-called provincial autonomy and the establishment of a sham "National Government" at the center, with perhaps a sugar-coating of post-war promises.

All this goes to prove the correctness of the position of the Bolshevik Leninist Party of India that the Congress is a bourgeois organization and can lead the masses not to the overthrow of imperialism but only to a compromise with it. In this, however, there is no reason for honest fighters against imperialism to be disheartened or to despair. For the last word has not been said, nor has the last blow been struck, in the struggle for India's independence. Even if not again during the war, then assuredly after the war, India, and with it the whole world, will witness an upsurge of the masses the like of which the world has not yet seen. For that upsurge we must prepare patiently from now on. Understanding clearly that it is only under the leadership of the working class that imperialism can be overthrown, the urgent task of the moment is the building of the revolutionary party of the Indian proletariat. We therefore appeal to all honest fighters for freedom to join with us in building the revolutionary party of the Indian proletariat.

*Down with the Compromisers! Down with Imperialism!
Forward to a New Road! Down with the Imperialist War!
Inquilab Zindabad!* Bolshevik Leninist Party of India
July 20, 1944. (Indian Section of the 4th International)

The August 1942 Struggle

By RUPSINGH

The movement commenced on August 9, 1942. The masses of Bombay and other cities and towns of India rose spontaneously to express their bitterness and indignation against the Government at the arrest of the Congress leaders. They broke through the shell of non-violence in which the Mahatma and the Congress creed has imprisoned them for so long and proved to an astonished world that the masses of India are revolutionary. In Bombay, the masses went about the streets stopping buses, trams and even trains. The college students struck work and went about appealing to the workers in the buses, trams and trains to stop running them. By evening of the following day (Monday) small barricades, crudely constructed, appeared in the streets of some parts of the city, sufficient to obstruct the movement of the motor vehicles of the police and military. Soon the masses, intoxicated by their initial successes, attacked police stations, railway stations and other seats of government power. The demonstrations were spontaneous. The masses acted spontaneously under the leadership of chance leaders. The most active, courageous and determined in the crowd became its leaders.

The Storm Breaks In Bombay

The masses had complete possession of the streets and squares (circles) on Monday and Tuesday. The police were no longer able to control the masses and their activities. The military appeared in the streets on Tuesday evening. A curfew was enforced. Armed lorries and even tanks patrolled the streets. By Wednesday evening, August 12, the streets and squares of the city were "recaptured" by the military and the armed police. Many were killed by the lathi charges, firing by the police and military, and in the street fighting generally. A clash took place in Parel—with casualties on both sides—between armed troops and workers on strike. This was the only important incident in which the Bombay workers actively participated in the eventful days of August. But it was more in the nature of an overflow from the petty bourgeoisie locality of Dadar, and the leadership was in the hands of Congressmen.

Many mills in Bombay were closed—largely by the Congress mill owners. Workers in other mills kept away for a few days, but they soon returned to work. Even the Congress-controlled mills soon opened. The strikes in a number of smaller workshops dragged on. The working class of Bombay did not actively participate in the mass movement in the most critical days in August. The mass movement was largely confined to the petty bourgeois masses. How is this to be explained? The Bombay workers had the experience of two terrible years of a Congress Government in the Province. Its record of anti-working class legislation was still fresh in their minds. The Congress leaders and their program did not inspire confidence in them. There were other factors at work too. Even though the cost of living was going up, there was plenty of work. There was very little unemployment. Family earnings in the aggregate were higher than in the "old days." The Royists and their trade unions in the Indian Federation of Labor and the Stalinists and the Servants of India people in the Trade Union Congress all condemned the struggle and asked workers not to participate in it. Added to these factors which acted as a brake on their urge to support the movement was their

loyalty to the workers of the Soviet Union in their war. By clever propaganda the Stalinists have sowed confusion in the minds of the workers who displayed such a high degree of class consciousness and political maturity in the anti-war strike of October 1939.

From Monday, August 10, the movement began to spread from province to province. The immense reserves to revolutionary energy of the masses broke out everywhere without plan or system. The movement spread out over an unlimited field from Peshawar to Cape Comorin and from Karachi to the borders of occupied Burma. At Bangalore in Mysore the mass movement rose to a very high pitch. The students were the spearhead of the attack on Indian feudal power and British imperialism. The workers in the mills, mines and workshops of Mysore actively supported the petty bourgeois masses who launched a series of attacks on the Government of the Indian Prince and the British Raj. They were driven back by the troops and the armed police. Many were shot dead, more sustained injuries. But the ferment continued for weeks.

In Tamil Nad and Andhra areas the peasantry and the city petty bourgeois masses displayed tremendous vigor, resourcefulness and readiness to struggle. In Tenali, Ramnad, Madras, Coimbatore and Madura the working class supported the movement by strike action. Kerala held aloof from the struggle. (This is the Stalinist stronghold in the South.) But even in this area the masses are beginning to join the struggle and Stalinist meetings and demonstrations have been broken up by violent crowds. From the Karnatak areas of Madras and Bombay daily reports pour in of attacks on railway stations, post offices and other government institutions. In the Deccan and the South of India the masses are bristling with discontent.

Bihar and Jamshedpur

In the Central Provinces and Berar the mass movement carried everything before it in the first week of the struggle. In this region the Stalinists have absolutely no influence over the working class. The reformist trade union leader Ruikar controls the working class organizations here. The Congress in this area was very strongly supported by the Forward Bloc and the trade unions. The workers in the Nagpur mills and in all the cities and towns of the Central Provinces went on strike in support of the mass movement led by the Congress. But the working class did not step into the movement with their program, banner and slogans. They were drawn into the movement by the petty bourgeoisie who hold Congress politics. Thus a splendid opportunity was lost. The working class supported the petty bourgeois masses in revolt, but there was no genuine working class revolutionary party to lead them for a frontal attack on imperialism, which would have brought the petty bourgeois masses of this region under their leadership. The peasant areas of the Central Provinces were in active revolt. The government had to recapture the rural areas by sending "armies of occupation." The Chimur incidents are yet fresh in the public mind. The atrocities committed by the troops of imperialism are by no means less revolting than the atrocities of the Nazi thugs in Eastern Europe.

By the third week of August the whole of Bihar, parts of

the United and Central Provinces, and even portions of Bengal and Orissa were in a state of virtual rebellion. In these areas the civil administration of the government broke down. Particularly was this the position in the rural areas of these provinces. Bihar was the storm-center. In scattered parts of Bihar the peasantry set up "Swaraj governments." Their jurisdiction never extended over more than a few villages. And they never lasted more than a few days. But these ephemeral "peasant governments" that appeared in the most semi-feudal and landlord-ridden areas of rural India tell us which way the wind is blowing. It is true that "those peasant embryonic states" that floated on the rising crest of the mass movement acknowledged the leadership of the Indian bourgeoisie by calling them "Congress Raj." But that does not minimize the fundamental significance of these phenomena; manifesting in India from the first week of the struggle. They tell us that the peasantry was up and its mighty limbs were quivering. The Stalinist-controlled Kisan Sabha was unable to hold back the heavy peasant masses. It was unable to prevent them from marching to the assistance of the town petty bourgeoisie. Despite the propaganda of the Stalinist Kisan Sabha the peasants joined the struggle. They were active participants in it.

The Jamshedpur metal workers and the Jharia coal-field workers went on strike in sympathy with the masses in revolt. The Royists and the Stalinists who have been given every encouragement by the government to work in these places exerted all their energy to lead the workers back to the workshops and mines. But the metal and coal-field workers put up a determined struggle till they were starved out and compelled to surrender to superior arms. Their leadership in the critical days was in the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie in the Congress. Their slogans never went beyond the usual bourgeois slogans of the Congress: "Release of the Congress leaders" and "National Government." No independent working class program, banner and slogans appeared to show them the way out of the crisis. They fell a prey to the chauvinist and class-collaborationist propaganda of the Congress bourgeoisie. Their will to struggle was fettered and paralyzed. They did not know the line of march, where to strike and how to strike at the enemy. They thought the Congress bourgeoisie was their friend. They made no serious effort to understand the peasant struggle that was raging in the countryside. While confusion, hesitation and doubt reigned in the leadership of the struggle at Jamshedpur and Jharia, the imperialists struck and struck hard at the movement. British troops with tanks, airplanes and all the paraphernalia of modern warfare were massed and the mass movement was forced to retreat and acknowledge temporary defeat. The imperialists not only terrorized the masses by a display of armed might, but even tanks and airplanes were used to machine-gun the peasant masses in Bihar and the neighboring provinces.

Had there been a working class revolutionary party at Jamshedpur during the critical days of August to show the workers the path of struggle clearly and concretely, the mass struggle that commenced in Bombay on the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee of the Congress might have taken a different turn. It is only in concrete action that the working class can win the leadership of the petty bourgeois masses. Jamshedpur provided a splendid opportunity to the working class to wrest this leadership from the Indian bourgeoisie in the Congress. Perhaps the working class will learn from the mistakes they committed in Jamshedpur before the next wave of the mass movement draws them into the struggle again. There is one important fact

that we must remember. The masses once mobilized should at once be thrown into the offensive. You cannot keep the masses under mobilization for a long time. If the mobilized masses are not led into the offensive, then the waverers, the grumblers, the timid begin to influence the masses and they scatter even before the enemy strikes the first blow. It is the duty of organizers of revolution to see that the mobilized masses are thrown into the struggle when the mass movement is at its peak. At this stage the waverers, doubters and even timid join the struggle if the leadership is courageous and bold in launching the offensive against the enemy.

At the most critical hour in the first phase of the mass struggle, the Congress High Command in Bombay did not know its own mind. The Congress Socialists who stepped into the breach on the arrest of the Congress leaders were more interested in pleasing the Bombay bourgeoisie than in waging a serious and determined struggle against a ruthless and experienced enemy—British imperialism. This was to be expected.

Servile Tool of the Bourgeoisie

The Congress Socialist Party has always been a petty bourgeois party—in membership as well as in politics. In the most critical days of the struggle, when they were in a position to influence the development of events by a courageous and bold lead, they did not inspire the masses or the organizers of the mass struggle to preserve and raise the struggle to a higher pitch by galvanizing into active political life the working class, by setting out before them a bold and concrete program of action to improve their conditions and at the same time to intensify the mass struggle with the powers of organization, sacrifice and energy that the working class is capable of when it is really roused. From the commencement of the struggle in August, the CSP has displayed political bankruptcy. True to its petty bourgeois character, the CSP is a servile tool of the Indian bourgeoisie. It has dissolved itself in the Congress. It has neither an organization nor a program. New problems in an extraordinarily rapidly changing situation demand solutions. Parties and groups are judged by deeds, not words.

Though the mass movement has been compelled to retreat in many districts of Bihar, peasant resistance still continues. The movement spread from Bihar to the Southern portions of the United Provinces and the eastern districts of the Central Provinces. It swept over Orissa into the Andhra districts of Madras. In the Santhal regions of Bihar and Orissa it is still raging. In these predominantly peasant areas in which semi-feudal landlordism still rules over the peasantry ground down by rent, taxes and extortionate interest rates, the struggle is flaring up into peasant revolts. The unequal exchange between the city and the country has reduced peasant economy to the breaking point. The peasant has to pay exorbitant prices for the articles he purchases. He gets only a small fraction of the price that agricultural commodities really sell at. Moreover the control of the prices of agricultural commodities by the government has prevented even the normal rise in prices of agricultural commodities. The "blades of the scissors" are widening daily. The gulf between agricultural and industrial prices is yawning wider and wider. The imposition of collective fines might be the "last straw that will break the camel's back." An agrarian crisis of the first magnitude is maturing in the countryside. All objective factors are quickening the process of its maturity. The civil disobedience movement has roused the peasantry from its age-long stupor.

Bengal and Assam were slow in joining the movement. The students are in the front rank of the struggle in these provinces. But the petty bourgeoisie are being slowly drawn into it. The working class has not played a very prominent part in the first three and a half months of the struggle. In these provinces the differences between the Forward Bloc and the Congress have been resolved in the field of mass activity. The underground organization of the Congress has virtually passed into the hands of the Forward Bloc. The Revolutionary Socialist Party—a National Revolutionary Party under a Socialist flag—is cooperating with the Forward Bloc in intensifying the mass struggle and drawing into it the declassed intelligentsia. In Bengal and Assam the peasantry is being drawn into the mass struggle.

Everywhere the heavy hand of repression has descended on the masses with ruthless brutality. Shooting, whipping, arrests, imprisonments are the normal routine of the imperialist administration today. Collective fines have been added to taxes that the peasantry have to pay. The police forces of imperialism have increased in numbers. They are armed with very wide powers. Military units have been stationed in all the principal cities and towns of India—and even in a great many villages. The forces of liberation are daily training their reserves. Armed bands and guerrilla fighters are operating over widely scattered areas. They are ill-equipped and scarcely trained. But they can count on the enthusiastic support of the masses of town and country. Bomb manufacturers and bomb throwers are increasing in numbers daily. The trade hartal as an effective weapon has been discarded. In a word, “sabotage” has taken the central place in the struggle during the last two months.

Indian Bourgeoisie Is Doomed To Servility

The movement as yet is led by the nationalist bourgeoisie. The fact that the Indian National Congress is a mass organization should not blind us to the sinister class character of that body. The INC is the political party of the Indian bourgeoisie. The presence of honest revolutionary elements inside the Congress does not and will not make it a revolutionary body. The Congress will not take the revolutionary road. Under the conditions of modern imperialism the colonial bourgeoisie cannot be a revolutionary class. It can fight for the overthrow of British imperialism in order to become the puppet of Japanese, German or American imperialism. Wendell Willkie's broadcast on “war aims” is significant. The more aggressive section of the American capitalist class desires the liquidation of the British Empire. They prefer to trade with a “Free India.” “Dollar Diplomacy” is conscious of its strength and is anxious to see that all trade and tariff barriers in the colonial empire of Britain are removed in the course of this war. That is the reason why the more conscious and far-sighted leaders of Wall Street are ready to support the demand of the Indian bourgeoisie for “independence” from Britain.

The Indian bourgeoisie, a historically belated class, is doomed to servility. It can change its masters. But it can never be master in its own house. Whether it will fight the British to a finish and sever its connections with the British Empire completely will be determined by the development of the imperialist world war and the attendant changes in the international situation. It will not be determined mainly by events in India. If the mass movement develops rapidly and the peasant masses rally round the Red Flag of the working class to fight imperialism to a finish, then its counter-revolutionary

countenance will be lighted by the fires that will rage in the cities and country districts of India.

The Congress cannot overthrow imperialism. It cannot give “National Independence” to the masses of India. Its politics is “pressure politics.” The Congress wants the British to set up a “National Government.” The bourgeoisie is not fighting to overthrow British imperialist power for the purpose of setting up a “national government” of its own, unless developments in the war make them the servile tools of Japanese, German or American imperialism. That is why it has not burnt all the bridges that lead it back to Whitehall. That is the secret of Mr. Rajagopalachari's ubiquitous pilgrimages. Rajagopalachari is the unofficial ambassador of the nationalist bourgeoisie, trying to bring about a settlement between the Congress and the Government. The nationalist bourgeoisie that “grumbles at those above and trembles in face of those below” cannot be expected to carry on a revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of British imperialism. Those honest activists who have thrown themselves heart and soul into the movement now raging in the country should remember this fundamental fact.

The Forward Bloc represents the most aggressive action of the Indian capitalist class, still emerging from its petty bourgeois origin. It is very closely tied to the petty bourgeoisie of city and country—even to the upper layers of the petty landlords and the prosperous stratum of the peasantry. The differences between the Forward Bloc and the Congress have been resolved in the actual field of mass struggle. In many parts of Eastern and Central India the underground organization of Congress has passed into its hands. The political party with its exiled leader—Subhas Chandra Bose—is in favor of a complete severance of all connections with the British Empire. It believes that an Axis victory will give India “freedom”—“National Independence.” It has supported the struggle and is energetically organizing the movement.

The Liberals of the “No-Parties” or the “Knights' Conference” are trying to fish in troubled waters. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru believes that where Rajaji failed he might succeed. He is converting the “No-Parties Conference” into an “All-Parties Conference” by the addition of Rajaji and V. Savarkar, the militant president of the Hindu Maha Sabha. The Liberals are the party of the extreme Right Wing of the Indian big bourgeoisie—which is tied to British finance capital by bonds of gold. A settlement with it cannot widen appreciably the base on which British imperialism rests in India to weather the mass storm.

The Landlord-Feudal League and Maha Sabha

The Muslim League represents the feudal princes and semi-feudal Muslim landlords of India. They are the most reliable and abiding allies of British imperialism in this country. It is true that wide sections of the petty bourgeoisie and even backward sections of the working class are flocking to the feudal banner of Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League. The Stalinists have helped and accelerated this process of strengthening the mass basis of the Muslim League by the specious campaign of Congress-League unity. The Muslim League, despite its recently acquired mass character, remains to this day a semi-feudal body covering its hideous class character by sowing confusion in the minds of the Muslim masses by its religio-communal propaganda for a Pakistan. It is the strongest prop of the tottering British Empire in India. It has condemned the struggle from the commencement. It is interested

in carving up India into feudal principalities. However, the advanced section of the Muslim bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia are supporting the Congress movement and have taken their stand in the Azad Muslim Conference—led by Allah Bux, the ex-premier of Sind. The Ahrars are wholeheartedly supporting the mass movement. Their activities are, however, confined to the Punjab. In the North-West Frontier Province, a predominantly Muslim Province, the Muslim masses are solidly behind the Congress movement.

The attitude of the Hindu Maha Sabha to the mass movement has puzzled the supporters of the struggle. But those who understand the class character of this religio-communal body which attempts to recreate in twentieth century India the "glorious past of pre-feudal and feudal Hindustan" need not be astonished at the politics of this organization. The Hindu Maha Sabha is the political party of the Hindu Princes and landlords of India. Its opposition to British imperialism is largely a reaction to the close alliance between the Muslim League and British imperialism. It has, however, roused pan-Asiatic sentiments in their Hindu youth, but these are directed mainly against the Muslim League idea of dividing India into petty principalities. Being the majority community the Hindu feudalists are anxious to have a Hindu dominated India just as the Muslim landlords desire Muslim domination in those parts of India in which their numbers give them easy dominance. Fundamentally their class character is the same. There is nothing to prevent the Hindu Maha Sabha coming to terms with the Muslim League. British imperialism is likely to bring them together if the situation is not complicated by a Japanese invasion of India. The Maha Sabha is supported by the princes in the Indian States.

"So far as the Indian States are concerned it is the additional aim of the party to establish healthy relations between the rulers and the ruled" declares the Manifesto of the Hindu Forward Bloc—the militant section of the Hindu Maha Sabha (*The Mahratta*, page 5, November 6, 1942). The Maha Sabha has stood aloof from the struggle. It still adheres to its policy of responsive cooperation with British imperialism. It is clear that this policy has its class roots in the Hindu Princes and landlords of India. That the Maha Sabha is making frantic efforts to enter the Viceroy's council and call it a "National Government" is proved by the repeated pilgrimages of its leaders to New Delhi since the beginning of August.

During the last two years the Hindu Maha Sabha has gained in numbers as well as in fighting strength. Numbers of the petty bourgeoisie youth, disillusioned with the policy of the Congress, are rallying round the banner of V. Savarkar in the Hindu Maha Sabha. The Maha Sabha has a strong appeal to the youth of the upper strata of the village population. Its volunteer organization—the R. S. S.—is a fairly formidable one. It is already displaying signs of fascism by its pronounced antagonism to working class politics. Fascist ideology in colonial countries gives a ready camouflage to landlord interests—to semi-feudal institutions even more than to capitalism. We are more likely to see fascism springing from the Muslim League and the Hindu Maha Sabha than from the ranks of the Congress in the near future. The Khaksars and the R. S. S. volunteers are more likely to be the "Storm Troops" of the counter-revolution in India than the fighting units of the Congress. A united front between the Muslim League, Hindu Maha Sabha and the Sikh League of the Sikh landlords of the Punjab with the support of the Princes and the Liberals (the No-Parties Conference which has transformed itself into an All-Parties Conference), is likely to form the "National Govern-

ment" that the Stalinists have been clamoring for. The "settlement" must of necessity be a short-lived one. It can be only a "stop-gap" government in support of British imperialism before the masses regroup their forces under the leadership of the working class for the last and final assault on British imperialism.

The Royists condemn the struggle "lock, stock and barrel." They give unconditional support to British imperialism in this Imperialist World War.

"Being engaged in a war against the Axis powers, the Government of India must be a party to the India civil war" declared M. N. Roy. "It must declare war upon the forces of reaction in this country... The Government on the other hand is on the side of the people. The battle is joined between the forces of progress and of reaction, of revolution and counter-revolution, in the international as well as the national arena. Let the battle be fought. Let people choose their side." (*Independent India*, November 2, 1942).

A Lap Dog of Imperialism

Roy is quite clear and emphatic that the masses and the Congress in their struggle are on the side of reaction and counter-revolution, whereas the Government of India is on the side of progress, nay revolution. So Roy supports the Government and fully endorses British imperialist terror and repression in suppressing the mass movement. After all, does he not ask the Government of India to declare war on the masses in this struggle? The campaign of shooting, whipping, arrests, imprisonments and collective fines on the petty bourgeois masses of town and country is fully supported by Roy and his party, the Radical Democratic Party of India. As to repression of working class activities! Well! Like the proverbial ostrich Roy buries his head in the sand and repeats to himself with all the fervor of a Coue that there is no working class in India. His *chelas* repeat the master's formula as an objective truth and there the matter ends. To Roy and his underlings there is no working class in India, though it has been in the womb of Indian society from about the nineties of the last century. It was a lusty child at the beginning of the century. Roy does not see the need for a working class party or for working class politics in India. He is re-writing Marxism. He has hired out his able pen to British imperialism. His revised version of Marxism and his flunkeyism in the service of Whitehall may appeal to the most servile and opportunist elements of the intelligentsia but they have lost all meaning and appeal either to the masses or to all honest revolutionaries. If Roy regains again his mass following it will be in the role of an Indian Doriot and not as a leader of the working class or even as a national revolutionary leader. Roy had a past—that of a revolutionary. At present he is the lap-dog of British imperialism in India. His future can be only that of a fascist leader. His idealization of the petty bourgeoisie is an index to his future. The Twentieth Century Jacobins of his dreams can be only fascists in India.

The Communist Party of India has played a treacherous and ignoble role ever since the entry of the Soviet Union into the war compelled the Stalinists in this country to support British imperialism. They moved heaven and earth to prevent Congress coming to a decision to launch a mass civil disobedience movement. At the meeting of the AICC in Bombay, all the Stalinist amendments to the main resolution for launching the struggle were designed to side-track the main issue of struggle by raising the question of a communal settlement. They were defeated. When the struggle commenced, they remained

indoors enjoying their newly-won freedom of a "legal existence" for the CP of India. On the 11th of August, P. C. Joshi, the party boss came out with the nauseating and double-faced statement in the press.

It was impossible to face the masses without condemning government repression and asking for the release of Congress leaders. But Joshi made it quite clear in his statement that the CP of India did not support the mass struggle. It attempted to divert mass attention to peaceful and constitutional negotiation by raising the issue of a settlement with British imperialism for the purpose of setting up a "National Government." Surely, the Stalinists are aware that a national government can be set up by the victorious democratic masses only on the overthrow of British imperialism. Don't they know that British imperialism cannot and will not relinquish its power in India? That it will not abdicate in favor of the Indian masses? The "National Government" the Stalinists are demanding is really a united front between the Congress bourgeoisie and the feudalists in the Muslim League in support of British imperialism for the purpose of exploiting the masses of India.

After the first wave of the mass movement was over the Stalinists foisted on an unwilling public a campaign of unity. It was really a cleverly designed campaign in support of the imperialist war. "Behind the national demand for a National Government," declares the Manifesto of the Communist Party of India (*People's War*, October 4, 1942), "is growing the All-National Front of the Indian people, from Sir T. B. Sapru on the right of the Communist Party, on the left, embracing Merchants' Chambers, trade unions, Kisan Sabhas, students' organizations—all desiring Congress-League unity to be the axis of our national united front." The Stalinists are trying to ignore the class struggle by asking the capitalists in the Merchants' Chambers to unite with the workers in the trade unions, the zamindars in the Muslim League with the peasants in the Kisan Sabhas. The exploited workers and peasants are asked to support the exploiters—the capitalists and the landlords, for the purpose of building an "All-National Front" which is to be guarded for British imperialism by Sir R. B. Sapru on the Right and P. C. Joshi and his cheer-leaders on the Left.

The workers are reminded that "to keep up production is their patriotic duty"! The peasant is asked to build the "unity of the village, to keep off anarchy and keep the peace." He is to cooperate with the merchants and landlords for the purpose of controlling "food prices and solving other problems." The Stalinists want unity in the village between the peasant masses and the landlord-exploiters. They are asking the peasants to preserve the "peace in the village," that imperialist peace which is responsible for their misery, that peace which has driven them to the verge of revolt. This is their solution for the accumulated ills of the peasantry—of chronic indebtedness, of land hunger, of exorbitant rents, of extortionate interest rates, and of all the burden of heavy taxes. The Stalinists refuse to admit that it is these very causes that are driving the peasantry to revolt against the government and the existing social order. The Stalinists cannot read the signs of the times. The question is not one of "preserving the peace" and "keeping off anarchy from the village" but one of fanning the flames of the scattered peasant revolts to a mighty conflagration, a nation-wide peasant rebellion.

It is the task of the party of the working class to give a leadership to these scattered peasant revolts by actually participating in them. In the present phase of the struggle, that is the only concrete method of demonstrating to the peasant

masses the leadership of the working class in the bourgeois-democratic stage of revolution, and the only method of ousting the Congress bourgeoisie from the leadership of the masses which, in fact, they hold today. If the working class leads these peasant revolts, then its leadership of the petty bourgeois masses will be established. Once this leadership is provided to the peasant masses in active rebellion, the bourgeois-democratic revolution will commence and the overthrow of British imperialism will be assured. The revolution once commenced will proceed to its logical conclusion of a proletarian revolution till it establishes the dictatorship of the working class with the support of the peasant masses and the international proletariat.

"National Front"—In Support of Imperialism!

The Stalinists are carrying on a chauvinist campaign of the worst type. "Chittagong has been bombed. Indian houses have gone up in smoke" howls the Stalinist weekly (*People's War*, November 1, 1942). "The invader has drawn Indian blood on Indian soil," it weeps. They are, however, silent on the machine-gunning of the peasantry in Bihar by British airplanes. Their propaganda is racial, anti-Japanese and pro-British. There is not a trace of anti-imperialist propaganda in it, not even against Japanese imperialism. The present mass struggle is condemned. "The Communist party sets its face boldly against the present campaign," writes P. C. Joshi (*People's War*, November 29, 1942). No boldness was necessary to take shelter under British imperialist bayonets; only cowardice and treachery were necessary to join the camp of the imperialist against the masses in revolt. The Stalinists of India have displayed that their backbones are as supple as their principles. Their publications and speeches display a welter of confusion and contradiction between their professions and their practice. Their campaign for unity narrowed down to a demand to get permission for Mr. Rajagopalachari to see Mr. Gandhi. That is the sum total of Stalinist strategy in this struggle.

The Stalinists have helped British imperialism to win the first round in the struggle, by betraying the trust and confidence the masses had in them. By their perfidy they have lost the confidence of the masses in India. Mr. Joshi wants the world to believe that the position of the Communist Party of India among the masses is stronger today when he says "If this were a real national struggle, it should have blown our party sky-high. . . . We should not have grown stronger but become extinct." (*People's War*, idem). Mr. Joshi and his henchmen in the CP of India should realize that the Communist Party is extinct as a working class party. A political party which ranges itself with the imperialists when a violent mass struggle is raging in the country for the overthrow of the established government has forfeited all right to call itself a party of the masses, certainly to call itself the party of the revolutionary working class. Mr. Joshi goes on to pat himself on the back, "Hundreds of disillusioned Congress workers are coming to us for lead and guidance" (*People's War*, idem). That, perhaps, is true. Hundreds of the petty bourgeois youth disillusioned with the bourgeois leadership of the movement are looking round for "lead and guidance." But the Stalinists can lead them only to the camp of British imperialism, guide them to the feudal organization of Mr. Jinnah. No honest politically conscious Congress worker will drift into the camp of the agents of imperialism in India unless he is weary and desires

rest, ease and comfort under the protection of British bayonets. The CP of India has been legalized and it is allowed to work in the open because its leaders have agreed to become the willing tools of Whitehall. The Stalinists are working for a united front in support of British imperialism. The major part of the front is already in operation. The Muslim League, the Hindu Maha Sabha, the Liberal Federation, the Royists and the Stalinists are already in the camp. They are making frantic

efforts to bring the Congress—the nationalist bourgeoisie—into this camp. Perhaps they will succeed. But on the day they succeed in bringing the Congress into the “United National Front” in support of British imperialism the masses will not be under the Congress banner. Let Mr. Joshi understand that the Congress is not the only organization that stood and still stands for this struggle.

The Famine in India

I

THE FOOD CRISIS

By S. Krishna Menon

Six millions died in Bengal alone in the famine of 1943—perhaps a larger number than have been killed in all theaters of war during these last four and a half grim years. But in the grand total of this imperialist holocaust they are no less the casualties of this war than those who fell on the approaches to Stalingrad or on the beaches of Dunkirk.

In his ritual performances before an uninterested Parliament Mr. Amery attempted to explain away the food crisis as a minor shortage caused by the failure of imports resulting from the Japanese conquest of Burma. But when the death-roll began to mount into millions even he was unable to deny the existence of famine conditions. The blame was therefore cast on the broad shoulders of Providence and provincial autonomy. The Stalinist stooges equally interested in diverting the masses away from imperialism and the imperialist war (the causes of this famine) found their scape-goats in the hoarder and a well intentioned yet, nevertheless, blundering “bureaucracy.” Hoarding and profiteering from the highest official, the governor of Bengal, the late John Herbert and the Government Contractor Isaphani to the lowest peasant hanging to his seed paddy in the face of soaring prices were merely attendant circumstances. They may account for the acuteness of the famine but not for its incidence.

The blundering of the “bureaucracy” was, on the other hand, no accidental phenomenon. Every regime doomed by history to extinction has a large quota of stupidity to its credit. In this respect the Government of India was not found wanting. But stupidity in history does not play an independent role. Caught in the vise of an insoluble contradiction every attempted solution only served to deepen the crisis. The abrupt changes of policy assumed an epileptic character. It was merely a reflection of the impossibility of reconciling the necessities of imperialist war and the welfare of the Indian masses. Despite a policy of controlling food prices, the exigencies of the war compelled the government to permit the military authorities and the UKCC to purchase grain at black market rates for export to the Middle East. Faced with the revolt of the Indian masses in August 1942 the government leaned more heavily on the support of the Zamindari and rich landlords. By manipulating the Defense Regulations, it maneuvered into office in the provinces of Sind, N. W. F., Assam and Bengal Coalition, Muslim League-Mahasabha ministries, the representatives of Indian feudal interests. The price it paid for this support was the total abandonment of any centralized policy of food control. There followed a hectic period during which money was minted from the blood and

bones of the destitute. Profiteering was indulged in by all—not excluding the Central Government itself. An instance of such flagrant profiteering comes from Sind where the Muslim League-Mahasabha ministry, not unmindful of the fact that such situations are rare, seized the opportunity to purchase grain in its province at Rs. 7/- a maund to sell it to the poverty-stricken areas at Rs. 15/- a maund which was resold by the Nazimuddin ministry at Rs. 35/-. This reliance on the free play of economic forces had only the effect of accelerating the death rate and threatened to lead to an unimaginable intensification of famine conditions. The government was again jerked back into a policy of centralized control and distribution.

Famine—The Off-Spring of the Imperialist War

To explain away the famine of 1942 as shortage caused by the fall of Burma may satisfy the morons of the conservative party but no one else. If it were true the distress would have been acutest after the British retreat from Mandalay. But an important feature to note is the inexorable deepening of the crisis which reaches its climax one and a half years after that “strategic” withdrawal. This can be explained not by the blunders of the bureaucracy but by the policies dictated by the necessities of an imperialist war. To airily dismiss the shortage as a mere 7 percent of total production may be good conservative politics but not sound economics. The shortage has to be balanced not against total production but against marketable surplus. Despite this serious deficit, immense quantities of grain were exported to the Middle East. The quota for civilian consumption was further reduced by the authorities building up huge stocks of supplies for the army of two millions. The shortage not being spread evenly throughout India is explained by the government’s denial of transport facilities. Priority was given to the transport of troops and war supplies. Ships in Indian waters were commandeered for the carriage of supplies to Britain. It is no wonder, then, that wheat rotted in the Punjab, while Bengal starved. Finally, the order for the seizure of river craft was for millions the equivalent of a death sentence. To the dislocation of the market was added the headlong pauperization of the poor and landless peasantry caused by the government system of financing the war. The issuing of notes for several hundred scores of rupees, while there was an actual shrinkage of commodities sent prices rocketing and set the poor and landless peasants on the road to the towns in search of food.

What of the future? To expect a solution at a time when every effort is being made to transform India into a base of the reconquest of Burma, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies is naive optimism. The Gregory report will be pigeon-holed

since the keystone of its recommendation, the building of a reserve stock of one and a half million tons of grain, will be found utopian, as shipping will not be spared. The extent of the starvation, destitution and death may be hidden by the destitutes being banished from the towns. But so long as the burdens of the war increase, so long as inflation continues, there can be no deceleration of the death rate. In the face of rising prices of industrial goods any rigid control of food prices will inevitably tend to reduce total production. It will pauperize the middle peasant as well, who from the beginning of 1943, has escaped the terrors of the famine. The middle peasant joining the ranks of the poor and landless will transform the prevalent food riots into a mighty peasant war.

II WAR AND THE FOOD CRISIS

By J. K. L.

There are various convenient "explanations" of the Bengal famine which have come from official sources. The first theory of Mr. Amery pointed to the blocking of food imports from Burma. But food imports were never relatively large in India, and there was ample time to make good the local deficits due to this cause during the eighteen months which separated the loss of Burma from the famine crisis in Bengal. The Secretary of State's evasive attempt to shift the responsibilities on to the Provincial Governments is also thoroughly exposed by the fact that these Provincial Governments are purely the creatures of British imperialism and represent the fruition of the "bloc" made by the Raj with the landlords of the Punjab, Bengal, Assam, N. W. F. Orissa, etc., in the face of the Oppositional movement of the Congress. That these governments concealed nests of profiteers appears quite inevitable when we remember that the landlords represent the chief profiteering interest in agriculture. The corruption and "bungling," as well as the wild oscillation of policy of the bureaucracy in this period are not "accidental" but based on the impossibility of reconciling the necessities of the imperialist war with the welfare of the Indian people. The political bloc with the landlord profiteers, the export of grain from starving India to the Middle East, the blocking of internal transport for military purposes, etc., all flow inevitably from this "impossibility." All these seriously worsened the food crisis.

Effects of Inflation

In the inflation policy of the Government of India, pursued for war reasons, lies the real explanation of the food crisis, since this policy served the government in directing production and capital away from agriculture to meet the needs of the British war effort.

A little pamphlet called "Starving India" by Satyasandhu provides a trenchant analysis of the causes of the famine. Though politically nebulous the writer makes an excellent concrete analysis of governmental inflation and its effect on the food situation. Here is a summary of his argument.

The problem of the food crisis is, for the masses, one of soaring prices first and foremost. Men die because they cannot buy food to eat. What is the cause of the soaring prices? To speak of the shortage of production is not enough. How is there a shortage of production? "In a country engaged in war, while production is increased to meet essential war demands, the volume of consumption goods often diminishes"—thus, a distinguished economist. War materials and not consumption

goods are produced. The scarcity of the latter (including food) is one result of the war; and far from being the *causa incausata* of rise in prices is one of the effects of a war economy which redirects production to war aims among other means by a currency policy and the manipulation of prices.

To explain soaring prices by the large Allied purchases in India, that is, by the huge preponderance of exports over imports is a fallacy. How are the Allies able to buy goods without giving an equivalent in exchange? Precisely because the Indian government as the agent of British imperialism in making purchases, *expands its currency*, to buy goods in exchange for paper money.

To explain the "soaring prices" by the blocking of food imports is ridiculous, since food imports were in any case minimal: the loss of these should in any case be balanced by the fall in price of articles formerly exported to areas with which commerce has ceased. In any case, this cause would only lead to the rise of a few annas in the rupee. Besides there has been ample time to adjust production to the new situation.

It is equally ridiculous to try to explain a general and not local rise in food prices by difficulties of internal transport. The control of transport would undoubtedly have helped to relieve the starvation of Bengal, but it could not cause a general lowering of prices throughout India.

To explain the rise in prices by "hoarding," is a cheap evasion of which only the government and the Stalinists are capable. Why do people hoard, if not to profit by the continual and progressive rise in prices?

It should be better recognized that *there is no special rise in food prices*, relative to those of consumption goods in general, so far as the masses are concerned. *There is a general rise in prices.*

Official Figures

According to the Economic Adviser to the government, the All-Commodities Index of prices for January 1943 was 190; and for June 1943—246. When the Index for All-Commodities was 246, that of food grains was 306, of primary commodities 240, of cloth 506, and of manufactures 266. The disparity between food and All-Commodities would have been much lowered if the figures had been *weighted*.

The fact is that there has been a general upswing of prices in a curve which is becoming steeper. This is due mainly to the *Government of India's currency inflation*.

The note issue has risen from Rs 218 crores (218,00,00,000)* in September 1939 to Rs 734 crores in June 1943, and rising daily by 1 crore. The percentage graph of the increasing note issue "strangely" coincides with that of the food prices and general price index.

	SEPT. 1939	SEPT. 1940	MARCH 1941	JUNE 1941	DEC. 1941
A.	100	119	123	133	154
B.	100	110.5	114.9	126.4	143.3
	JUNE 1942	DEC. 1942	JUNE 1943		
A.	210	263	337		
B.	155.4	184.7	240		

A is the note issue; B. is the index of wholesale food prices. The latter are calculated very conservatively, the more so as they rise steeply. But it will be clear that food prices as all prices follow in the wake of the note issue.

The government not only denies any connection between

*Crore is a money of account equal to 10 million rupees, and written Rs 1,00,00,000.—Ed.

its currency policy and the phenomenal rise in prices, it denies that inflation exists! The "explanation" is that the expansion of Indian currency is backed by gold and sterling in excess of the requirements of the Act." This is in fact true. Reactionary economic authorities like *The Economist* and Mr. Sarkar, however, interpret this to mean that the expansion of Indian money is backed by "real assets," as opposed to "government security," and is therefore not inflation. But the "real assets" are only sterling, that is to say the British government war bonds, and represent only British government security. What the sterling assets of India are really worth is very, very doubtful, but *in any case* not relevant to the issue, since there is no free exchange permitted between the rupee and sterling, and the sterling exchange standard is not operative. Hence the paper rupee is full-fledged inconvertible "fiat" money, entirely independent of the contents of the Reserve, whatever the latter are worth. This remains within the "requirements of the Act." That is to say, for the government of India, inflation is strictly legal.

Currency manipulations always hide real trends of government policy regarding the production and exchange of material goods. What is the policy underlying this gross inflation? The government *creates* purchasing power at the expense of the whole country in order to help finance the British war effort directly, by enabling the British government to make free "purchases" in this country. But this is not the whole story. The Indian government uses this extra purchasing power to *direct* production along certain channels, by sharing some of the proceeds of the robbery of the masses with those who are ready to produce war goods. Capital and labor are attracted accordingly, and production is directed *away from food* to war material. Hence it follows that the consumption of food has to be curtailed by the masses.

That people go hungry cannot create food, unless they have the effective purchasing power to *buy* it, if and when produced. When the people's purchasing power is reduced by inflation, there can be no wonder that food production dwindles. Food production would indeed be still lower than it is if it were not for the purchasing power of the troops (including Indian troops) in the country. Capital does not flow to finance agricultural production. It may be said in this connection

that agriculture was a deficit economy for the cultivator, even before the war. The present higher prices of food-stuffs profits the landlord-profitteer, and only to an extent the small upper layer of the peasantry.

It must simply be said that there is no solution of the food problem consistent with the effective prosecution of the war.

It is useful to review some of the "solutions" suggested by politicians. The government and the Stalinists are "on the hunt" for the hoarders. These latter only profit by the continual rise in prices. They do not create the rise, which is due to an excess of "purchasing power" over the supply of commodities. The real shortage of consumption goods is due to the diversion of production to serve the war.

The "grow-more" food campaign of the government and the Stalinists can have small success, except as diversion of public interest, unless it is backed by a heavy subsidy. That is, unless the proceeds of inflation are withdrawn from the war effort to agriculture. Even so, we must note the permanent obstacles to the expansion of agriculture in this country, which have long ago brought it to an impasse, namely, the load of parasitism (landlord and money lender) on the cultivator, his miserable technical equipment, the exhaustion of the soil, the microscopic holdings, and finally the heavy taxation.

The control and rationing schemes can only secure some measure of fairness in the distribution of the restricted supply. But the supply will not increase unless inflation ceases, and the country resources are not drained away for war purposes. More food means: Down With the War!

The talk about cooperative food stores, about improving the internal export and import system, etc., is only a business of scratching the surface of things.

Finally, Satyasandhu proposes the following immediate "solutions," not as practicable under imperialism, but as fixing attention on the real starvers of the people: STOP FURTHER INFLATION; RETURN THE 1,000 CRORES OF STERLING BALANCES IN THE FORM OF GOODS; REMIT ALL EXCISE IMPORT AND SALES TAXES ON THE PEASANTRY TO COMPENSATE IT; REMIT ALL LAND REVENUE.

It is necessary to strip the government of all its disguises, and reveal its stark oppression and exploitation to the people.

From the Arsenal of Marxism

War and the International

By LEON TROTSKY

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the third month of the first world war, October 1914, in Zurich, Switzerland, Leon Trotsky wrote a pamphlet, *The War and the International*. It is one of the great internationalist documents of that period. We reprint

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At the basis of the current war is the rising up of the productive forces, developed by capitalism, against the national-state form of their exploitation. Our entire planet, its land and water areas, the earth's surface and its subsoil provide today the arena for a *world-wide* economy, the de-

below the introduction and the concluding section of this pamphlet from the Russian edition of Trotsky's *Collected Works* published in 1923 in Moscow by the State Publishers (Vol. I, pp. 75-81; 151-154). The English translation is by John G. Wright.

pendence of whose various parts upon each other has become indissoluble.

This work has been accomplished by capitalism. But capitalism also compels the capitalist states to fight in order to subordinate this world economy to the profit-interests of

the respective national bourgeoisies. The policy of imperialism first of all testifies to the fact that the old national state, created in Europe through the revolutions and wars of 1789-1815-1848-1859-1864-1866-1870, has become outlived and has turned into an intolerable fetter upon the further development of the productive forces. The war of 1914 represents first of all the collapse of the *national state* as an independent economic arena. Nationalism can continue as a cultural, ideological, psychological factor—the economic basis has been cut from under its feet. Blind or hypocritical are all speeches to the effect that the present sanguinary dog-fight serves the cause of “national defense.” Just the contrary is true; the objective meaning of the war consists in its destroying the existing national-economic nests in the name of a world economy. But imperialism is seeking to solve this task not along the principles of a rationally organized productive collaboration but along the principle of an exploitation of world economy by the capitalist class of that victorious country which is to be transformed by this war from a Great Power into a World Power.

The war heralds the crack-up of the national state; and, at the same time, also the crack-up of the *capitalist form* of economy. From within the national states capitalism has revolutionized the whole world economy, dividing the planet among the oligarchy of Great Powers, around whom move their satellites, the small states, kept alive by the rivalry between the big states. The further evolution of world economy on capitalist foundations signifies an uninterrupted struggle between the world powers for ever newer partitions of the self-same earth's surface as the object of capitalist exploitation. Economic rivalry under the aegis of militarism is being replaced by world banditry and devastation which disorganize the very foundations of mankind's economic life. World production has risen up not only against national-state fetters but also against the capitalist organization of economy that has now become transformed into a barbarous disorganization of economy.

The war of 1914 is the greatest convulsion in history of an economic system that is perishing from its own contradictions.

All the historical forces which have been called upon to give guidance to bourgeois society, to speak in its name and to exploit it—the monarchies, the ruling parties, the diplomacy, the standing army, the Church—all of them serve notice by the war of 1914 of their historical bankruptcy. Capitalism, as a system of human culture has been safeguarded by them—and the catastrophe to which this system has given birth is first of all *their* catastrophe. The first wave of events has raised national governments and armies to an unprecedented height, momentarily rallying the nations around them; but all the more terrible will be the downfall of the rulers when the actual meaning of unfolding events will become revealed in all its truth and horror to the peoples now stunned by the roar of cannons.

The revolutionary answer of the masses will be the more powerful the more monstrous is the shake-up to which they are now being subjected by history.

Capitalism has created the material prerequisites for a new, socialist economy. Imperialism has led the capitalist peoples into a historical blind-alley. The war of 1914 points the way out of the blind-alley, forcefully driving the proletariat onto the road of the socialist overturn.

In the economically backward countries of Europe the war is placing on the order of the day questions of a much earlier historical original: the questions of democracy and

of national unification. This is how matters stand by and large for the peoples of Russia, Austria-Hungary and the Balkan peninsula. But these historically belated questions, which the previous epoch has bequeathed to the present one, do not at all alter the basic character of the events. Twenty-five million soldiers have been set on their feet not by the national aspirations of Serbs, Poles, Roumanians or Finns, but by the imperialist interests of the bourgeoisies of the Great Powers. Having disrupted the European *status quo*, so carefully preserved for four and a half decades, imperialism has reopened all the old questions which the bourgeois revolution proved impotent to solve. But in the present epoch these questions are bereft of an independent character. With the preservation of Czarism and Austria-Hungary, the creation of normal conditions for national existence and economic development in the Balkan peninsula is unthinkable. At the present time Czarism represents the necessary military reservoir for the finance imperialism of France and the conservative colonial might of England. Austria-Hungary serves as the main prop for the aggressive imperialism of Germany. Beginning as a domestic clash between Serbian nationalist terrorists and the Habsburg political police, the present war has quickly unfolded its main content: the life-and-death struggle between Germany and England. At a time when simpletons and hypocrites talk of defending national freedom and independence, the Anglo-German war is actually being waged for the freedom of imperialist exploitation of the peoples of India and Egypt on the one side, and for the sake of a new imperialist division of this earth's peoples, on the other. Awakened for capitalist development on a national basis, Germany began by destroying in 1870-1871 the continental hegemony of France. Today when the blossoming of German industry on national foundations has made Germany the foremost capitalist power in the world, her future development runs up against the world hegemony of England.

Full and unlimited domination of the European continent is for Germany the necessary condition for the overthrow of her world enemy. Therefore imperialist Germany inscribes in her program first of all the creation of a central European unification. Present-day Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Balkan peninsula along with Turkey, Holland, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, Italy, and, if possible, also France, after she has been bled white, together with Spain and Portugal must comprise a single economic and military unit—Greater Germany under the hegemony of the existing German government. This program carefully elaborated by the economists, jurists, and diplomats of German imperialism and realized in life by its strategists is the most incontestable and at the same time the most shocking expression of the fact that capitalism finds its position intolerable within the tentacles of the national state. In place of the national Great Power must come the imperialist World Power.

In these historical conditions the issue for the European proletariat cannot possibly involve the defense of an outlived national “fatherland” which has become the chief brake upon economic progress; but involved is the task of creating a new, more powerful and stable fatherland—the republican *United States of Europe*, as a transition to the United States of the World. To the impasse of imperialism, the proletariat can counterpose only the socialist organization of world economy as the practical program of the day. To the war, as a method of solving the insolvable contradictions of capitalism at the apex of its development, the proletariat is compelled to counterpose its own method—the socialist overturn.

The Balkan question as well as the question of the over-

throw of Czarism—these tasks bequeathed to us by *yesterday's* struggle can be solved only in connection with the revolutionary solution of the tasks *today's* and *tomorrow's* struggles.

For the Russian Social-Democracy the primary unpostponable task is the struggle against Czarism which is seeking in Austria and the Balkans primarily an outlet for its state methods of plunder, barbarism, and violence. The Russian bourgeoisie, including the "radical" intelligentsia, has been completely corrupted by the enormous upswing of Russian industry in the last five years; has concluded a bloody alliance with the Romanov dynasty, which with its new territorial seizures must secure for impatient Russian capitalism its share of world booty. Despoiling and devastating Galicia, depriving her even of the morsels of Habsburg liberties, dismembering unhappy Persia, and seeking from behind the Bosphorus ambush to cast a noose upon the peoples of the Balkan peninsula, Czarism entrusts Russian liberalism, which it despises, with covering up this robber's work by means of revolting declamation about the defense of Belgium and France. The war of 1914 signifies the complete liquidation of Russian liberalism; makes the Russian proletariat the sole bearer of the liberationist struggle and completely transforms the Russian revolution into an integral part of the social revolution of the European proletariat.

In our struggle against Czarism, in which we know of no "national" armistice, we did not seek nor are we seeking assistance from the side of Habsburg or Hohenzollern militarism. We have preserved sufficient clarity of revolutionary vision to perceive that German imperialism is basically hostile to the idea of destroying on its eastern boundary its best ally, to which it is bound by the unity of historical tasks. But even if that were not the case; even if we grant that in obedience to the logic of military operations and contrary to the logic of its own political interests German militarism will deal a death blow to Czarism, even in this most unlikely case we would refuse to see in Hohenzollern not only a subjective but merely an objective ally. The destinies of the Russian revolution are far too intimately bound up with the destinies of European socialism, and we Russian Social-Democrats hold the internationalist position firmly enough to reject once and for all as payment for a dubious step toward emancipation of Russia the price of the indubitable crushing of the freedom of Belgium and France; and—what is more—the injection of imperialist poison into the German and Austrian proletariat.

We owe a great deal to the German Social-Democracy. We have all gone through its school; we learned from its successes as well as its mistakes. For us it was not one of the parties of the International, but the "party"—*tout court*. We have always maintained and strengthened fraternal ties with the Austrian Social-Democracy. In our turn we were proud in the knowledge that we had contributed our modest share, paid for by more than one drop of our blood, to the conquest of universal suffrage in Austria, and the awakening of revolutionary tendencies within the German proletariat. We accepted without hesitation the moral and material support from an elder brother who fought for common goals on the other side of our western frontier. But precisely out of respect to this past, and all the more so out of respect to the future which will bind still more closely the working class of Russia with the proletariat of Germany and Austria, we indignantly spurn the "liberationist" assistance which German imperialism—alas! with the blessing of German socialism—is bringing us in the coffer-dams, which bear the Krupp imprint. And we hope that the indignant protests of Russian socialism will ring

out loudly enough to be heard in Berlin and Vienna.

The collapse of the Second International is a tragic *fact*, it would be blindness or cowardice to shut one's eyes to this. The conduct of French socialism and of the greater section of English socialism constitutes as much a part of this collapse as the course pursued by the German and Austrian Social-Democracy. Purely diplomatic attempts to recreate the International—by means of mutual "amnesty"—will not advance us a single step. It is not a question of an episodic or temporary divergence, nor of differences of opinion on the "national" question. Involved is the capitulation of the oldest political parties in the historical test to which they have been submitted by the European war.

At first sight it might seem that the social revolutionary perspectives of the impending epoch of which we spoke above are completely illusory in view of the bankruptcy of the oldest socialist parties that has been disclosed so catastrophically. But such a skeptical conclusion would be completely false, it would ignore the "good" will of the historical dialectic, just as we used to ignore all too frequently its "ill" will so mercifully revealed in the fate of the International.

The war of 1914 heralds the foundering of the national states. The socialist parties of the epoch just concluded were *national* parties. All the ramifications of their organization, of their activity and their psychology made them grow together with the national state and contrary to the solemn pledges of their Congresses they came to the defense of the conservative state formations when imperialism, grown up on national soil began destroying with its sword the outlived national barriers. In their historical fall the national states have dragged down with them the national socialist parties.

What is perishing is not Socialism but only its temporary historic expression. The revolutionary line is moulting, shedding its petrified skin. This skin is comprised of living people, a whole socialist generation, who in the course of the self-sacrificing agitational and organizational work during several decades of political reaction have become petrified by views and habits of national possibilism.

As national states have become a brake on the productive forces, just so the old nationalist socialist parties have become the chief obstacle in the way of the proletarian revolutionary movement. They had to disclose all their backwardness, discredit all the limitations of their methods, bring down on the proletariat the disgrace and horror of internecine strife in order that the proletariat, through terrible disillusion, might free itself of the prejudices and slavish habits of the preparatory epoch and finally become that to which it is being summoned by the voice of history: the revolutionary class fighting for power.

The Second International has not existed in vain. It has performed a gigantic cultural work, unequalled in the world: the education and fusion of an oppressed class. The proletariat does not have to begin all over again. It will not enter the new road with empty hands. From the previous epoch it has inherited rich ideological arsenals. The new epoch will compell it to add to the old weapons of criticism the new criticism by means of—weapons.

* * *

Conclusions

We revolutionary Marxists have no grounds for despair. *The epoch which we are entering will be our epoch.* Marxism has not been vanquished. On the contrary the roar of cannons in all corners of Europe heralds not only the collapse of the historical organizations of the proletariat but also the victory

of Marxist theory. What remains today of the hopes for a "peaceful" evolution, the blunting of capitalist contradictions, the planful growing into socialism? The principled reformists who hoped to solve the social question through tariff agreements, consumers' societies and parliamentary collaboration of social democracy with bourgeois parties, are now transferring all their hopes to the victory of "national" arms. They expect that the property-owning classes will more readily agree to meet the needs of the proletariat which has demonstrated its patriotism. This hope would be completely dull-witted were it not for another hope that lurks behind it, a less "idealistic" expectation that armed victory will create for the national bourgeoisie a broader imperialist base of enrichment, at the expense of the bourgeoisies of other countries, and will permit it to share a part of its booty with the national proletariat—at the expense of the proletariat of other countries. *Social reformism has become converted in practice into social imperialism.* We have seen with our own eyes the annihilating liquidation of the hopes for a peaceful growth of the proletariat's well-being; the reformists are compelled to seek a way out of the reformist blind alley by restoring, contrary to their own doctrine, to force—not the revolutionary force of the peoples against the ruling classes, but the military force of their ruling classes against other peoples.

After 1848 the German bourgeoisie refused to solve its problems by methods of revolution. It entrusted its feudalists with the solution of the questions of bourgeois development by methods of war. The social process of the last half-century, having exhausted the national foundation of capitalist development, has placed the German proletariat face to face with the problem of revolution. Shying away from the revolution, the reformists were compelled to reproduce the historical fall of bourgeois liberalism: they entrust their ruling classes, that is, the self-same feudalists, with the solution of the proletarian question by methods of war. But here the historic analogy ends. The creation of national states did actually solve the bourgeois question for a whole epoch, while the long series of colonial wars after 1871 "supplemented" this solution, extending the arena for the development of capitalist forces. The epoch of colonial wars, waged by the national states, has led to the present war between the national states—over colo-

nies. After the backward sections of the world were divided among the capitalist states, nothing remained for them except to tear away the colonies from one another... However, the new redivision of the colonies between capitalist countries does not extend the basis of capitalist development but merely alters it: a gain for one sides denotes an equal loss for the other side. A temporary blunting of class contradictions in Germany could therefore be gained as a result of this war only through an extreme sharpening of the class war in France and England—and vice versa.

To this must be added another factor of decisive importance: *the capitalist awakening of the colonies themselves which has received a powerful impulse from the present war.* The disorganization of world economy signifies the revolutionizing of colonial economy and this implies that the colonies are beginning to lose their colonial character. In consequence, whatever may be the military outcome of the present dog-fight, the imperialist base of European capitalism will undergo as a result of it not an expansion, but a contraction. War not only fails to "solve" the working class question on the imperialist foundation but, on the contrary, it aggravates this question, confronting the capitalist world with the alternative: either *permanent war* over the narrowing imperialist foundation or—the *proletarian revolution.*

If the war has grown over the head of the Second International then its next consequences will already grow over the head of the entire bourgeois world. We revolutionary socialists did not want the war. *But we do not fear it.* We do not fall into despair over the fact that the war has smashed the International, the old ideological-organizational form worn out by history. From out of the inexhaustible reservoirs of proletarian socialism, the revolutionary epoch will create a new organizational form corresponding to the greatness of the new tasks. To this work we have applied ourselves at the present time, amid the wild barking of machine guns, the crash of old cathedrals and the patriotic howling of capitalist jackals. Amidst this hellish music of death we preserve our thought in all its clarity, our vision remains unclouded and we feel ourselves to be the only creative force of the future. There are already many of us, many more than appears on the surface. Tomorrow there will be many more of us than today. On the day after tomorrow beneath our banner there will stand millions who today, 67 years after the appearance of the *Communist Manifesto*, still have nothing to lose but their chains.

Zurich, October 31, 1914.

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The imprisonment of the 18 under the vicious Smith "Gag" law makes the Minneapolis Labor Case the most important civil liberties issue in the Second World War. Already over 300 unions and other progressive organizations representing more than 3,000,000 members have supported the work of the Civil Rights Defense Committee.

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The Minneapolis Labor Case directly involves you and the democratic rights of your union. Our campaign to free the 18 and repeal the Smith "Gag" Act is a campaign to defend the hard-won rights of the American labor movement.

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Fraternally yours,

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President, Industrial Union of Marine
and Shipbuilding Workers-CIO

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General Manager, N. Y. Joint Board,
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