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WAR AND REVOLUTION

POLITICAL REPORT TO THE R.W.L. CONVENTION

Incorporated in this report is all the political material appearing in the "Fighting Worker" and "International news" since the last convention, including the reports of the Central Committee plenary sessions since that time. This should be called to the delegates' attention at the beginning, because in the space of an hour it is impossible to treat many phenomena except by reference, and is only possible to bring out the main points.

IMPERIALIST WAR AND CIVIL WAR

A political report of any affiliate of the International Contact Commission can of course, only properly commence with an analysis of the world situation. The events since the last convention fully substantiate the position taken at the last convention. More and more the predominant elements of an imperialist war are giving way to and merging into the predominant elements of civil war. What has happened since the last convention? Mass starvation in India, accompanied by demonstrations, strikes, and hunger riots, even though none of these rose to the level of August 8, 1942. A heightening of the tension between the Chinese bourgeois on the one hand, and the masses of workers and peasants on the other. A series of strikes in the U.S. the foremost in significance being the the various miners' strikes, but also of importance being the threatened strikes in steel and railroad. It is however, when we turn to Europe that the scenes of mass activity and impending revolution are most marked. General strike in Denmark, coal and ship yard strikes in England, actual revolt in the Greek fleet, and above all the most significant event, following the July 25 Revolution, a strike in northern Italy of some 3 to 6 million workers, raising political demands under the very nose of the Nazi tanks, and in southern Italy, tremendous ferment and discontent in the masses leading to shift after shift at the top in an endeavor to side track and stifle revolution.

REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION

All of this is of course due not only to the general decay of capitalism but to the further economic dislocation and misery resulting from the greatest war in history. At this point it would be well to recall the elements of a revolutionary situation set out scientifically by Lenin as far back as 1920, and most classically expressed in "Left Wing Communism", chapter 10. The objective pre-conditions existing in any revolutionary situation are the following:

1. An all embracing economic and political crisis causing a situation in which not only do the exploited and oppressed desire a fundamental change of condition, but the rulers are also in a state of confusion, not knowing what to do in order to maintain their rule.
2. The more than usual increase in the needs and misery of the masses of exploited and oppressed.
3. On account of the foregoing reasons an unexampled increase of activity of the exploited and oppressed. If these three conditions exist and there is added to them the subjective factor, namely the existence of a Marxist party, having the leadership and confidence of the proletariat, and leading behind the proletariat the vast mass of the peasantry, and large sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie, then successful revolution is on the order of the day.

ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION

It is from this standpoint that we propose to examine the world situation and the situation in the U.S.A. Before entering into this examination it should be definitely understood that Lenin wrote about revolutions in general and proletarian revolutions in particular, but that a distinguishing feature of the present time from 1920 is the existence of the Soviet Union as a workers' state, even though degenerated to an almost incredible extent. We therefore have to take into consideration the role of the Soviet Union in the present period of war and revolution, and something else, the role of the Stalinist bureaucracy. But we must not fall into the trap of just looking at the degenerated workers' state and the reactionary bureaucracy as isolated. One of the fundamental revisions made by the present arch priest of revisionism, Max Schachtman, in the modern hand book of revisionism known as the "Struggle for the New Course" is the separation of the Soviet Union from the rest of the world. Let us not imitate this.

Another important point of difference between the present and the period of 1914-1918 is the following: In 1917, and for that matter as far back as 1915, Lenin made use of the expression that imperialism had kneaded humanity into "one bloody lump". Relatively true as this was at the time, it is absolutely true now. The examples of Italy, India, Denmark, etc. reveal two facts. One is that it is very unlikely that there will be a successful isolated revolution such as October 1917. But for the very same reason, there is being prepared the biggest explosion that history has ever seen, embracing, if not continents, at least many countries within its scope.

INNER IMPERIALIST FIGHTS

Starting then from a world standpoint let us examine the criteria of a revolutionary situation as given above. On a world scale is there an all embracing economic and political crisis? The answer to this is not only in the affirmative but the signs of growing crises, as already pointed out have greatly multiplied since the last convention. Previously in this report we have pointed out some of the phenomena of economic and political crises. Let us dwell for a few moments on the rifts within the ruling class on each side of the battle lines. Previous issues of the "Fighting Worker" and "International News" have pointed out the grave contradictions between the imperialist aims of Greater Germany and Japan. It is sufficient to recall that before the last convention when the Japanese army took over the Dutch East Indies, German capitalists, through their government, made demand for their share in the exploitation on the grand that shares of the stock in the Dutch East Indies Company belonged to them by virtue of the Nazi conquest of Holland. Japanese imperialists promptly turned this down. But even more significant are the shake-ups within both the Japanese and German commands. As already pointed out in the FW the shake-ups in the Japanese command of a few months ago must be explained on political, not military grounds. This is particularly true in the case of Japan whose political structure is that of a puppet Diet and a figurehead emperor subject to conflicting army and navy groups representing the respective interests of the Mitsui and Mitsubishi capitalists. In Germany too, the signs of increasing rifts within the ruling class become more and more manifest. Later on we shall deal with specific differences raised by the invasion of Normandy, but suffice it to say that the series of defeats imposed upon the German armies, and particularly the defeats on the Russian front, have aroused extreme lack of confidence of the masses of central Europe in the Nazi government. The recent quarrel between Rommel and Von Runstedt is primarily military but it also has its political implications. We shall examine this in detail later, inasmuch as at the present time we are giving a general world picture. When we turn to the other side of the battle lines it is easy to see that the apparent approach of military victory is not solving the United Nations' contradictions, but is intensifying them. The first and main contradiction within the ranks of the United Nations is between the Soviet Union on the one hand and Anglo-American imperialism on the other hand. Within this contradiction, which has a very objective economic and social basis, the Stalinist bureaucracy tries to maneuver for its own clique interests by capitulating to Anglo-American imperialism, attempting to line up mainly with the U.S.A. against Britain. But capitulation does not remove the economic base of the Soviet Union, and this objective contradiction increases with every military advance even though the Stalinists attempt to make every possible concession except the final and absolute restoration of capitalist property.

U.S. - BRITAIN

Second there is the continuing and intensifying antagonism between the U.S. and Great Britain. The closer it appears that the military defeat of Germany is inevitable, the sharper grows the antagonism between the U.S. and Great Britain. This was vividly manifested at Teheran. The conflicts that took place and the coldness that developed between Churchill and Roosevelt was not on account of personal factors, but on account of the fact that the approaching expected elimination of Germany would leave the U.S.A. and Great Britain face to face as main contenders for the imperialist world. In this connection we wish to reiterate and call attention to the thesis of the Cleveland plenum as to the respective differences between the policies of British and American imperialism with regard to Germany and Japan. Great as this contradiction is, however, it should still be remembered that this is a conflict within imperialism, and is subordinate to the conflict to the Soviet Union and to the working class, because the latter is a conflict between different social systems.

CHINA

Third is a very complicated series of contradictions and antagonisms within the ranks of the rulers on the question of China. As indicated at Teheran and Moscow Great Britain is insistent on the return of Hong Kong and her various concessions in China. The U.S. on the other hand is for the so-called "open door", knowing that her economic might would be sufficient to dominate the economy of China. As between these two conflicting powers Chiang Kai Shek has oriented himself more on the side of the U.S.A. for understandable reasons. But nevertheless, as admirably portrayed from a factual standpoint by Agnes Smedley in the "Battle Hymn of China" the low level of the development of Chinese economy, the terrible economic dislocation of even that poor economy due to the war which has raged longer in China than anywhere else, the increasing class antagonisms have caused Chiang to attempt a rapprochement with Japan. There can be no doubt that in addition to military motives, set forth in the bourgeois press, the prime political motive of the latest Japanese drive is to force Chiang to make up the mind of his class. Within the Kuomintang the widow of Sun Yat Sen has come out with a denunciation of Chiang and Madame Chiang, her sister, as fascists.

BASIC ANTAGONISMS

Fourth, there are other antagonisms of grave importance in addition to the above, the De Gaulle-Vichy antagonism, the De Gaulle-Giraud antagonism, the De Gaulle-AMG antagonism, the conflicts in South America between the agents of U.S.A., Great Britain and German imperialists, menaced at all times by a growing class conscious revolt on the part of the city workers and the peasantry.

But basically the world political crisis affecting the ranks of the ruling class reduces itself to three categories.

1. The basic antagonism between the two social systems, the antagonism between the economic base of the Soviet Union, and the economic base of all other countries of the world.
2. Inter and intra imperialist antagonisms. The main conflict in this connection still remains that between the United Nations imperialists and the Axis, and the main protagonists here are still the U.S.A. and Germany. Within this same category, however there are serious differences within the imperialist camps on each side. But all these are fundamentally antagonisms within the imperialist structure arising out of the existence of imperialism as the decay stage of capitalism, and therefore fundamentally different from the antagonism between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world.
3. There is the antagonism between the imperialist countries and the colonies or semi colonies. China gives an example of the fundamental thesis that in these countries the native bourgeoisie is incapable of playing a role other than that of tail to one or another imperialism. To the example of Wang Chin Wei may soon be added another chapter in that interesting living text book, Chiang Kai Shek.

Of course all the above flows from and is subordinated to the general world antagonism of capitalists and workers. Even though we have been considering the antagonisms from the particular standpoint of rifts within the ruling class, the more general aspect cannot be neglected. For instance, one of the most important phenomena, the recent defeat of Tito, can primarily be explained by the capitulation of the Stalinists on the property question. As already predicted in the FW, this has been even more the case in Rumania, where the Communist Party of Rumania technically remains illegal after the occupation by the Russian army.

ECONOMIC CRISES

Apparently so far we have mostly treated political phenomena without touching upon the economic. This has been purposely done in this report in order to pose and solve a fundamental theoretical question. That question may be stated thus: Can there be an economic crisis when the productive machinery is used to a tremendous extent and when unemployment has been greatly reduced, and in some cases eliminated? We have posed the question in the manner that we did because superficially it seems that there is no economic crisis and yet there are tremendous political crises. What is the explanation? The explanation is very simple. As already pointed out in 1914 by Lenin in the crisis in the "Second International" the war itself is an all embracing economic and political crisis. True as this was in 1914, it is a thousand

times more true today. The present imperialist war itself is truly a world war. And it is still truer that not only is this war in general an expression of capitalism at its rottenest stage of decay historically, but it also creates a form of cyclic crisis within the general crisis. This has been very ably explained in articles in the IN on "Inflation" and the peculiar forms that inflation takes today, and the delegates are referred to these articles for further elucidation. Suffice it to say that the main manifestation of the economic crisis is the destruction by military means, not only of commodities, but of the instruments of production as well. When a \$5,000 bomb hits a \$5,000,000 plant all the factors concerned, the plant, the bomb, the workers, the machines, represent economic crisis. Use values are obliterated at the same time that exchange value literally disappears into the air. Therefore, it is a palpable all-embracing economic crisis giving rise to the important surface phenomena in the political realm that we have already shown.

Summing up we say that all over the world there is in the ranks of the world bourgeoisie and its Stalinist and its social-democratic stooges an inability to consolidate their own ranks. There is already maturing very rapidly the condition that Lenin described in 1920, "The rulers are unable to rule as before".

MISERY OF THE MASSES

We come now to the second prerequisite. The increase in the needs and misery of the exploited and oppressed. What about this? In China and in India where the oppressions of imperialism and its superexploitation have been superimposed upon a semi-feudal base, there is actual starvation. Not just hunger, which has for decades been the lot of the colonial slaves, but starvation in the most literal sense of the word. Before the war bourgeois economists pointed out that the diet of the Indian worker was on a par with relief diets in famine times and less than the diets prescribed by the jail regulations. Now with the transformation of Indian economy into war economy with the denuding of India of wheat, exported in times of famine, there has ensued actual death diet. In Bengal 25 thousand died from starvation every week. Bourgeois newspaper reporters tell of traversing the streets of Bombay and Calcutta and seeing every morning corpses of men, women and children, who have died during the night. China presents a similar picture. Daniel De Leon once said that there were three diets for the exploited Chinese, one section of the population lived on rats, another less fortunate on the tails of rats, and the least fortunate on the memories of the tails of rats. De Leon did not enjoy the happy faculty of living to see the full fruits of capitalist culture in the gustatory realm. Now he would have had to add a fourth category, of amnesiacs, who have even lost the aforesaid memory.

In Italy a recent article in "Liberty" substantiates fully the R.W.L. thesis at the time of the ousting of Mussolini. We pointed out then that it was quite probable that the Italian masses of southern Italy would at first welcome the AMG, and only later, as a result of their own experience, discover that the capitalist base remained the same as ever, and that there was no change in their condition. This article goes even further. It discloses that there has not only been no improvement in the masses in southern Italy, but that particularly from the standpoint of meat, prices, wages, inflation, etc. there has been an actual worsening of their condition. And it further pointed out that the cries of relief and exultation which greeted the invading armies have now been changed to mutters of rage and discontent, daily growing louder and louder. We have only picked out some characteristic examples, but they might be multiplied and extended to cover the entire capitalist world, and to cover as well the Soviet Union, which as long ago pointed out by Lenin and Trotsky, cannot avoid being entangled in the general capitalist environment. In that portion of our report dealing with the situation in the U.S.A. we shall discuss conditions there. Suffice it to say at this time that there has been in general an increase in the needs and misery of the exploited and oppressed here, although not to anywhere near the same extent as in Asia or even Europe.

POLITICAL CONDITION OF THE MASSES

But the increase in misery is not exhausted simply by an inquiry into the state of food, clothing and shelter. It also embraces the political condition of the masses. Here, in the U.S. and everywhere else, there has been a positive worsening of the political condition of the workers, the peasants, and the urban petty bourgeoisie. War time regulations and military government are stripping the last fig leaves of democracy from the harlot bodies of the erstwhile democratic ladies of U.S.A. and Great Britain. This also constitutes, as Marx pointed out in Volume 1 of "Capital", a part of the misery of the exploited and oppressed.

Summing up on this point then we can definitely say that not only is the ruling class disunited, but the ruled and exploited have had a more than usual increase in need and misery, an increase which is not only a part of the general decay of capitalism, but a part of the accentuated cyclic crisis - the second imperialist war.

INCREASE IN MASS ACTION

As we have stated above the third prerequisite of revolutionary situation is the more than usual increase in the activity of the masses. This has been the case in the present war much more than it was in the last. In the last war it was not until 1916 that the first manifestations of discontent, of civil war, took place,

the Easter Revolt in Dublin. And that was on such a minor scale that it led to a legitimate polemic by Lenin on the one side and Radék and Piatakov on the other as to whether it was a real revolution or putsch. But in this war there have been manifestations of independent working class revolutionary action from the first days (Warsaw) down to the present time. All that we have to do today is determine the tendency. Is independent revolutionary action of the masses decreasing or increasing? The examples of Italy, England, the U.S., Denmark, to mention only a few are indicative of the trend. The general strategic trend is upward. The tactical variations we shall mention when we come to particular countries.

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION

On a world wide scale we may take it as definitely established that there is a tendency to positive increase in all the factors of a pre-revolutionary situation. We may take it as established that these tendencies have increased and deepened on a world wide scale since our last convention. We can consider as established the fact that the activity of the masses is both more intensive and extensive in this war than in the last. We see then all the conditions for revolution and we can definitely state that within the immediate future there will be revolution. But, as Lenin also pointed out in the aforementioned chapter of "Left Wing Communism" not every revolutionary situation produces a revolution, much less a successful one. To the foregoing objective factors there must be added the subjective factor, the revolutionary party. Now a party does not grow in such periods as the present by mere accretion, but by leaps and bounds on the basis of revolutionary program. And this growth of the party does not take place in a vacuum. It takes place in the midst of the explosions of the masses, experience of the masses, and as a result, among other things, of such explosions and such experiences.

STALINISM AND TROTSKYISM

What is the record in this respect? We have witnessed in the past two years a further decline in the prestige and influence and organizational growth of the Second International. We have seen the formal dissolution of the Third International and have seen not only organizational liquidation but the vilest kind of ideological surrender to the bourgeoisie. We have seen this in India, in China, in Italy, in England, in the U.S., not to speak of the Soviet Union. The Stalinist machinery has become the open strike breaking, slave driving defender of capitalism in the ranks of the working class. One instance suffices. Harry Bridges, whose line swings with every Stalinist turn, now declares that not only are strikes "unnecessary and harmful" in time of war but that the same will be the case after the war. This will bring about going home on the part of many of the Stalinists and

a certain number of splits, as for instance has already been the case in Italy. But above all it will mean the lessening of the influence of the "Communist" parties wherever they are. This is being increasingly realized even by many backward workers. It is therefore all the more significant that the Trotskyites, both factions, come forward as the biggest objective potential support of capitalism in the ranks of the working class by their advocacy of a transitional program, and particularly the labor party. That this is not an isolated national thing, but an international manifestation of centrism, can be seen by taking the attitude of the Trotskyites in the most significant countries, the Soviet Union, U.S.A., Great Britain, Germany, Italy, France, India, China. In each country you will find an adaptation of centrism. In regard to the Soviet Union these centrists either speak of the dual role of Stalinism or of "red imperialism". In the other countries their main slogans are such traps as a labor party or open advocacy of the bourgeois state in the form of Constituent Assembly.

INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION

The small forces of the International Contact Commission are on the increase. But it should be distinctly understood that it is more likely than otherwise in the present situation that the forces and leadership of the ICC will grow on a world scale as a result of the experience of the vast masses disillusioning them as to the latest manifestations of reformism and particularly centrism. But in the period such as the present this does not mean years. It means rather months, and in some cases even weeks.

SOVIET UNION

And now in this connection in considering the subjective factor, it becomes necessary to refer back to the objective conditions in various countries, including the state of mind of the working class. In a report to an affiliate of the ICC naturally the report must dwell mostly upon those countries, including the U. S. A., which most directly affect the work of the RWL U.S.A. It should be remembered in this connection that since the last convention millions more of U. S. A. soldiers are scattered all over the world. More than ever before events in Africa, in Asia, and particularly in Europe have their repercussions here. More than ever before is it also true that the foremost counter revolutionary power in the world is the U. S. A. It has trained and armed millions of men with the primary purpose of crushing the proletarian revolution. To that end it subordinates everything, even the conflict for world domination with its nearest imperialist rivals. Therefore, we start an examination of the "hot spots" of world economy.

The first of these "hot spots" is the Soviet Union. Despite

Stalinism, despite the bureaucratic caste-degeneration of the Russian army, despite all the patriarchs, and the Orlemanskis, despite even the proposed contribution of one billion dollars or more by the Soviet Union to the International Bank after the war, and despite it may be said the premature wailing of Max Schachtmann, the fact remains that the economic base of the Soviet Union plays a most significant role in world politics. What causes the greatest fear on the part of all the imperialists, is the continued advance of the Russian army. Not because they fear Stalin, (they want and need Stalin) and not because they fear any of the leadership of the Russian army, but because they know that objectively the very existence of a degenerated workers state is a menace to the whole system of capitalism. So the old plans of all the imperialists, all their disagreements among themselves must be and are subordinated to the fight against the Soviet Union as a part of the world proletarian revolution. It is in this connection that there must be considered the invasion of Normandy, the events in Italy, the events in Yugoslavia, etc.

The invasion of Normandy has by no means shown itself to be the invasion of western Europe. Already six months ago we pointed out that the determining factor in all the Allied military moves was the fear of proletarian revolution. All that they have done in Normandy is to seize a bridgehead primarily for the crushing of the central European revolution and only secondarily as a military move against Germany.

The German bourgeoisie realize this. That is the explanation of the fact that the DNE nearly always broadcasts the news of Russian victories before TASS, and very often exaggerates the importance of the victories. They are in effect saying, "Roosevelt and Churchill, you see how badly we are being licked on the eastern front. If we don't get together some way bolshevism is going to sweep all over Europe". For a long time when there was military stalemate around Stalingrad at tremendous costs of both Russian and German lives and material, the U.S.A. and Great Britain were very satisfied. At that time when practically the whole mass of the German army had been thrown to the Eastern Front it is ridiculous to assert that there could have been no invasion of France. Italy was only invaded when social revolution impended, and in order to stop social revolution. Despite Schachtmann the astute Roosevelt and Churchill know what would be the effect of continued Russian advance against Germany. They fear real revolutionary repercussions in central Europe, and so does Stalin. It should not be forgotten in this connection that Stalin is just as afraid of entering Berlin as are Roosevelt and Churchill of his doing so. The first and primary motive of invasion is to have a spring board of attack on the proletarian revolution in central Europe. But all of them are in the position of the man who let the genie out of the bottle and couldn't put him back in. Invasion means weakening and defeat of the Nazi army, and that leads

to a result most unpleasant for all the imperialists, namely revolution in central Europe; and would be equally unpleasant to Stalin as well. How do the Allies and the Stalinists attempt to solve this so as to save their respective roles? Both forces have agreed at Teheran and elsewhere to make their major concentration the struggle against Proletarian Revolution. The Stalinists have openly admitted that the Revolution represents to them the biggest obstacle to continuance of their regime. The Allies, on their part, will not only use Stalinism (and other forces) for this purpose, but they are preparing even today for an eventual struggle against the Soviet Union, which they recognize as a potential bulwark of the impending revolutionary crisis.

FORMS OF CLASS COLLABORATION

As was agreed between the different points of view at the plenum which considered the first Italian revolution the main resort of the bourgeoisie is to force, military force. That is why millions of soldiers in both the imperialist camps are armed and ready and why such a large proportion are kept in reserve. Also as we have already pointed out this is not a period in which the bourgeoisie can afford to use the velvet glove of democracy rather than the iron fist of fascism. This does not, however, lessen the danger of centrism. In France they tried to throw across the trail of the rising masses the red herring of nationalism. In England and the U. S., the labor party, in India the Constituent Assembly. Since the prerequisites for revolutionary situation are maturing rapidly, since the main resort of the bourgeoisie is to open force rather than democratic deception (the changing words of Churchill are very illuminating in this connection), the main agitational and propaganda work of our forces must be devoted to the idea of real soviet power and the immediate taking over of the instruments of production as an immediate solution to the increased needs and misery of the working class and poor peasants. In this fight we can only win by pursuing a bold course, not by trying to out reform the reformists or out centrize the centrists.

The advance of the Russian army to the borders of central Europe and our reaction to the problems caused thereby has been adequately touched upon in the article "What Now" in the IN. This article is fundamentally nothing new. It places the main axis of our activity on the permanent revolution, but amplifies this conception from the tactical standpoint. This is the only correct way to pose the questions as against both Cannon and Schachtmann.

ITALY

Another "hot spot" is Italy. The PC has already pointed out in the article "Germany the Key to the European Revolution" that the

Italian revolution can only be successful if it is connected with revolution in greater Germany. But this is not to be taken in a mechanical sense. Neither the bourgeoisie nor the proletariat just sit by and wait until central European revolution is on the actual order of the day. The whole history of Italy in the past couple of years indicates growing activity of the masses on the one hand, and various shifts on the part of the bourgeoisie on the other in an endeavor to head off actual fight for power. References are made to the present as a Kerensky period. This is only a limited analogy. The opportunities of the Italian and international bourgeoisie for maneuvering with the forms of democracy are more limited. The apparent progress from Mussolini to Badoglio to Sforza and Bonomi are only significant in representing formal concessions to the growing pressure of the masses. It is not deemed necessary to do otherwise at this point than to incorporate our analysis laid down in the FW and IN and particularly in the IN article "Trotskyism in the Period of War and Revolution".

INDIA

We incorporate in the report all our material on India since the last convention. Suffice it to say that on the basis of our analyses new and bigger developments in India are to be expected in the very near future. That our world view is fundamentally correct is proved by a recent article by Drew Pearson in which that columnist says that large quantities of men and material have been sent by Roosevelt to India with the avowed purpose, not of launching an attack upon Japan, but primarily of suppressing potential revolts of the Indian people.

CENTRAL EUROPE

Our views on the central European revolution have been adequately expressed in a number of articles in the FW and IN, and particularly in the article "Germany, the Key to the European Revolution". The invasion has not changed this. The primary purpose of the invasion is to have points of departure for attack on revolutionary forces. Its secondary purpose is to hold enough troops of the German army on the western front so that a war of mutual extermination can take place on the eastern front. When the full scale, mass and speedy operations take place in the west, it will be a particularly decisive proof that the revolutionary situation in central Europe is reaching the boiling point.

UNITED STATES

Against that background of world situation we now properly consider the situation in the U. S. A. The economics of the present period in the U. S. A. also reveal elements of crisis. We cannot expect to find this crisis in the old form. We are dealing

with a world economy. Various articles in the FW and IN, and particularly the articles on inflation give a sufficient factual picture and theoretical analysis, so as not to need reiteration. Since the last convention we have witnessed the same fundamental trends. A considerable shift to the right on the part of the bourgeoisie, with a continuation of a shift to the left on the part of large sections of the working class, and particularly the basic heavy industrial sections. It is undoubtedly true that if American economic and political life is taken by itself, U. S. A. is much farther from a pre-revolutionary situation than Europe or Asia. But such an application would be mechanical. The foremost representatives of the bourgeoisie have been compelled to admit the interconnection of the whole world. See for instance, the book by Wendell Wilkie, bearing the significant title "One World". In such a situation one can less than ever base policy on any Lovestone theory of exceptionalism. However, bearing the above caution in mind, we intend to examine the present state of social life in the U. S. A. from the same standpoint as we did the world situation.

First. What is the status within the ranks of the U. S. A. ruling class? It can definitely be stated that since the last convention two processes have been in conflict, one being in the ascendant in the first period and the other in the last few months. The first process was that of drawing together in the ranks of the ruling class. The culminating point of this was at the time of the miners' strike. Faced with a militant strike in one of the most basic industries practically the entire bourgeoisie rallied around the regime. But after the miners' strike, and after the subsiding of the threatened strikes in steel and Railroad, the second tendency, that of disunity, came into play. Today this tendency is in the ascendant. Very significant in this respect is the long fight between the Old Dealers in the South, based upon a semi-feudal method of exploitation, and the New Dealers, representing the real capitalist elements. This fight has already received attention in the columns of the FW in the article "Barkley Blows Off", and was forecast at the time of the Cleveland program in the thesis presented at that plenum on the South. But it is very significant that for instance in Texas where the fight is very intense the semi-feudal elements within the Democratic Party find themselves reinforced by large Republican Party enemies of the New Deal, including big sections of finance capital.

In connection with the growing inability of the ruling class to rule as before the conflicts within the Democratic and Republican Parties should be noted, but of still greater importance is the conflict between the political action committee of the CIO and the labor party advocates. It will of course be no surprise to the delegates that despite the terminology, we put this conflict as an expression of the contradictions within the ruling class.

Lenin long ago pointed out that a so-called labor party is nothing but a bourgeois party followed by the workers. So that the recent fights that have taken place in this sphere, as well as the conflict in the New York ALP are not, as the centrists would have us believe gropings towards independent political working class action, but are fundamentally an expression of division in the ranks of the ruling class as reflected in the minds and action of their labor stooges.

WORKERS IN THE U. S.

Proceeding in the same manner we find an increase in the needs and misery of the working class. The government and employers try to hold down the workers to the "little steel" formula, and this lying formula, the real nature of which has been shown in the columns of the FW, is itself an expression of increasing economic need on the part of the working class. What do we mean by this? Well, the formula says that there has been only an increase of 15% in the cost of living and holds or tries to hold the working class to that. But even the most conservative reliable figures show that there has been an increase of 43%. Therefore it follows that if the working class is restricted to a 15% increase and the real increase has been 43% there has actually been a drastic cut in real wages. In addition to that, as we pointed out with regard to other countries, the restrictions upon the working class are increasing. The necessity of releases from jobs, militarization, combined attacks upon the rank and file by the government, the bosses and the labor bureaucracy, all these lead to an increase in the misery of the working class. All of this has been analyzed before and the only question for the convention to determine is whether or not there is a tendency to increase of this or relaxation. Without going into a mass of figures, it may definitely be taken to be established that the tendency is undoubtedly towards increase of repression. More significant than many delegates think, is the fact that many issues of the FW and IN have been banned.

The period since the last convention has shown to blind people that the activity of the exploited and oppressed is distinctly on the increase. We have cited instances of this in the report and it is not necessary to reiterate same. But it is necessary to point out that this is not a universal picture. Due to the smallness of the Marxist forces, and due to the fact that a period of war and revolution raises to the Nth degree of social manifestations, progressive and reactionary, we find a complex and confused picture. We find for instance at one end of this scale the miners fighting the bosses, the government and Lewis as well. This was a glorious page in American history, despite the fact that it was more spontaneous than conscious. At the other end of the scale we find such disgraceful things as the textile workers of Danville, Virginia, going on strike to compel

the firing of Negro workers. The dialectics of the thing may be well shown by conversation had by a member of the PC with a comrade in the government's service. This comrade pointed out that the tremendous influx of women workers, including many women from backward agrarian sections, and many housewives who had never been wage workers before, into government clerical employ brought with it a terrific wave of reaction. This reflected itself in the UFWA, and of course the Stalinist leadership was very glad to base itself upon these elements. But, said this comrade, "Look at these same workers six months or a year afterwards and we see a different picture. How rapidly they have become disgusted. How do they now listen to us when before their ears were entirely closed." This little example tells more than a whole volume of statistics.

U. S. CONTRADICTIONS

Summing up we may definitely say that the same factors which affect every other country in the capitalist world affect the U. S. A., although to a lessened extent. But again we point out to the delegates that the very apparent strength of American imperialism is the source of still greater, more widespread and more far-reaching contradictions than that of any other. As experience has shown the American worker does not have to be reduced to the economic level of a Chinese coolie before he revolts. Such a thesis would be most mechanical. On the other hand as the PC has already pointed out that it would be equally mechanical not to see the varied picture in the U. S. A. More than ever it is necessary to concretize. For instance if we can intervene in Danville, and that will depend not only upon the situation there, but upon the state of our forces, we shall have to work out a solution which will unite the Negro and white workers in a fight for complete elimination of discrimination and a fight for the general raising of the standards of living. In such a situation, as in many others the slogan of workers control of production will play a tremendous part.

A political report clearly consists of three parts. An analysis of facts and tendencies, a report on past activity and a prognosis for the future.

ACTIVITY OF THE RWL

We now take up the past activity of the league in the period just mentioned. Of course, we shall not go into a detailed report, as that is the function of other reporters, but we shall endeavor to give the delegates a political picture of what we have done. The figures, etc., will be supplied in the Org. report and the trade union report.

Since the last convention the work of the PC may be divided into

the same categories as those of Engels, namely, the work on the theoretical, the economic, and the practical political fields. Theoretically, there have been good contributions in the past period. What questions came up? The real nature of inflation, nationalism and centrism, again the nature of the Soviet Union, and the theoretical question connected with the advance of the Russian army. The reporter does not intend to go into a lengthy analysis of these, but suffice it to say that the RWL is the only organization that has even attempted to make a definite contribution to Marx's theory with regard to present day events. The reporter says this advisably, because the work of Schachtman can in no sense of the word be considered as Marxism. The Cannonites have put out nothing of a theoretical nature. Of course, so far as the Stalinists are concerned, the main "contribution" has been the article of Leontiew in "Science and Society" completely repudiating Marxism in actuality.

The economic, which means mostly the union field, is to be covered in another report. I just wish to point out that the political base for the activity of the PC has been breaking of the class truce by concentrating on rescinding the "no-strike" pledge and withdrawal of all the labor members from the WLB.

With regard to what may be called the practical political activity the PC has based itself on concentration on the elementary steps of turning the imperialist war into civil war. At this stage this means mostly the gathering of forces. Concentration has been on the Kelly case, an anti-war case, a case involving the struggle of the Negro people; trade union work, counterposing of the shop steward system to the labor party as a political fight; and enlightenment of the working class in all the current events taking place since the last convention.

Politically from all standpoints there has been an advance. This has been greatly facilitated and depends in large part upon the general increase in militancy on the part of the working class.

PROSPECTS

What are the prospects before us in the coming period? We first state what are the general world prospects, basing ourselves upon the preceding analyses. 1. Within the next few months we may definitely expect a tremendous sharpening of revolutionary struggles in Central Europe, in Italy, and in China, India and Asia. 2. Stalinism is reaching the breaking point. Not from the standpoint of the historical period, but from the standpoint of immediate perspective we must count upon a tremendous struggle in the Soviet Union between revolution and counter-revolution within the framework of the general European and Asiatic revolutionary situation. 3. In the U. S. A., although there is no immediate indication of a revolutionary situation within a short

period, say of months, there will be increased activity of the exploited and oppressed masses, particularly in the union field, and in the South with regard to the struggle of the sharecroppers and the Negro people.

TASKS AHEAD

All the above determines our theoretical, economic and practical political tasks for the coming period.

1. In the theoretical field we must still further elucidate the nature of the Soviet Union as a degenerate workers' state on the brink of a new political revolution or counter-revolution, with the world situation favoring the former. We must give more attention to the question of the army and work out material on the relationship between the army and the economic base on the one hand and the army and the Stalinist bureaucracy on the other. We must also give theoretical attention to the proposed inter-linking organizationally and financially of the Soviet Union with finance capital and point out that this will pose as an immediate question political revolution or social counter-revolution. We also have as a theoretical task the working out of the Marxist analysis of class relations in the South and the development of our work on the status of the Negroes.

The struggle in the trade unions should be continued along the lines already existing, but with an even sharper emphasis upon the shop steward movement. We must, as in the days of the old TUEL, start a national movement at all trade union conventions for rescinding of the no-strike pledge and withdrawal of the WLB labor members.

On what might be called the practical political side we should devote more attention to the revolutionary use of parliamentary institutions, including participation in the presidential election campaign. We must raise in as open a form as possible the question of material aid to the Marxists in all countries and support by the working class.

If these things are done we can confidently expect growth such as has never been seen since the initiation of the League. Our organization was born at a period of the down swing of the struggle on a world scale. It has maintained itself organizationally and above all politically. This has been a triumph of historical proportions. Now on the upswing we have the dual and inter-related task of combating American imperialism at home and giving aid to the fights for power in Europe and Asia. It is generally historically true that the best aid which can be given the revolution in Europe and Asia is the development of a powerful revolutionary movement in the U.S.A. This, of course, must not be allowed to obscure the fact that in conditions of actual fight for power the main immediate task is the aiding of that fight, wherever it may be, which in turn contributes to the success of the struggle in the U. S. A.