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FIVE CENTS

A Special Pamphlet-Issue on

WHAT IS STALINISM?

The Independent Socialist View

This is the 5th in LABOR ACTION's series of annual special pamphlet-issues devoted to explaining the Independent Socialist view on basic questions of the day. Our regular features and discussions of news events will be back next week as usual.

PART I—THE SOCIALIST FIGHT AGAINST CAPITALISM IS THE POSITIVE ANSWER TO STALINISM

By GORDON HASKELL

In the United States today, it takes very little intelligence and no courage at all to be "against Stalinism." Outside of the tiny American Stalinist movement and the narrow little circle of its non-party apologists, *everyone* is against it.

Cynical ward-healers, running for some petty local office, seek votes on the ground that they know how to "fight Communism." Tens of billions of dollars are appropriated for the armed forces in the name of "fighting Communism." Both major political parties seek to gain control of the machinery of the American government by claiming that each knows how to "fight Communism" better than the other. The whole of American foreign policy, no matter which party is in power, is oriented around the objective of "fighting Communism."

Not only is "everyone" for fighting Stalinism, but just about every public policy, however far-fetched it may appear to be, seeks justification on the grounds that through it the struggle against Stalinism can be carried on most effectively. People who favor giving milk to school children at public expense are apt to claim that this will keep them from becoming "Communists." Those who oppose free milk programs claim that government "intervention" in this field is one step on the road to "statism," and hence to "Communism."

The government has poured billions of dollars into the creation of the H-bomb on the grounds that this weapon is needed to "stop Communism." Most liberals (to say nothing of all witchhunting reactionaries and most conservatives) agree that members of Stalinist organizations should be kept out of jobs as teachers (regardless of how competent they may be in their subjects) as a way of "fighting Communism." And the United States has entered a military alliance with such reactionary police regimes as Franco's Spain and Chiang Kai-shek's Formosa on the ground that this is necessary in order to defeat Stalinism.

It would take too much space even to attempt to list all the things which have been advocated and done in the name of "fighting Communism." Here in the United States, two methods have been most widely and persistently employed.

Witchhunting Methods

One of them has been to identify, or "root out" individual Stalinists, or people suspected of being Stalinists or of associating with Stalinists, and then get them fired from their jobs or persecuted in other ways. The other method has been to put the known leaders of the Communist Party on trial under the Smith Act, and to send them to jail. (The nature of the struggle against Stalinism conducted by the American government in the field of world politics is discussed in another part of this special issue.)

It cannot be denied that both these methods have dealt heavy blows to the small Stalinist movement in this country. Many people have undoubtedly been driven from its ranks by fear of all kinds of legal and illegal reprisals, and some who might otherwise have joined them have been scared away for the same reasons.

The American Communist Party, which at one time had between sixty and one hundred thousand members, and several hundred thousand sympathizers or members of front organizations, has now been reduced to between ten and twenty thousand members of the CP, and an extremely narrow band of innocents who are helping them to one degree or another.

So, one might say, the methods used to fight Stalinism in this country have "worked" pretty well. The trouble is that they have worked so well that they have killed off, or are threatening to kill off, far more than the little Stalinist movement here. It is very much like burning down a house to get rid of the rats in the cellar. It would get rid of the rats, all right, but...

But what house has been burned down? What institutions, rights or privileges of the American people have been shrunk, withered and blistered by the methods used in the struggle against Stalinism?

The whole political atmosphere in the country has



been poisoned by the methods of the witchhunt. Under the guise of "fighting Stalinism" every progressive institution and idea has come under attack.

Today, hundreds of thousands—yes, millions—of people are afraid to read not only Stalinist but also socialist and liberal periodicals and newspapers. Teachers are afraid to discuss vital social issues like race equality, socialized medicine, public housing, social control of our vital national resources, and the like. People are afraid to sign petitions for the redress of grievances, or to put minority parties on the ballot. People are afraid to join organizations for fear that it may later turn out that some Stalinist or alleged Stalinist may also be a member, and that they may have to answer some day for this "association" with such a person.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has been turned into a political police tending toward the model of the old Czarist *Okhrana*. FBI agents are sent into all kinds of liberal and radical organizations and into the trade unions to keep an eye on what people are doing there. People who belong to such organizations, or who have dropped out of them for personal reasons, are badgered by the FBI to turn informers, to report the conversations and activities of their associates.

Every right-wing reactionary and even crackpot organization is given free license to spy on and "root out" Stalinists, liberals and socialists in all spheres of public life. As a result, people are blacklisted from their chosen occupations on the basis of the flimsiest evidence, or no evidence at all. They have no legal recourse by which to establish their "innocence," as no formal or legal action has been taken against them.

The house of civil liberties in this country has not been burned down yet, but the flames are licking at the walls.

Just a "Conspiracy"?

Not long ago we witnessed the spectacle of a former Democratic president of the United States being accused by a Republican attorney general of having consciously promoted Stalinist agents to high posts in the government. The "accused," however, was the same man who, as president, had instituted the so-called federal loyalty program under which his own attorney general had been instructed to prepare and issue a "list of subversive organizations," for guidance to government officials in deciding who should be fired from or kept out of public jobs.

This list had been drawn up without hearings, without notification to the organizations listed, and without any method provided by which they could legally contest their listing and prove themselves innocent of whatever charges the attorney general may have against them.

But, it may be argued, what is wrong in all this is not the purpose, or even the methods used. What is wrong is that bad or irresponsible men have got hold of the machinery of "anti-Communism" and are abusing their powers. After all, Stalinism is a "conspiracy," and must be dealt with accordingly. We must see to it that only honest and well-meaning people are put into positions of power, for we know that all methods and institutions can be abused or misused by bad men.

Hard Core and the Dupes

This description of Stalinism flatly as a "conspiracy" is the theoretical basis of everything which is wrong with the struggle against Stalinism in the United States. Once it is accepted as the dominant or most important characteristic, let alone as the totality of Stalinism, every abuse of civil liberties, every repression, every attack on socialists and liberals and trade unionists under the guise of "fighting Communism," can be justified, at least in principle. For it is evident that if what we are fighting is a vast, invisible, all-enveloping and all-penetrating conspiracy, then *everyone* is suspect insofar as such a conspiracy may be expected to put on a million disguises, and among them even the mask of its own most outspoken enemies.

The truth of the matter is that conspiracy, espionage, infiltration is just one aspect of Stalinism, and a minor one at that. Stalinism is a world political and social movement which attracts millions of people to its banners on the basis of its political program. It is also a world movement which has won power in Russia and China, and has imposed the rule of the new Stalinist ruling class it has created on the peoples of the satellite countries.

It is true that its apparatus of espionage and infiltration in countries it does not control is greatly aided by its nature as a social movement. But at the same time, it becomes a serious, a dangerous social and political force only where it has come to power, or where millions of men and women accept its leadership and join its organizations because they are convinced that these offer them the best chance of gaining freedom, democracy and a decent standard of living for themselves.

The hard core of the Stalinist parties, to be sure, know that their movement is neither free nor democratic. They are quite willing to use every kind of political skulduggery to confess, exhaust and defeat those who stand in their way. They will espouse popular causes today, betray them tomorrow, and champion them again the day after. They will betray and destroy their most loyal adherents, and even whole sections of their movement if this serves the purpose of their real masters in Russia.

But their success, their hope of victory in any one country or in the world at large, lies in their ability to convince masses of people that they, rather than their enemies, are the real representatives of humanity's aspirations for freedom, democracy, peace, and an end to human exploitation and degradation.

The Capitalist Mind

It is precisely this most important aspect of the world Stalinist movement which leaves its capitalist opponents so helpless before it. Many of them recognize it, dimly, but they cannot make the necessary connection between this recognition and their actual, concrete struggle against Stalinism.

In speeches and books many a liberal opponent of Stalinism has pointed out that it gains support because the workers and peasants in Europe and Asia are sick of a social and economic system which provides vast riches for a few and leaves the great majority in terrible poverty and degradation. They urge and plead with the American government to do something to alleviate these conditions. They are for an expanded "Point

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PART II

THE RUSSIAN STALINIST SOCIAL SYSTEM

By MAX SHACHTMAN

It is impossible to discuss any important political problem of our time, let alone take a part in resolving it, without a clear understanding of what Stalinism really signifies.

It is just as impossible to get such an understanding from the writings and speeches of capitalists, their statesmen, politicians, hangers-on, apologists, or any other beneficiaries of their rule. They are quite capable of describing the notorious vices of Stalinism. Its true social significance, however, escapes them, and so also therefore does the simple secret of combating it effectively.

For the very first task to perform is to ascertain the relations between capitalism and Stalinism, and that is precisely what they are prevented from doing by their own social interests and prejudices.

You can write it down as an iron law of politics today: Whoever does not know what are the real relationships between the social system of capitalism and the social system of Stalinism, may be ever so intelligent in fields like physics or art or investment banking or logistics, but in the most important field of politics today he is an ignoramus.

And whoever knows something about these relationships, but refuses to make them the rock foundation on which to base and build his political ideas and actions, may be ever so fine a family man, so tender a poet, so graceful a writer and so eloquent an orator, but in this field of politics he is either a convinced muddlehead, a phrase-drunken emotionalist or a plain demagogue.

The Old Order Is Passing

The first thing to grasp about Stalinism is that world capitalism is at the end of its rope. It shows all the classical signs of decay and disintegration in addition to those special signs which are its own distinctive contribution.

With the hugest productive machine ever imagined for the creation of social wealth, it has nevertheless instilled in the entire population over which it holds sway a profound and amply warranted sense of insecurity. Everybody realizes that whatever economic prosperity there is, or seems to be, is based upon the unparalleled economic destruction produced by the wars of today or by the organized economic waste of the periods of war preparations. The very preparation for war requires that a crushing economic burden be kept upon the shoulders of society, above all on those shoulders least able to carry the burden. Yet practically everybody realizes that if world capitalism were to disarm on Monday (assuming the possibility of such a utopia), or even to reduce its armaments drastically, it would be done for on Tuesday.

An even worse showing is made by capitalism in the actual wars themselves. When it was going through its rising phase, wars had a distinctly positive meaning for capitalism. Now, its wars are economically pointless, politically pointless; they do not solve a single important problem and they cannot solve any.

The Second World War showed that ten times more clearly than did the First World War. The war in

Korea only underscored the same point. The war of French imperialism in Indochina is the latest underscoring of the point. Capitalism, in general and in its national-state form, cannot have any encouraging perspective in war; and yet it cannot avoid preparing for them and precipitating them.

The growth and expansion which younger capitalism experienced in the rise of its imperialist power has not only come to an end but is actually going through a reversed process. A hundred years ago and even fifty years ago, world capitalism was adding tremendous new natural resources and vast hordes of new slaves to its domain in the conquest of countries in the so-called colonial world. It battered and fattened on these grisly conquests. The tide is running the other way now.

Can Capitalism Survive?

The old imperialist world of capitalism is shrinking and it will never again be expanded—never. One part of it has fallen under the dominion of Stalinism. Another part of it has won its way to political independence and the end of its colonial status. The remaining part is in a state of permanent warfare against the old imperialist powers which drains them heavily without the old compensations of colonial rule. The capitalist world has shrunk drastically and its prospects have shrunk even more.

All this is reflected both in the thinking of the capitalist class and that of the working classes. In the former, there is a pronounced and even catastrophic decline of the old self-confidence. In the United States, one political or intellectual leader after another now repeats, as if it were an incontestable truth, that they face a "fight for survival"; and not a soul has yet been found to reject that ominous formula.

Drowning men fight for survival; dangerously diseased and weakened men fight for survival; imminently bankrupt firms fight for survival. So it is with social systems. The phrase is the panic-stricken, desperate outcry of a social order on the brink of disaster, and it is not by chance that it is so widely and unquestioningly accepted.

And if that is the unwittingly revealed state of mind of the ruling classes of the United States, where capitalism still has some appearance of strength and good health, it requires no great effort to judge the state of mind of the ruling classes in the older, frankly decrepit countries of capitalism which could not exist for five minutes without the financial and military upshoring provided by Washington.

In the working classes, there is a corresponding and much more conscious loss of confidence in capitalism and capitalist imperialism. With the exception of the United States, there is not a single popular movement anywhere in the world that proclaims its allegiance to capitalism or imperialism. The most that capitalism in general—and its last bastion, the United States, in particular—can expect from the masses nowadays is not support but irritated tolerance, as a lesser evil compared with the otherwise universal anger, disillusionment, bitterness, hostility and open warfare directed against it on every continent of the globe.

No Solution

To say that capitalism is at the end of its rope is only another way of saying that it is more and more incapable of solving the important problems of society, especially as these problems reach the stage of acute crisis. It is well to emphasize here: when we speak of capitalism solving a social problem it should be self-evident that we mean solving the problem on a capitalist basis. Capitalism was never able to solve a social problem on any other basis. But the point is that where it was able to solve such problems on that basis in the past, it is less and less capable of solving them even on that basis today.

It is precisely such a decay of capitalism that was not only foreseen by the founders of modern socialism but was regarded by them as the precondition and the eve of the socialist reorganization of society by the working-class movement. They did not and could not foretell all the forms and manifestations of this inevitable disintegration of capitalism, and they did not try to; but they did indicate the main lines along which it would develop, and in doing so they amply forewarned and forearmed us.

The first great world-wide crisis of capitalism broke out toward the end of the First World War. The masses throughout Europe rebelled against the futile imperial-

ist slaughter and their fists hammered at every wall of European capitalism. The wall fell only in Russia, and only in Russia did the socialist working class take power and start to lay the foundations of a new, rational, brotherly social order. In the rest of Europe the walls of capitalism held, mainly due to the sturdy and criminal support which the besieged ruling classes received from the conservative Social-Democratic Party leaderships. They saved capitalism; they prevented the working class from carrying out its great revolutionary mission in good time. In addition, the victorious Russian Revolution was allowed to suffocate to death for lack of the oxygen of the revolution in the advanced Western countries, which was indispensable to its life and growth.

Second Step

The effect which the victorious lifting of the revolutionary siege in the West had upon the Russian Revolution, in dooming it to isolation and therefore to death, was not the one which was generally expected. And it is right here that we are able to take a second big step toward an understanding of Stalinism.

It was assumed by everybody—not only by the Bolsheviks of those days but by all their critics and enemies—that if the socialist Soviet regime were to fall (for one reason or another), it would be replaced by a capitalist regime. Whether it would be a democratic capitalism or a despotic-militarist capitalism was widely argued; but that only a capitalist regime would succeed to a fallen Soviet regime was agreed upon by everybody.

Everybody turned out to be wrong. The socialist Soviet state was undermined and destroyed, root and branch; but it was not replaced by capitalism. What had happened?

That which was assumed by everybody implied—took for granted without more penetrating thought—the existence of a viable capitalist class inside Russia which could replace the Russian working class at the head of the nation and which could proceed to a solution of the nation's problems on a capitalist basis; or it implied, at least, the existence of a capitalist class outside of Russia strong enough, single-willed enough and otherwise sufficiently able, to take the place of the Russian proletariat. The assumption was an abstraction; in real life it proved false and disorienting.

It turned out that inside of Russia there simply was no capitalist class in existence and outside of Russia a Russian capitalist class existed only as a joke. It turned out that inside of Russia there were only capitalist middle-class elements in town and country, strong enough to exact concessions from the Soviet state, strong enough to harass and threaten it, strong enough to be of tremendous help in finally destroying it, but by no means strong enough to take power in the country.

Deadlock

Outside of Russia, it turned out that the foreign capitalist classes, which had at one time unsuccessfully tried by force and arms and corruption to overturn the young Soviet government, could never thereafter manage to get together enough unity of purpose among themselves, unity of military effort, and freedom from working-class and liberal opposition and restraints in their own countries, to try to impose their own capitalist rule over Russia. (In fact, as we saw in 1941, even when Hitlerite Germany made such an attempt, not against a Soviet regime but against a Stalinist regime in Russia, the rest of the capitalist world not only did not come to his aid but helped decisively, as a Russian ally, to fight him off. And as we see today, even with its powerful financial lash, the United States is unable to overcome the mutual antagonisms in the capitalist world, to the point where it can be effectively united against the Stalinists.)

The capitalist solution to the social problems of Russia was thereby rendered practically impossible, despite the theory which assumed its inevitability.

With that, the sector of world society known as Russia stood before an apparently insoluble dilemma.

The united efforts of the world proletariat would have been more than enough to solve the social problems of Russia on a socialist basis; indeed, the united efforts of the proletariat of a few advanced countries of Europe would have sufficed for that; Lenin used to go so far as to say, compactly, that "Russia plus Germany equals socialism." But since Germany and Western Europe in general were prevented from becoming the industrially-advanced "plus," the Russian proletariat was left to its own resources. And they were not enough to provide a socialist solution.

The result was at first a sort of chaotic stagnation in Russia. Capitalism could not be restored; but neither could socialism be established. By stagnation we mean the condition where Russia could not go forward to socialism nor yet backward to capitalism. By chaos we mean the consequent dissatisfaction, resentment, uncertainty, helplessness of all the traditional classes, the repeated but unavailing efforts of each to impose its historic program upon the other.

Into the Vacuum

Such a situation is unendurable to society, especially in modern times when the simplest aspects of life are so intricately and extensively dependent upon the most complex aspects, and all of them are inescapably and often decisively influenced by state policy. When a social crisis develops, it must be resolved by radical means, in one sense or another, by one social force or another.

And where such a social force does not exist, society does not long brook the vacuum; it brings into being the social force that is capable of ending the social crisis in its own way.

The social force that brought the crisis of the Russian Revolution to an end (even though, in the very

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The New Exploitive System: Bureaucratic Collectivism . . .

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course of doing so, it sowed the seeds of another crisis (of a different type) was the new Stalinist bureaucracy which has ruled Russia for about a quarter of a century.

If the crisis in Russia had to be summed up in a single word, the best one that could probably be found would be: modernization. Russia could not be modernized on a capitalist basis and in a capitalist way for the good and simple reason that there was no capitalist class in existence to do that job. The reason why it could not be modernized in a socialist way and on a socialist basis has already been indicated—the enforced isolation of the revolution.

Russia was modernized nevertheless, and built into the second power in the world today, without going back to capitalism or going ahead to socialism. The new Stalinist bureaucracy developed into a new ruling class and the social regime it established became a new society of class exploitation and oppression.

Out of what has the new ruling class come? Out of remnants and segments of older classes: bureaucrats who had risen out of the working class or out of the peasantry without rising (or being able to rise) into the capitalist class; technical and professional personnel whose privileged position is imperiled by a revolutionary and therefore equalitarian working class but which at the same time cannot be assured by the capitalist class or its contemporary property relations. They constitute a distinctive ruling class in every important sense of the term.

The Bureaucratic Ruling Class

They have a common mode of life that distinguishes them from the working classes; they constitute a basic element in the Stalinist mode of production, that is, they organize and maintain the process of production; they determine, as Marx would put it, the conditions of production; they are, as a distinctive social grouping, the first and the principal beneficiaries of the process of production since their social position enables them to determine the distribution of the surplus product with far fewer restraints than the ruling class suffers under capitalism; they are the exclusive owners of the full machinery of the state, which exists solely for the purpose of preserving their monopolistic social power; and since the state, under Stalinism, owns all the means of production and distribution, the Stalinist ruling class, by virtue of its exclusive possession of this state power, enjoys a general and super-concentrated social power over the population such as no ruling class has ever known in the last thousand years.

Socialists have always thought in terms of the working class establishing its own state power in order to centralize all the main means of production and exchange into its hands. They still think so and rightly. But they think of this centralization not for the sake of centralization, this nationalization not for the sake of nationalization, but because it puts into the hands of the new democratic regime the vast and mighty economic instrument which is indispensable to carrying out the task of fusing political democracy with economic democracy into the new concept of social democracy. The performance of that task is the next great step in mankind's progress to emancipation.

But where all the economic power is centralized in the hands of the state, and the state is monopolized by a despotic, self-perpetuating minority, it therewith acquires an unprecedented power of oppression and exploitation. This new ruler has no private property in the sense of the capitalist, the feudal lord or the slaveowner. His "private property" exists in a new form—the state. He owns it collectively, along with the other privileged members of his social grouping. But because it places in his hands all the economic as well as the political power in the country, at one and the same time, and because he is forced to direct this power against the masses, against their interests, and against their aspirations—otherwise his privileges would not last a minute—we have, not socialism and not even a "socialist type" of state, but, as we call it, totalitarian or bureaucratic collectivism, a regime of modern barbarism, modern slavery, permanent police terror and super-exploitation, the regime of the permanent denial of all democratic rights and institutions to the masses, a regime in which all political and economic rights are openly and exclusively in the hands of the ruling class, which is the distinctive hallmark of Stalinism.

How Stalinism Expands

This new social force reduced a great nation—and more than one nation—to slavery; its destruction and waste of productive forces, of the precious creative forces of society, have been colossal and not one whit less than capitalism in its worst abominations; it represents a social order which is in a state of permanent crisis; and, as the most relentless, conscious, consistent, thoroughgoing repressor of the working class and revolutionary movements, it constitutes the mightiest and most effective forces for reaction in the world today.

All this is true and true twice over. But it should not blind us to the fact that Stalinism rose to solve a social crisis, in its own way, which other existing social forces could not or would not solve in the way that is appropriate to them.

This basic interpretation of its character is corroborated by the development of Stalinism outside of Russia. The cause was the isolation of the Russian Revolution; the effect was the victory of Stalinism. But effect in turn becomes a cause, and this has certainly been the case with Stalinism.

Its victory has weakened world capitalism; but at the same time it has brought such demoralization and disorientation and paralysis into the working-class movement all over the world as to weaken and undermine its socialist struggle against capitalism.

The power of Stalinism has consequently been extended beyond anything that anyone may have dreamed twenty-five years ago. And wherever this has happened, the tell-tale relationship between capitalism and Stalinism has been revealed again and underlined again.

Most revealing and emphatic in recent times has been the development in China.

Chinese Stalinism

There are now all sorts of confusionists, romanticists and even theoreticians who argue that the Chinese Stalinists are not really Stalinists, that they really did carry out a sort of socialist and democratic revolution, and that in any case they are developing away from "typical Stalinism" and toward genuine socialism. The truth is that the Chinese Stalinists are, if anything, the most chemically pure example of the basic social type, and not at all a welcome deviation from it.

Mao, Chou and Co. did not even pretend to be a proletarian socialist party, as Stalin & Co. did. Mao's movement did not even arise out of the industrial—that is, the proletarian—centers of China. The working class never played any role, either in Mao's party or in Mao's military exploits against Chiang Kai-shek's regime. While the Stalinists were making their successful march southward to complete victory over China, there was not a single industrial center where the working class rose in revolution to "supplement" Mao's triumph.

The Chinese Stalinists—unlike the Russian or, let us say, the Czech Stalinists—at no time really based themselves on working-class organizations, and the "trade unions" they now have are as worthy of that name as are the speed-up machines that go by that name in Russia or the late Hitlerite Labor Front. The Stalinists won their domination of China without the working class of that country, against that working class and behind its back. A fine "socialist" revolution! A fine socialism that will lead to!

As for the other point of the confusionists, who are little more than independent apologists for Stalinism, they forget that if the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy rose as the police-oppressor of the nation because of the economic backwardness of the country (as they say, and rightly), how can they expect the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy to develop as anything but a trebly-brutal police-oppressor of a nation that suffers from twenty times the economic backwardness of Russia?

What They Can't Understand

Let us leave that aside now, for the important matter here is that the Stalinists did triumph in China and thereby opened up a new page of cardinal importance in world politics.

A proletarian socialist movement did not exist in China, except in the form of tiny, unimportant groups (whose existence the Stalinists have been cutting down with the same animal savagery displayed by the GPU) which were not in a position to provide a democratic and socialist solution to the problems of China.

The bourgeoisie? Both the Chinese and the international bourgeoisie proved incapable of solving the Chinese problems on a capitalist or imperialist basis. They supported the arch-corrupt, arch-impotent regime of Chiang Kai-shek. What other regime was there for them to support or even to encourage? (People who refuse to learn that capitalism and capitalist imperialism are

in their death agony are still looking for another alternative to Chiang whom the Chinese or at least the American bourgeoisie can support. They will for sure wear themselves to death without finding one.)

The Stalinists triumphed in China not because the Russian army intervened to put them in power, and not because Chiang was "betrayed" by Roosevelt, Truman, Acheson, Marshall or anyone else, but because they filled the vacuum created by the inability of capitalism to solve the protracted crisis in China and the absence of a working-class movement armed with a socialist program for solving the crisis.

It should be clearer now why the professional supporters of capitalism are incapable of analyzing and understanding Stalinism. Such an understanding implies a thoroughgoing indictment of capitalism which is unacceptable to those who are wedded economically or intellectually to this moribund social order.

Such an understanding implies that the fight against Stalinism is not a fight against socialism in any sense of the word, since Stalinism is one of the cruelest punishments that could be visited upon a people that has failed to fight for socialism.

Such an understanding implies that precisely because Stalinism has expanded its power over the world the fight against it must be redoubled; but that the fight against it cannot be conducted in alliance with—let alone in support of—the very capitalist order whose decay produces it.

The Real Race

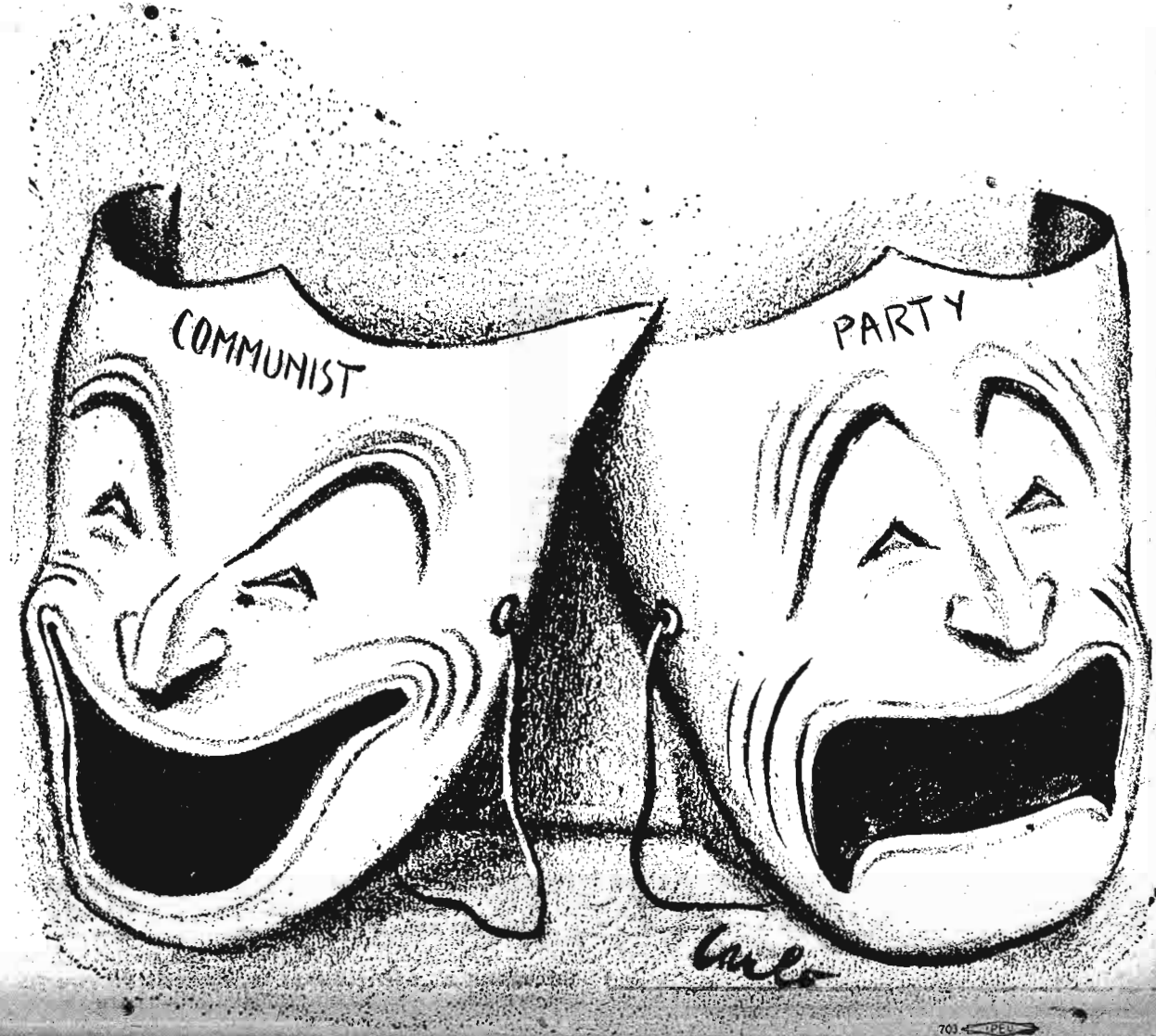
It implies that the fight against Stalinism can be effective and consonant with the interests of progressing mankind only if it is at the same time a fight against capitalism.

It is only in this sense that both the durability and the nature of Stalinism will eventually receive its final determination. And in this sense—it is the only fundamental one—the race is not between capitalism and Stalinism, as seems so overwhelmingly to be the case at the moment. If it is understood that Stalinism has risen because of the failure of socialism to replace the dying capitalist order, the real race is for the society that is to succeed capitalism: the fall into a new barbarism which Stalinism stands for, or the rise to socialist freedom.

In that race, the real one of our epoch, our basic confidence in the outcome has never been changed and it need not be. The vicious circle of capitalism-vs.-Stalinism is constantly being broken and in time will be altogether destroyed. Not all those who are repelled by Stalinism are passing into the camp of capitalism; not all those who turn away from capitalism become the victims of Stalinism.

In hundreds of ways, obscure to the superficial eye, unseen by the panic-stricken and the fatalistically resigned, but evident to those who always seek to probe beneath the surface of events, the idea of independence from capitalism as well as from Stalinism and of struggle against both, asserts itself among the toiling masses, those natural bearers of democracy and socialism.

To make this idea the conscious, directly-expressed and deliberately-acted-upon program of the masses, is the only worthwhile task of socialism and the advanced section of the labor movement today.



PART III

THE NATURE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

What kind of organization and movement is the Communist Party?

We know that in the countries where Stalinism is in power, it is the "state party," the ruling institution of the regime, the instrument through which the bureaucracy holds together the reins of totalitarian power. But what is the Communist Party in countries where capitalism still rules and it is in opposition?

The CP, particularly in the latter countries, is widely looked on as a "working-class party," even by many anti-Stalinists, even though they may attack it as a workers' party with a wrong, or excessively "leftist," or suicidal policy. There have been radical movements that have even viewed it as a fundamentally reformist, pro-capitalist party, because of the various services that it has performed in certain periods for capitalist governments when these governments were allied with Russia.

In our view, both of these opposite opinions are not only wide of the mark but miss the essence of the distinctively new character of the Stalinist movement.

It is true that the CPs have, in the course of their function as auxiliary agencies of the Russian foreign office, done their all to support capitalist regimes where this service has jibed with conjunctural interests of Moscow. But class instinct, plus experience has taught every bourgeois that the support of the Stalinist parties in the capitalist countries are for lease, but not for sale.

So long as a given capitalist regime is the ally of Russia, the Stalinists are leased for service to that regime. They then appear to act as arch-patriots. They vie with the bourgeois parties in nationalism and chauvinism. They catch up with and outstrip the reactionary labor leaders in urging workers to accept the most onerous conditions of labor with docility. In general, they acted in that abominable manner which distinguished them from ordinary scoundrels in the U. S. and Britain during the period of the "Grand Alliance" in World War II.

Through Different Eyes

But this lend-leased servant is unreliable in two respects from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie. In the first place, in the very course of pretending to serve, he infiltrates and undermines the institutions of the bourgeoisie. And in the second place, the terms of the lease are not under the control of the bourgeoisie and can be altered or destroyed unilaterally by the Russian state, that is, by the real employers and owner of the Stalinist parties.

To the revolutionary socialist, the triumph of Stalinism means primarily and above all the crushing of the working class, the crushing of all proletarian and revolutionary movements, the triumph of a new totali-

MORE ON STALINISM

For the best analysis of the historical development of Stalinism and the nature of its social system, see *The New Course by Trotsky and The Struggle for the New Course by Shachtman*, both bound in one book (\$1.50).

The Shachtman-Browder debate on "Is Russia a Socialist Community?" was published in the *New Internationalist* for May-June 1950.

The ISL's basic resolution on the nature of the Russian state appeared in the *NI* for October 1941 (no longer available, but can be obtained in libraries).

The 1949 ISL resolution on "Capitalism, Stalinism and the War" was published in the *NI* for April 1949.

For a fundamental discussion of the problems of analyzing Stalinist society, see "Is Russia a Workers' State?" by Max Shachtman in the *NI* for Jan.-Feb. 1952.

"Four Portraits of Stalinism" by Max Shachtman (*NI*, Dec. 1949 issue to Sept.-Oct. 1950 issue) is mainly a discussion of the theory that Stalinism flows from Bolshevism, through reviews of books by Shub, Wolfe and others.

Part III, on the nature of the Communist Parties, is adapted from two articles, one by H. W. Benson, and one by Max Shachtman (from the *New Internationalist* of September 1949).

tarian despotism. To us, accordingly, every increase in the strength of the Stalinists in the working-class movement means another step toward that triumph which is a catastrophe for the movement.

The standpoint of the bourgeois is necessarily different. The triumph of Stalinism means primarily and above all the crushing of the bourgeoisie and all its social power. That is his standpoint! That is why he can and does, with genuine concern and sincerity, regard Stalinism as the "same thing," at bottom, as Bolshevism, as the proletarian revolution, as socialism. From his standpoint, it makes no difference whatsoever whether he is expropriated by the authentic socialist revolution in Russia under Bolshevik leadership, which brought the working class to power—or he is expropriated by the reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy in Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia which has brought the working class into a totalitarian prison.

Not the "Left Wing"

To the working class, there is all the difference in the world between the two; to the bourgeoisie, there is none. That is why the bourgeoisie expresses a deep and honest class feeling when it characterizes Stalinism as "left" in substantially the same way that it once characterized the Bolshevik Revolution and its partisans. From its class standpoint, the designation is understandable, it makes good sense. Likewise understandable is the political attitude which corresponds to this designation.

But that designation (and what is far more important, the political attitude that corresponds to it) does not make good sense from the class standpoint of the proletariat. It is totally false from the standpoint of the fight for its immediate and its historical interests—the fight for socialism. In this fight, Stalinism is no less the enemy of the working class than capitalism and the bourgeoisie. Indeed, inside the working class and its movement, Stalinism is the greater and more dangerous of the two.

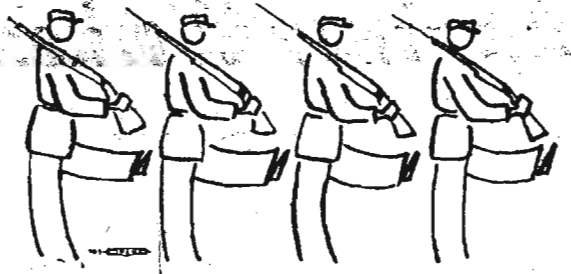
The Stalinists very cleverly exploit the attacks made upon them by the bourgeoisie to enlist the support of those workers and revolutionists who, while opposed in general to Stalinism, are not less hostile toward the bourgeoisie. But it is an absurdity, where it is not suicidal, to react to every bourgeois attack or criticism of the Stalinists by rallying automatically to their support. Trotsky writes somewhere that any imbecile could become a revolutionary genius if proletarian policy required nothing more than learning what the bourgeoisie wants or does, and then simply doing the opposite. This very well applies, in the matter of the policy to follow toward Stalinism, to more than one anti-bourgeois imbecile (just as it applies, in the matter of the policy to follow toward the bourgeoisie, to more than one anti-Stalinist imbecile).

The first task, then, of all militants in the proletarian movement who understand the end of combatting Stalinism, is to rid themselves of all traces of the conception that Stalinism, in some way, in some degree, represents a "left wing." It is not a proletarian or socialist conception, despite the respectable (and fatal) status it enjoys in the proletarian and socialist movement. It is a bourgeois conception, well-suited to the bourgeoisie, its standpoint and its interests, but utterly disorienting the working class.

Not "Reformists"

We will not have advanced far enough, however, if, in abandoning the notion that Stalinism is in any sense an authentic part of the left wing of the working class, we adopt the notion that it belongs in the right wing.

The right wing of the labor movement, classically and contemporaneously, is its conservative wing, its reformist wing. It is that section of the working-class movement that stands closest to bourgeois democracy, that practises economic and political collaboration with



the bourgeoisie, that confines itself to modest (increasingly modest) reforms of capitalism. That being the fundamental feature of the right wing, it should be clear that Stalinism is fundamentally different from any of the reformist currents and bureaucracies we know of in the labor movement.

None of the old designations—"right," "left," "centrist"—applies to Stalinism. Stalinism is a phenomenon sui generis, unique and without precedent in the working class. The fact that it is supported by tens of thousands of workers who are passionately devoted to the cause of socialism, who are ready to fight for it to their dying breath, is besides the point entirely. This fact is of importance only with regard to the forms of the agitation and propaganda work to be conducted among them. It does not decide the character of Stalinism itself. That is determined by the real program and the real leadership of the Stalinist movement, and not by the sentiments of those it dupes.

Alien to Working Class

What, then, is Stalinism? Our formula is not very compact, but it will have to stand until a more elegant one can be found:

Stalinism is a reactionary, totalitarian, anti-bourgeois and anti-proletarian current IN the labor movement but not OF the labor movement. It is the unforeseen but nonetheless real product of that advanced stage of the decay of capitalism in which the socialist proletariat itself has as yet failed to carry out the reconstruction of society on rational foundations. It is the social punishment inflicted on the bourgeoisie for living beyond its historical time and on the proletariat for not living up to its historical task. It is the new barbarism which the great Marxist teachers saw as the only possible alternative to socialism.

Stalinism is a current IN but not OF the working class and its movement, we repeat. The importance of the distinction is far-reaching. It demands emphasis not in spite of the prejudices and dogmas about Stalinism that exist in the revolutionary movement, but precisely because they exist. It underlines the unbridgability of the gulf between Stalinism and ALL sections of the labor movement. And by "ALL sections" is simply meant, without diplomacy or equivocation, all of them—from the left wing to the right wing.

Stalinism is not a working-class movement with a wrong, or even very bad, policy. It is alien to the working-class movement. Fundamentally (and that means: apart from the subjective intentions or hopes of so many Stalinist dupes) it represents the interests of a different class—the bureaucratic ruling class of the Russian Empire.

Twists and Turns

The Communist Parties first came into being as a quite different type of movement, in the upsurge of revolutionary struggle that followed the end of the First World War, especially under the impact of the Russian Revolution. In its early revolutionary years, the Communist International was the sole rallying center for all the workers who wished to have done with the timid, compromising and anti-revolutionary role of the "pink" social-democrats, who had discredited themselves by chauvinist support to their warring imperialist governments.

But in step with the Stalinist counter-revolution in Russia, which destroyed the conquests of the revolution, so also there took place a gutting of the Communist Parties which transformed them into agencies of the Russian counter-revolution.

The Communist Parties became, not left-socialist parties representing the interests of the working class in their countries, but totalitarianized tools of the reactionary social class climbing to power in Russia.

Their policies uniformly became erratic, subject to rapid oscillation between apparently contradictory positions. But they were not at all inexplicable. Each turn in policy was dictated by the momentary needs of the Stalinist regime in Moscow, above all by the needs of its foreign policy.

Nowhere was this made clearer than in Germany, where the Communist Party's hands were tied by its

(Continued next page)



Are They Workers' Parties? Are They 'Left-Wing?' . . .

(Continued from preceding page)

Stalinist policy in the face of the extermination of the organized working class by Hitlerism.

In the years before Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, the Stalinist regime feared its diplomatic isolation in world politics. It witnessed a growing rapprochement among the capitalist powers that had been at war in 1914-18 and it dreaded an attempt by them to settle their mutual antagonisms at the expense of Russia.

It assigned to the docile Stalinized Communist Parties of every country the task of manipulating the working-class, pushing it into blind-alley struggles, not to achieve the genuine aims of the proletariat but merely to disrupt those of the capitalist enemies of Russia.

This was the notorious "Third Period" of Stalinism.

The Third Period

Its official ideology divided all the world of politics into two simple camps: the Communists, on the one side, and fascists on the other. Whoever and whatever opposed the CP was "fascist": social-fascists, left-social-fascists, trade-union fascists, Hitler-fascists, democratic-fascists. It was the duty of the Communist Parties uncompromisingly to lead the masses against every variety of "fascism" in this final period of struggle for the inevitable overthrow of capitalism and defeat of capitalist war.

But all its radical verbiage was a political façade decorating its real aims.

In Germany, conservative bourgeois regimes alternated in power, with the support or tolerance of the Social-Democratic Party, the majority party of the German working-class. With the crisis of 1929, the Nazi party began to grow in mass proportions. The stronger it grew, feeding upon the hopelessness and misery of the German middle classes, the more the Social-Democracy clung to its moderate bourgeois allies as the "lesser evil." And the more Social-Democracy took responsibility for the regime, the stronger grew the Nazi party, capitalizing upon the resentment of the non-proletarian masses against the main party of the working class.

The Communist Party increased in strength but far more slowly than the Nazis, whose vote increased by the millions and whose electoral representation rose to first rank until normal parliamentary life became utterly impossible and unstable governments died like a succession of May flies. The Nazis, whose program called openly for the setting up of a totalitarian state and the extermination of all workers' organizations, were on the threshold of power, power which they succeeded in grasping in 1933.

Method and Madness

The danger imperatively called for a unified program of defense of the existence of the labor movement, and for the preparation of serious struggle for the defense of democracy. But the Communist Party viewed the scene with political equanimity.

The Social-Democrats were fascists, their official line told them. In fact, they were worse than the Nazis, just as a concealed enemy is worse than an open one. The CP convinced its supporters that the socialists were the main enemy and consoled them with the thought that a Hitler victory would destroy Social-Democracy and thus wipe out the main barrier to "proletarian" victory. It repudiated and rejected the road of united-front struggle with the socialist party against fascism.

This was madness from the standpoint of the working class but totally comprehensible from the Stalinist view.

Social-Democracy, like all reformist socialist parties of its day, hoped and prayed that capitalism would get back on its feet. Economic recovery would cut the ground from under Nazism and restore the conditions of normal day-to-day eking-out of gradual improve-

ments whose sum total some day might be socialism. But German economic recovery, they estimated along with moderate bourgeois parties, was possible only if the victorious powers of World War I would grant prostrated Germany a far-reaching program of economic and political concessions. They hoped to reach just such an agreement with the Western powers.

But it was just such an alliance which the Stalinists were eager to disrupt. Social-Democracy had to be destroyed. Better a Hitler who might turn against the West. When he came to power, the CP prepared no resistance. After Hitler's victory, Stalin gingerly proffered the hand of agreement but Hitler then rebuffed it.

The "Third Period," of course, was duly executed in the United States too. The CP excoriated the New-Deal "fascism" of Roosevelt, which was eternally preparing for war against Russia. It denounced the AFL as "company-owned-fascism" and organized its own tiny "revolutionary" unions to carry on the uncompromising struggle against 57 varieties of American "fascism."

From the People's Front—

But this was all dumped in 1935.

By that time, France, first among the Western powers, was becoming alarmed by the growing power of resurgent German imperialism, and Russia sought to reach an understanding with it. The Franco-Soviet pact of mutual military assistance against German attack was signed and Stalin announced that he "understood and approved" France's need for rearmament. No Communist Party required any less subtle hint.

The period of People's Front was fabricated. The "social-fascists" of yesterday were now transformed into great guardians of peace and democracy. The world was divided now into the camp of Peace-loving Powers allied with Russia, plus Peace-lovers who favored such an alliance, and Nazi warmongers who opposed it.

Communist Parties which yesterday voted with scorn against any and all military budgets of "imperialism" now demanded with fanatical zeal that everyone grant military credits to the Peace-lovers. The answer to world problems was the "collective security" of all Peace-loving Powers (allied with Russia, of course) against Germany. And inside every nation, Communists were to join in a "People's Front" with those whom they had denounced as fascists the day before.

In the United States Roosevelt, yesterday a fascist, became the great leader of the Popular Front, and now his critics became "fascists." Yesterday, all for the "revolution"; now, as in France and Spain in 1936-7, where socialist workers rose in mass demonstrations or even civil war, the Communist Parties were zealous in suppressing them.

—To the Hitler-Stalin Pact

The socialist revolution must not be allowed to interfere with the "People's Front" of agreement with capitalists (even with fascists if possible) nor to irritate the Western capitalist allies of Russia. And the People's Front for "democracy" was so popular that thousands of Stalinist-influenced liberals overlooked the Moscow Trials which entrenched totalitarianism in Russia.

But the world of Peace-lovers, kind democrats and well-intentioned anti-fascists was shocked by the next turn of Stalinist policy. It was the announcement of the Hitler-Stalin Pact.

Faced by a now-powerful Germany, rearming and menacing, France and England tried to stave off attack by appeasement. At Munich, Czechoslovakia was turned over to German imperialism. For the Stalinists, this marked the end of collective security and People's Front. If the Western allies intended to make a deal with Hitler, Stalin would beat them to it.

In 1939, while CPs everywhere were still lyricizing the People's Front against fascism, Russia and Germany reached an agreement for the partition of Poland



between them. Molotov, for the Stalinists, explained that now, "fascism is a matter of taste." The Stalinist Parties all fell in line.

It mattered not that they had just been appealing for a world-wide front of democratic powers against Germany. Russia and Germany were now friends; the war against Germany was denounced as an imperialist war for the benefit of capitalists; England and France were excoriated as warmongers for rejecting Hitler's early peace maneuvers that accompanied his shattering military victories. Months before, the workers had been instructed to restrain themselves lest they antagonize the bourgeois friends of Russia, but now was the time for "militant" strikes and demonstrations under the watchword of "Down with the imperialist war!"

Pro-War Frenzy

But not for long. In 1941, Germany invaded Russia. The Stalinists abruptly found themselves in the camp of the warmongers. Warmongers? Not at all. It was time for a new turn.

Miraculously, the war of the Allied powers became transformed from a reactionary imperialist adventure into a great people's war for liberation at precisely that second when the armies of Hitler Germany crossed into Russian territory. Everything else soon followed.

The CPs became the most chauvinist of all fake patriots. They demanded that all unions pledge not to strike for any reason at any time. They called for the restoration of piecemeal in industries where it had been abolished only after years of union struggle. They expelled workers from unions under their control for not working fast enough.

They denounced the "March on Washington" movement for Negro rights as a disruption of national unity. They advised colonial peoples, subjects of Russia's allies, to abandon their struggle for national independence. And thus they persisted until the war came to an end.

With the defeat of Germany and Japan, the former allies parceled out control of the world among themselves, but their mutual antagonisms were irreconcilable. The cold war between the former allies began. Who is to dominate the world, capitalism or Stalinism? That was the issue that divided them and which could not be bridged. To a man, Stalinist parties the world over fitted their new line to the new needs of Russian policy.

Not one turn in Communist Party policy can be explained as an attempt to carry out a pro-working-class program. Every turn, on the other hand, has been clearly motivated by one unchanging objective: to serve the needs of the reactionary ruling class that holds power in Russia.

Our Mortal Enemy

The world Communist Parties have functioned as agents of Russian foreign policy because they are the movements of the class that holds power in Russia. But they are not simply agents of Russian Stalinism.

Communist Party leaders and bureaucrats in each country pursue the Russian line not merely because they are eager to strengthen Russian Stalinism. By advancing the interests of the ruling class which has its seat in the Kremlin, they hope to further their own pretensions to becoming a ruling class in the Stalinist image.

The Stalinist social system is no longer confined to Russia. Within the Stalinist empire and within the Stalinist world, native CP groups strive to further their own aspirations along Stalinist lines, to rule and exploit the masses of their own nation with the same methods and with the same social system as proved so effective in Russia. These impulses toward national-Stalinism are irrepressible.

In Yugoslavia, the national Communist Party was driven to break with Russia and declare its independence of Russian Stalinism while maintaining its own dictatorial regime, basically totalitarian and Stalinist in the most scientific sense of the term. In the East European satellites, where such dreams of independence have never been crowned with success, they can be kept in check by the Russian masters only by intermittent purges within the Stalinist movement itself, mixed with concessions.

Stalinism is a world-wide movement to overthrow the capitalist system by replacing it with a new social system of exploitation, replacing the old ruling capitalist class with a new totalitarian bureaucracy. Socialism and Stalinism are mortal enemies.

Have You Read the Other Pamphlet-Issues?

- No. 1—The Principles and Program of Independent Socialism.
- No. 2—Independent Socialism and War.
- No. 3—The Fair Deal: A Socialist Analysis.
- No. 4—Socialism and Democracy.

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No. 1, 2 and 4 also contain important analyses of Stalinism in connection with the subject discussed.



PART IV

STALINIST IMPERIALISM AND THE WAR CRISIS

By HAL DRAPER

There is a paradox—only an apparent one—in the development of Stalinist imperialism.

Stalinism arose out of the counter-revolution in Russia under the slogan of building "socialism in one country" as against the perspective of "world revolution" represented by the Bolshevik left wing under Trotsky. An historic internal struggle took place within the party under these different banners, in which, as everybody knows, the Stalinist wing won out. To the Stalinists, the theory of "socialism in one country" which they put forward meant: Let's keep our eyes fixed on our problems at home; let's not worry about extending our influence or winning support abroad; that is a will o' the wisp; we want only to build our economic and social strength within our own borders and to hell with conditions outside of it. And (as Stalin put it later): We don't want an inch of anyone else's territory but let the capitalist countries keep their snout out of our Soviet garden. . . .

The fierce drive of Stalinist expansionism that blossomed especially after the Second World War seemed like a sharp reversal of this home-bound ideology. To many of the latter-day "Russian experts" (the numbers of whom also blossomed after the war) this new policy seemed like the adoption by Stalin of the Trotskyist "world-revolutionary" perspective.

For were they not militantly pressing their power beyond their own borders? Weren't they doing what Trotsky had demanded, only in their own way and so much more effectively? So it was said not only by the "authoritative" bourgeois commentators but even by the disoriented "official-Trotskyists" of the Fourth International, who have drifted in the direction of pro-Stalinism.

The Russian-Nationalist Virus

But the new post-war Stalinist imperialist expansionism was not a break with, but a logical development and continuation out of, the theory of "socialism in one country"; and by the same token it was still the antithesis of a working-class revolutionary policy.

For that famous dispute of the Stalin-Trotsky struggle was never really based on the mostly-academic question of whether it was actually possible to "build socialism" within the borders of a single country (and a backward one at that). This was mainly the ideological form that the clash took between the social forces of the counter-revolution and the movement which stood for the liberating ideas of the 1917 revolution.

Behind it was a tendency much easier to understand: it represented the turn-away of Stalinism from internationalism to a Russian national-chauvinist outlook. Russia-First, they said, and the usefulness of the Communist Parties and pro-Soviet sympathizers abroad was to be gauged by the extent to which their activities contributed to strengthening Russia; for since this Russia was "socialist," strengthening Russia meant strengthening this "socialism." Thus the interests of the world's workers were to be subordinated to the national interests of the "one country" where socialism was being "built."

It is this conception which is the fundamental link between the early Stalinism of the counter-revolution and the Stalinist imperialism of the present day. We have seen in the course of our generation two related truths exemplified: that in trying to build something called "socialism" on the ruins of workers' democracy and all democracy, the Stalinists in actuality built a new system of exploitation which is the enemy of socialism; and in trying to build "socialism" on a national-chauvinist basis, they likewise built a new exploitive system which today has all the features of a virulent imperialism.

In its internal aspects, the crushing of democracy in order to build "socialism in one country" led to a process of bureaucratization which has flowered into

chauvinist ideology of the Stalinists led to imperialism, once this reactionary regime was strong enough to assert itself as a competitor for world power.

"Imperialism"? There is a point here which has to be cleared up for many people. For this new oppressive and exploitive class society which developed in Stalinist Russia is not based on a capitalist form of exploitation, as another part of this issue explains. Well then, isn't it true that modern imperialism is an outgrowth of the drives of capitalism? Wasn't it Lenin who defined imperialism as a stage of capitalism? Isn't one of the fundamental drives of modern imperialism, for example, the need of capitalist economies to export their surplus capital; and where do you see this as an economic basis of what we call Russian imperialism?

Is It "Imperialism"?

If it were not for the widespread character of this "deduction" from a formal acquaintance with Marxist writings on imperialism, it would not even be worthwhile mentioning. For it is a useless play on words. For people who need quotations, the same Lenin who spoke of imperialism as a stage of capitalism also time and again referred (like all other educated people) to the imperialism of the pre-capitalist societies, the Roman empire for instance. Capitalism is not the only social system which has given birth to its peculiar form of imperialism; on the contrary, there was such a thing as imperialism based on the ancient slave-states, as well as the type of imperialism which developed under feudalism. Lenin was analyzing the specific imperialism of the then-dominant social system, capitalism, and laying bare how it generated its own need to mobilize the nation-state for the conquest and domination and exploitation of peoples abroad.

The imperialism of Stalinist Russia is not the capitalist imperialism which Lenin brilliantly analyzed in a famous work; but that is simply saying that Stalinist Russia is not capitalist, and that we already know.

But in many cases, when objection is made to even using the term "imperialism" in connection with Stalinism (by Fritz Sternberg, for example, and others), there is more than word-juggling or ignorance behind it. There is a political idea involved which suggests to them their otherwise-sterile play on words. They are often willing to speak of Russian "expansionism," but "imperialism" no. The thought that is often behind this fine distinction is the following: Moscow may indeed be following an expansionist-adventurist policy, deplorably, and this is a bad thing; but this policy which is being followed by the men in the Kremlin is simply a POLICY of bad or mistaken men, and is not rooted in the "Soviet" social system; it is not inherent in the economy, which must be considered "progressive" because it is not capitalist; it is simply a more-or-less accidental excrescence of the system, or a very temporary and dispensable stage of it, or the fortuitous result of Stalin the man's personal predilections, etc. It is only under capitalism that imperialism is ROOTED in the social system as such; under Stalinism it is something that wiser rulers will dispense with, especially if capitalism ceases to threaten the country. . . .

This notion of such an important difference between capitalist imperialism on the one hand and of Russian imperialism on the other is a notable stock-in-trade of Stalinoids the world over, but not only of Stalinoids! All of the powerful "neutralist" currents of Europe and Asia — anti-Stalinist elements included — are shot through with it, including even the Bevanites of England. It represents a very dangerous illusion about Stalinism even among many of its would-be opponents, who succumb to its lies.

The Economic Root

Well then, how is Stalinist imperialism rooted in its exploitive social system?

First of all, there is an important though simple generalization to be made about the connection between imperialism and a social system, any social system. It is true, as we said, that each class society (ancient slavery, feudalism, capitalism) has had its specific drives to imperialism; but there is obviously something common to all of these imperialisms too, with regard to societal origin.

That which is common to the root of all imperialism, in spite of vast differences in the social system, is this: The ruling class is driven by inexorable necessity to foreign conquest, exploitation and looting in one form or another in order to make up for the inevitable de-

that system is by its gangrenous contradictions; the exploiters of the society are pushed in this direction as a matter of life-and-death for their system because of their inability to create a harmonious economy capable of satisfying the needs of the people and, most especially, capable of solving the fatal diseases which arise out of the system of exploitation itself. For every class society generates its own self-poisons, which, as they accumulate, threaten to bring down the whole economic structure, unless a transfusion of fresh blood is obtained; and it is in the cards that a ruling class will be impelled to seek this new supply of economic blood in the squeezing of wider and wider circles of people, first inside its own borders (where the process is perhaps easiest or the victims at least more accessible) and then outside.

Now, designedly this presents very generally the economic root of imperialism in all class societies which have been known, but it is enough to raise the basic question about the roots of Stalinist imperialism.

Rosy Illusion

Only those can see Stalinist imperialism as merely a regrettable excrescence, which is not inherent in the system, which is unrooted, who also see in the Stalinist system itself the basis for (at least an eventual) harmonious and progressive development of the forces of production and social relations; that is, who see no inherent deficiencies and contradictions which imperialism has to compensate for; that is, who look on the Stalinist system as being genuinely on the road to socialism in some real sense; that is, in short, who regard the Stalinist system as genuinely socialist in nature, even if still pockmarked with defects.

This view of Stalinist imperialism as a dispensable policy of bad men in the Kremlin is tied up with a basic illusion about the whole nature of the Stalinist economy: *Since the economy is state-owned and planned, there are no limits to its possible increase in productive level. . . . Since it is not rent by the contradictions of capitalism which Karl Marx expounded in Capital, there is no inherent bar to the attainment of such a level of wealth that plenty-for-all becomes possible at last. . . . Since here is a society, whatever its other distasteful features, which is not held back from economic advance by [capitalist-type] crises, it is possible for increasing productivity to lead to the abolition of the bureaucratic dictatorship which was necessary for a time in order to attain this wonderful aim; the bureaucratic distortions of this "socialism" will be able to disappear, etc. . . .* Such is the illusion.

Basic Contradiction

It is bound up with the rosy view that this Stalinist regime will be—indeed, must be—reformed from above, democratized from above, if only the present rulers are not kept scared to death by outside opponents. This is the basis for the pro-Stalinism of a man like Isaac Deutscher, on the theoretical side, and of anti-Stalinists like Aneurin Bevan, on the less-than-theoretical side.

This whole structure very largely depends on the overwhelming demonstration that this Stalinist system is not beset by the contradictions that bedevil capitalism—and sure enough that is true, just as capitalism is not being strangled by the poisons which put the Roman Empire to death. The contradictions of Stalinism are of its own kind.

At bottom what the Stalinist illusion ignores is the fundamental contradiction peculiar to a completely statified economy under the rule of an uncontrolled bureaucratic master class: the contradiction between (1) the absolute need of the economy to be PLANNED, since in a statified economy only the Plan can perform the role in the society which under capitalism is the function of the market and market relations; and (2) the impossibility of workably planning a modern complex society from the top down under conditions of bureaucratic totalitarianism.

It is this contradiction between Planning and Totalitarianism which is the most basic factor in making for chaos and anarchy in the Russian economy, enormous inherent wastes and inefficiencies, which are in part compensated for by the gigantic expenditure of human labor in the slave camps as well as in the mercilessly driven factories—and which was also in part compensated for by the wholesale looting of the conquered territories of East Europe after the war, a looting which still goes on in forms of exploitation subtler than open rapine.

Motive Drives

This opens a much broader subject than the limited topic of this article,* but enough has been said to indicate the line of analysis which we propose for one's thinking on this matter. When one asks the question, "What are the roots of imperialism in the Stalinist social system?" one is really asking the question: "What are the inherent contradictions of Stalinist bureaucratic collectivism which lead to its downfall?"

In a more immediate way, then, the motive drives of Stalinist imperialism stem from the need of this fiercely exploitive system, which drives its own workers like cattle, to plug the gaping holes in its economic and social armor.

Of course, certain drives it shares with its rival imperialisms on the capitalist side: the impulsion to corner raw materials, especially raw materials for war

(Continued next page)

*For a valuable insight into the "mechanics" of the contradiction between planning and totalitarianism in the Stalinist world, see "The Contradiction of Stalinist 'Planned' Economy: A Case Study" in LABOR ACTION for June 1, 1953. (The case is that of Czechoslovakia.) For descriptive material bearing on the same subject, see Lavinski's book *How Strong Is Russia?* and the article on Russian business management in *Foreign Affairs* for February, 1953.

The Russian Empire and the Third-Camp Struggle . . .

(Continued from preceding page)

industry; the usual imperialist need to grab "buffer" lands and military-strategic points of vantage; the need to grab territories if only to prevent others from grabbing them first, to use against oneself. All these come into play once an imperialist tug-of-war is under way, and in turn they intensify and sharpen the struggle.

One other drive is held in common in a sense: the Russian rulers' inherent inability to indefinitely continue to live in coexistence with a system where, in any way at all, a free labor movement exists just across a border. This is a permanent political danger to them. It cannot go on forever. As long as free labor exists in the world, there is a dynamite fuse extending from the outside to inside the Iron Curtain. But an analogous need exists also for the capitalist world: to get rid of this rival upstart system, which, in its own way, is a living threat to capitalism; which shows a whole social world living without capitalism—contrary to the professors who have conclusively proved time and again that capitalism is so rooted in human nature that even the pre-Neanderthal ape-ancestors of man lived under capitalism. . . .

Aims of Conquest

But of the drives more particular to the Stalinist system itself, the basic one is the need to exploit more and more labor on an ever-widening scale. The needs of this system have driven its ruling class into methods and forms of exploitation of the workers at home which are matched in brutality and violence by few pages in the history even of capitalism; and this same ravaging need drives it to the exploitation of peoples abroad. Just as within its own state, the ruling bureaucracy sucks its class privileges and revenue out of the surplus labor which it extracts from its slaves and semi-slaves, so also it needs more human laborers to milk; the more workers controlled, the more the surplus labor extracted, and the greater the wealth available both for the ruling class and for the state-girding-for-war.

Moreover, precisely because it is not a capitalist-type exploiting system, it has available a method of foreign exploitation which is excluded for capitalist imperialism: *direct looting of goods and products*. This phenomenon took place on a very large scale for a whole period in all the lands overrun by the Russian army after the Second World War: whole factories and their machinery were dismantled and moved bodily to Russia, etc. This would not make economic sense for the capitalist economies of the West, the U. S. for example, whose chronic problem under normal circumstances is a surplus of production which gluts the market if not disposable through the purchasing power of the masses. The chronic problem of capitalism is not how to get production up, but what to do with the products if it gets too high up!—and Stalinist bureaucratic collectivism suffers from no such embarrassment. Therefore, its capacity for direct looting and robbery of production wholesale.

Thirdly, it is worth mentioning also that, in a social system which dispenses bureaucratic privileges as the reward for its ruling class and aspirants thereto, imperialism creates a wider base for bureaucratic posts, an extension of the numerical basis of the "atoms" of the ruling class through the bureaucratic structures in far-flung stations of an empire.

Struggle of Systems

And so this Stalinist world confronts its rival in the world, capitalism, not merely as a contender in an imperialist struggle but as a contender in a struggle of rival systems over which, if either, shall exploit the earth.

This is a distinctive feature of the present-day war crisis and its cold war which is decisively *new*, as compared with the First and Second World Wars which were fought primarily between imperialist rivals within the capitalist camp. An analogous situation has not obtained since the days long ago when the armies of Napoleon, born out of the Great French (bourgeois) Revolution swept over Europe in combat with a feudal continent. But two great differences exist today as against that historic conjuncture:

(1) In those days one of the camps, objectively represented the interests of a new and rising class, the bourgeoisie, which was then *progressive*, standing for the needs of society as a whole to throw off the shackles of serfdom in favor of the social system, which was destined to raise the productive forces to the level required for further progress, for the development of the technological forces that could finally provide plenty for all and lay the economic groundwork for the classless socialist society.

This has now been done. The economic prerequisites for socialism exist.

Modern industry has reached the point where it is entirely feasible to put an end to all systems based on enforced scarcity, where man can produce an abundance of goods if industry is run for use and not for profit. The Stalinist tyranny is not a progressive alternative to the moribund system of capitalism, but a neo-barbaric relapse which feeds on the decay of capitalism as long as the working class has not unleashed its own forces to abolish it in favor of a real workers' democracy.

(2) In those days when the rising bourgeoisie stood arrayed against the old order, there was not yet any

other social class fully developed which offered a force for effective social leadership as against the two locked in conflict. Today the working class offers the social alternative, the third corner of the triangle of forces that the picture presents. It has the need and the power to build its own world, and it faces only intensified oppression and misery from the continuation of either the Stalinist or capitalist orders.

In this struggle of the two war blocs today, we socialists are enemies of both camps of exploiters and imperialists. That is the basic fact about our "Third Camp" policy.

No Appeasement!

In a previous special pamphlet-issue on Socialism and War, we have analyzed in some detail the bases of our opposition to capitalist war and its policies today. But our opposition to capitalism does not drive us into support of the monstrous alternative represented by Stalinist totalitarianism or into illusions about it. That way lies no exit, no hope, no livable future.

We say that Stalinism must be crushed, defeated, overthrown everywhere before the working class can achieve its democratic socialist future. We are not for conciliation with it, or appeasement of it. We do not share in one iota the common "neutralist" notion that



the interests of peace and democracy can be served by trying to convince the rival camps to live in "harmony"; we know that "peaceful coexistence" of these dog-eat-dog exploiters is a mirage; we do not take a stand that is "in-between" them.

Stalinism must be crushed! But it is an integral part of our indictment of capitalism that this CANNOT be done by the capitalist world in any progressive way or with any progressive consequences. The Western bloc can possibly defeat the Russian power in a military Armageddon, if indeed victory and defeat will retain any meaning in World War III even for the imperialists, but this can be done only at the expense of the downslide of a militarized, bureaucratized capitalism itself toward the same type of tyranny of which Moscow represents the acme today.

This degenerate capitalism of our world today is the very ground on which Stalinism feeds. If Stalinism is a dynamic force in much of the world, it is because—and only insofar as—it can take advantage of the justified hatred which millioned masses feel for the system which has exploited them so long, and which they refuse to support against a demagogic Stalinist appeal which at least seems to offer something different.

As long as, and in proportion that, the enemies of Stalinism base themselves on support of the capitalist alternative, Stalinism is bound to grow strong and stronger.

The "Secret" of Stalinism

Wherever Stalinism can pose as primarily the enemy of capitalism (which it is in truth, in its own interests), and not as an equal and even more deadly enemy of the working class and the masses who aspire to freedom, it can ride the revolutionary energies that capitalism's crimes have unleashed in the world. This is the "secret" of its strength and its dynamic appeal.

This is why it still can count on the active or apathetic support of millions in France and Italy and other West European countries; on millions among the colonial masses of Asia; on strategic points of support in U. S. imperialism's backyard, Latin America. This is why the Western capitalist statesmen are at the end of their rope in Indochina, where they are fighting in the name of French colonialism against a Stalinist-controlled Vietnam which is able to clothe itself in the garb of a national-liberation movement. This is why Korea was a trap for thousands of American dead.

Being anti-capitalist in reality, in the sense that it stands for a rival system of oppression and exploitation, Stalinism can hope to and seek to use a disoriented working class wherever it finds one, as its battering

ram against the old system. Where the U. S. can find only the most discredited of reactionaries and tyrants to be its semi-reliable allies—a butcher like Chiang Kai-shek or Syngman Rhee, fascists like Hitler's friend Franco or the neo-Nazis who flood the administration of its pet German, Chancellor Adenauer—the Stalinists are not tied to the old discredited classes and cliques in the countries of the Near or Far East, or in Europe. They can stage the act of offering a fundamental social transformation to throw out the landlords who oppress the peasant masses, whereas the U. S., bound by its capitalist status-quo ideology, cannot even find a demagogic word to say.

No one who stands for, or who is suspected of standing for, the retention of mastery by the capitalist imperialism—even if he apologetically explains that he supports the capitalist bloc only because it is a "lesser evil"—can hope to stem the expansionist dynamic of Stalinism.

Forward from Revolt

That is why we look to the gathering of the forces of the "Third Camp"—those who wish to fight in the name of an independent struggle against both camps of exploiters—as the only road to defeat both war and Stalinism, both the old and the new imperialism.

But that works the other way too. Wherever it is Stalinism that has established itself as the master, where it has already overthrown capitalism and had time to show its own hand, its own cloven foot, there the revolt against the bureaucratic-collectivist despotism grows fast. But the masses who turn against Stalinist power in disillusionment do not want to go back; they want to go forward. The most dramatic proof of this was given in the great June 1953 revolt of the East German workers, in their heroic first assault against the Eastern conqueror. No pro-West or pro-U. S. or even pro-Adenauer slogans appeared among them; that on the one hand; and on the other, the representatives of the Western camp in Berlin showed themselves as leery of the aroused workers in revolt as the Stalinist masters.

Within the Stalinist empire, where it has consolidated itself, disaffection grows. Only a primitive stage was represented by "Titoism," where a satellite regime turned *national-Stalinist*—that is, rebelled against Moscow domination as foreign oppression while retaining the forms and social content of the same system, totalitarian bureaucratic collectivism. "Titoism" in various forms shook the Russian empire, and we naturally cheer it on to do so; but it is not this nationalist (anti-Moscow) form of the same system which represents the future for us.

The Revolutionary Goal

The next stage of the revolt within the Stalinist empire is augured by the masses' aspiration for freedom against their new bureaucratic magnates who have replaced the capitalists as rulers, the revolt prefigured by the East German rising.

It is the revolt of the workers in the name of a democratic government which will overthrow the Stalinist horror. Revolt for democracy under Stalinism—what does it mean? In a completely statified society, where the means of production are already in the hands of the state (while the state is in the hands of a tyrannical bureaucratic class), the road to genuine socialism lies in winning the state power for the democratic rule of the people. In this kind of society, democracy is not merely a political form (as it is under capitalism at the best); it is the sole instrument whereby the workers can really build their own society, and convert the statified economy from the preserve of a privileged class to the foundations of socialism. Democracy is a *revolutionary* goal.

Capitalism cannot unleash the revolutionary energies of the people behind the Iron Curtain any more than it can do so with the colonial masses of Asia. That will take a struggle which offers an anti-capitalist alternative to these people who have had their bellyful of both the old system and the new tyranny, and this is a struggle which can blow the Stalinist power up from within.

We Have Allies

This is the "secret weapon" which can defeat Stalinism without plunging the world into a world slaughter to a bitter atomic end, to the greater glory of capitalism.

This is the political weapon which the Stalinists fear. It can be swung into action only by a consistent and fearless democratic foreign policy which has broken with the limitations imposed by capitalist class interests and alliances.

We are for the war against Stalinism to the death—not appeasement, deals, compromise or partitions of the world with it—but we are not for capitalism's war against Stalinism. Our allies are not Franco and Bao Dai, but our comrade-workers of the British Labor Party who are trying to find an independent road for their movement that stands against both war camps, and who are therefore smeared as "anti-American." Our allies are not Rhee or Chiang, but the lion-hearted East German workers in revolt. Our political blood-brothers are not the Stalinoid neutralists who want to appease Stalinism but the workers who want to find the way to fight both blocs. Our aim is not the peaceful coexistence of two varieties of exploiters but a socialist world where all peoples can be free.

Positive Answer to Stalinism

(Continued from page 1)

Four" program, for technical and economic aid to backward economies and the like.

But the capitalists in this country, who exercise a dominating weight in our national affairs, can see no real profit to be made from such measures. They feel much closer to the capitalists abroad than to the common people who are oppressed by them. Here at home they place their own private interests as businessmen above the interests of national policy, or rather, they shape national policy to conform to their own interests. They will not even permit the minor measure of lowering American tariffs so as to ease the economic situation of other countries, let alone accept high taxes to finance vast economic "give-away" programs abroad.

Right here at home, they know that the armament boom has done more to quiet the workers, and to reduce the appeal of Stalinism as well as of all other anti-capitalist theories and movements, than anything else. But they recognize that their own system has a fatal tendency towards depressions and crises and unemployment. They know, also, that such developments will give rise to social discontent and that the Stalinists will seek to take advantage of it to once more attract masses of people.

Police-State Trend

But as the CAUSE for such discontent lies at the root of their system, they cannot do anything about it. Hence they turn naturally and inevitably to methods of police repression as THE answer to Stalinism, THE way to combat it.

The capitalists all over the world have a built-in political peculiarity. This is the fact that they tend to prefer democracy as a method of social rule for themselves, but also that they are willing to abandon or destroy it if there is a serious danger that the masses of the people will put an end to their rule, their social system, even by the most democratic methods imaginable. They have demonstrated this amply in their suppression of democratic movements for colonial freedom, in their support of the Nazis in Germany and Fascists in Italy, and many other ways.

Hence, for them it is quite natural to turn to basically anti-democratic methods in fighting Stalinism. They seek justification for this in the fact that the Stalinists themselves are totalitarians and crush all democracy wherever they come to power. And some very prominent liberals in this country have provided a slick and all too specious argument for them by isolating the conspiratorial aspect of Stalinism and serving it up as its major and most important characteristic.

Of course, these liberals hope that in suppressing the Stalinist movement by police measures, no one else will be affected. They urge the government to maintain careful legal safeguards while moving against the Stalinists. They are horrified when liberals, democratic socialists, and other dissidents are lumped together with the Stalinists on the government's "subversive list," or when obviously harmless people are fired from their jobs because they were Stalinists at one time, or because they continued to "associate" with their fathers or wives who were Stalinists.

But their horror at the "abuses" of the witchhunt does not absolve them of responsibility for giving it theoretical justification, and for developing no alternative theory and practice for fighting Stalinism. Even a superficial understanding of the real social forces at work in our country should have warned them that once police repression of a political movement has been accepted as the method by which to fight it, this method will be extended by those who now have the real political power in their hands against all critics of their socio-economic system.

It Worked

We Independent Socialists approach the struggle against Stalinism from a completely different point of view. We have long been aware of its employment of infiltration, deception, lying and murder to achieve its ends, for these methods were first used against us and our comrades in all countries where the Stalinists sought to gain control of the Communist, socialist and labor movements as their stepping-stone to total political power. We and our comrades were fighting the Stalinists in the labor, student and other popular movements at a time when many of the present self-annointed "saviors from Communism" were in close political and military alliance with them.

But we must start with the understanding that none of these despicable methods would do the Stalinists any good if they did not also have a social program, a social appeal which brings millions of deluded but honest people into their camp. Thus the basic strategy of any progressive, democratic struggle against Stalinism must be not to "root out" and suppress individual Stalinists by police methods, but to expose their political program as the utter deception it is, and above all, to offer the masses a better political program in its place and fight for it determinedly.

One of the most striking examples of the effectiveness of this method was the fight waged by the Reuther caucus in the United Automobile Workers (CIO) from 1945 to 1947. At the beginning of this period, the union was run by a group of officers who were strongly under Stalinist influence. The Communist Party fraction was the most cohesive and well-organized group in the union. For sometime its policies were backed by many respected public spokesmen, and even by Philip Murray, the anti-Stalinist leader of the CIO.

The Reuther caucus was a loose coalition of anti-Stalinist union militants ranging from pure-and-simple trade-unionists to Independent Socialists. But the fundamental strategy of the then Reuther group was based on the idea that it had a better, more militant, more aggressive program for the union and the welfare of its members than did the Stalinists. Here is an author's summary of that fight:

"It [the Reuther group] had gambled on the idea that the Communist Party could be defeated in a trade union not by repression but by exposure; not by turning to reaction but by more consistent and aggressive militancy; not by shouting 'red' but by showing the totalitarian strings to which the CP danced; not by high-echelon maneuvering but by going to the rank and file to debate issues. And it had won."—Howe and Widick, *UAW and Walter Reuther*.

"Anti-Communism" Is No Program

The most important lesson of this experience was not simply that the Stalinists in the UAW-CIO were reduced to an insignificant, powerless and discredited remnant. That has been done in other unions by simply intimidating or throwing out every Stalinist or

suspected Stalinist from the organization (of course, the rest of the membership was cowed and intimidated along with the Stalinists, and in such unions democracy itself was wiped out along with the CP). The real achievement of the Reuther group was that during the time when it was fighting the Stalinists democracy, rank-and-file participation and the social and political education of the membership reached an all-time high in the union.

Hundreds of similar examples could be presented from the experiences of all kinds of movements and organizations. But in each of them the one essential element was this: the opponents of Stalinism were not just "anti-Communists." They had a social program which attracted the most militant, democratic and conscious people away from the Stalinists and to their own ranks. They deprived the Stalinists of their most powerful source of attraction, the appearance of being the ones who are most willing to struggle against the social evils which the mass of the people are against.

The experience of the British Labor Party is another example on a national scale. The end of the war left Britain exhausted and worn out economically. The workers in Britain are just as fed up with the inefficiency, social injustice and inequality of capitalism as are those in France or Italy.

But in Britain the Labor Party took its mission seriously. It was quite willing to strike at the vitals of British capitalism if this was needed to serve the interests of the workers and the mass of the people. In 1945 its mood was aggressive and militant, and its program was a flat declaration of the intention to nationalize immediately such industries as it thought needed it most. In office, it carried out much of its program, despite the hatred and abuse the Tories and the capitalists in general heaped upon it.

With such a movement leading the workers, the Stalinists could find no social soil in which to get a real foothold. They could not conceal their subservience to Russia and Russian imperialist interests under a cloak of militancy in behalf of the workers. As long as the Labor Party continues to represent the basic interests of the common people of Britain, the Stalinists will remain a tiny isolated political sect.

Learning the Lessons

In the first section of this article we have shown the damage done to democracy in our country by those who seek to repress Stalinism rather than to fight it politically. In the second section we have sought to demonstrate, by argument and example, that Stalinism can be fought successfully by those who offer a superior social program.

The choice between these methods, however, is not simply a matter of convenience (one is better than the other). In foreign affairs, it can mean the choice between a devastating and hopeless World War III on the one hand, and the defeat of Stalinism by undermining its social support all over the world on the other.

The issue of how to fight Stalinism is a central issue of our times, and the fate of civilization as we know it may well hinge on how many people learn the right answers soon enough, and how vigorously they act on them once they have learned them.

And here it must be emphasized that it is not just a question of how many individuals learn these lessons, but how the social classes absorb and react to them. For one thing is certain. The capitalist class in this country is incapable of learning the lesson, no matter how clearly it is presented and no matter how many disasters its governments' policies bring about.

For implicit in understanding the answer of how to defeat Stalinism by democratic means, how to wage the struggle against it by means which will enlist the mass of the peoples all over the world, is an understanding that capitalism has played out its role in history and now, in one way or another, must step off the stage and make way for another social system.

All over the world it is the poor, the exploited, the down-trodden workers and colonial masses who rally to the banners of Stalinism. In the end, this movement betrays them into a slavery which is even worse, if possible, than that from which they want to escape. But their determination to put an end to foreign colonial rule, to age-old systems of exploitation which have lost any elements of progress they may once have had—this urge is irrepresible and irresistible. And no one who seeks to maintain this system can win their confidence and support.

So, here in America too we turn to the labor movement, the workers, the students, the "common people." The armament boom has satisfied their most pressing immediate needs, and few of them today believe that our economic system needs to be replaced by a different one.

Democracy Can Win

But the disasters, one after another, which befall the foreign policy of their government, and the raging attack on civil liberties at home pressed with great determination by the most reactionary, labor-hating, anti-popular section of the Republican Party will make them stop and think here also. For the attack which has been directed primarily at the Stalinists is really meant, in the long run, for them.

The labor movement needs democracy if it is to maintain itself and broaden its gains. Without it, its status will be reduced to a "labor front," Hitler-model.

The students and teachers need freedom to learn, teach and think—without it their aspirations and functions will be reduced to repeating accepted formulas and shibboleths empty of meaning and devoid of the potentiality of progress. All the "little people" of the country need democracy, the right to organize themselves on behalf of their own interests against the overpowering strength of the great corporations and of the growing bureaucratized strength of the government itself.

If they struggle for this democracy, and if they use the methods of democracy in their struggle, they will be able to take the American Stalinist movement in their stride. And if they struggle for democracy, not only for themselves, but for their brothers in all lands, they will have sounded the death-knell of Stalinism on a world scale.

Thus, the basic strategy for defeating Stalinism is the struggle for democracy—political, social and economic. And to mean anything, that struggle must start here, at home, against those who are undermining democracy, even though they do it in the name of fighting Stalinism.

We of LABOR ACTION and the Independent Socialist League believe that the struggle for democracy in our time is inseparable from the struggle for socialism. It is to this struggle that we have dedicated all our efforts. To participate most effectively in the struggle against Stalinism, join our fight for socialism and democracy!

The ISL Program in Brief

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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