

**WORKERS OF THE WORLD
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the new International

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**FEBRUARY
1936**

AN ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

(With which is merged *Labor Action*)

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Victims of Stalinist Repression and Terror !

THE WALLS of Stalinism are beginning to crack in the strongest fortress—the Soviet Union.

Comrade Trotsky writes:

“The letters and documents recently published by comrades Tarov and Ciliga have served to stimulate highly the interest in the repressions of the Soviet bureaucracy against the revolutionary fighters. Eighteen years after the October revolution, at a time when, in accordance with the official doctrine, Socialism has conquered ‘finally and irrevocably’ in the U.S.S.R., revolutionists who are unwaveringly devoted to the cause of communism but who do not recognize the dogma of the infallibility of the Stalinist clique, are clapped into jail for years; incarcerated in concentration camps; compelled to do forced labor; subjected, if they attempt to resist, to physical torture; shot in the event of real or fictitious attempt to escape; or deliberately driven to suicide. When hundreds of the prisoners, in protest against the intolerable hounding, resort to the terrible means of a hunger strike, they are subjected to forced feeding, only in order to be placed later under even worse conditions. When individual revolutionists, finding no other means of protest, cut their veins, the G.P.U. agents, i.e., the agents of Stalin, ‘save’ the suicides only in order then to demonstrate with redoubled bestiality that there is no real salvation for them.”

For the first time since mass expulsions, imprisonment and exile of oppositionists began under Stalin in 1927, Bol-

shevik-Leninists have escaped from Siberia and made their way abroad.

For the first time the truth of conditions in the concentration camps, penitentiaries and solitary confinement cells has come to us from the mouths of the victims themselves.

And what a terrifying tale! Hundreds, thousands of the best Bolsheviks, whose names are inseparable from the Russian revolution, co-workers of Lenin, heroes of the civil war and the struggle against foreign intervention, cast into prison, tortured in a manner that would make the Inquisition blush for shame, exiled to barren Siberian territories, cut off from family, friends and the movement, their sentences interminably and indefinitely prolonged, many of them assassinated in cold blood.

And not Russian Bolshevik-Leninists alone. The dragnet of the G.P.U. and its supple agent, the C.I., reaches out into foreign countries where revolutionary critics are inticed to the Soviet Union ostensibly to “iron out differences”, thrown into jail with no means of release—prisoners for life.

Stalin has transformed the Soviet Union from a haven of refuge for revolutionists persecuted by capitalist reaction into a land where a rebel may enter only at peril of his life: for this alone he will go down into history as the worst enemy of the international working class.

Stalin and his clique have destroyed the party of Lenin, crushed the Soviets as organs for mass expression, buried

the trade unions as representatives of the workers' interests, and now he is engaged in the physical extermination of irreproachable revolutionists.

Yes, Stalin is destroying the Russian revolution, even as he has destroyed the Comintern as an instrument of proletarian revolution. For without revolutionists there can be no revolution. Lackeys, yes-men and courtiers have never made nor carried through a revolution. They will flee to their holes at the first shots of the class enemy. Men whose interests in the Soviet state is the fleshpot will cringe and betray when their skins are at stake.

But ideas cannot be killed by dungeons, torture and exile. The very intensity of the repressions and the bestiality of the treatment meted out to the Bolsheviks is a great testimony that the principles of Marx and Lenin are thriving in Russia. Their forces are growing, numbering probably in the tens of thousands.

Let the forces of the Fourth International take heart. Even as larger sections of the working class are finding their way against the social-patriotism of Stalinism into the camp of revolutionary struggle against war, so too in the Soviet Union a vast proletarian movement is arising to fight the Stalinist bureaucracy in its most entrenched stronghold.

Their power is invincible. Their victory inevitable. Let us aid them for their cause is ours. Together we will build the mighty international which will carry to triumph the great banner of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky!

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A BI-MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

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Does the A. F. of L. Face a Split?

IS THE American Federation of Labor facing a split? Prior to the Atlantic City convention, the posing of this question would have seemed ludicrous. After this memorable meeting there could be no doubt that the Federation of Gompers was shaken to its very foundation. Now, since the regular quarterly Executive Council's sessions, held at Miami, Florida, this question has moved into the realm of practical possibility. In this brief history is reflected a growing conflict, publicly identified by two powerful sections of leading trade union officials, but expressed in terms of the living dynamics of the movement, it has ramifications that not only embrace every local union in the country but affect most vitally the working class as a whole. In this brief history we find also expressed a series of events that have moved forward with a truly American speed.

Industrial unionism vs. craft unionism is the immediate issue in dispute. But the conflict in its real nature, as will be amply borne out by future events, reaches much deeper. However, this question of organization form is the focus of attention in the higher councils and it is becoming the axis of active struggle throughout the ranks of the organization.

At the Miami Executive Council meeting, the elders who make up its overwhelming majority, lashed out savagely against the Committee for Industrial Organization, headed by John L. Lewis. They manifested their fear of the dynamic forces that the industrial union issue may set into motion and at the outset they considered this committee a rival movement in embryo form. Its dissolution was demanded. Voices were raised in favor of suspension of the unions whose representatives make up this committee. "...There is a growing conviction," declared the Council's statement in terms even too moderate to suit the most conscious reactionaries, "that the activities of this Committee constitute a challenge to the supremacy of the American Federation of Labor and will ultimately become dual in purpose and character to the American Federation of Labor." Seventeen hundred delegates to the United Mine Workers Convention retaliated by voting authorization to the union officers to withdraw from the Federation whenever they deem such action necessary.

This is the official record to date, briefly stated—the surface manifestations of meetings and conventions. Standing alone these may serve only as a barometer registering the currents within the movement. From its zero point of stagnation, maintained over a period of years, the mercury is rising to indicate the coming storm. There would be no sense in speculating on the exact terms of a split in the A. F. of L. We need perhaps not be concerned about this question in the sense of an immediate probability. But it is important to remember that there are already many indications pointing in this direction.

The A. F. of L. is not a centralized organization. It is a purely voluntary federation of completely autonomous international unions. Although loose in its structure it could easily be held together, as long as these unions had common aims. In the elemental forms of the movement these aims have been generally accepted to be the organization of all tradesmen on a strictly craft union basis in order to protect the interests of each separate and distinct craft, and to secure by registration such measures favorable to

labor as can be obtained through parliamentary elections, by "rewarding labor's friends and punishing labor's enemies". The class struggle was given no recognition. However, the reality of the pursuit of these aims turned out to be different from the pious intentions. To politically conscious workers it has already become a well-established fact that this political policy resulted in a partnership between the bureaucratic craft union leaders and the capitalist politicians in control of governmental administrations. The purely and distinctly craft union organization, on the other hand, was unable to penetrate the great industrial plants and the stubborn insistence on paper jurisdictional claims rendered these unions utterly ineffective as weapons of struggle in any serious onslaught made by the big monopoly concerns. With the recent advances of modern industry, with the deep going changes in the national economic structure, particularly as the result of the crisis, and the subsequent changes in class relations, the purely craft form of organization has become one of the weakest links in the chain in the trade union movement. It is, therefore, at this point that the pressure for a change is now the greatest. Of course, this pressure grows wholly out of the needs of the masses and it receives its dynamic impetus from the visibly changed moods of the masses.

The present trade union officialdom, even in its higher strata, is not homogeneous. Where any doubt about this fact may have existed before it should be dispelled by taking a look at the movement today. Some of these officials are now responding more readily to this pressure of the masses than others. They are compelled to set out for new aims. To the extent that they gauge more accurately the present leftward developments among the rank and file workers and draw the necessary conclusion by advocating a progressive position, this is all to their credit. With the introduction of new aims, as is now the case in the fight for industrial unionism, the very feeble powers of cohesion of the American Federation of Labor are immediately apparent. The bonds of unity are slender indeed when no clearly defined class ideology prevails. And as could be expected the present profound conflict over forms of organization—the conflict of industrial unionism vs. craft unionism—tends to create an unbridgeable gulf between the two opposing forces. These two forces are bound to develop more fundamentally in opposite directions, as the two conflicting classes really begin to exert pressure by the kind of intervention that inevitably enters into a situation of struggle between progressive and reactionary currents.

Viewed in this light, it is clear that the present conflict in the A. F. of L. is certain to increase in intensity rather than to diminish. Today it has reached only an elementary stage; yet it is unprecedented in sharpness. It should not be difficult to understand, however, that the officials who are now in control of the A. F. of L. and who have chosen to function as labor lieutenants of capitalism in deeds, if not in words, will lean ever more toward the employers and toward the capitalist state for support in their efforts to stem a progressive tide. Green, Woll and Co. have made this amply clear in recent experiences. It is also well to remember that for them to maintain the craft union form of organization is not the major objective. In theory and practice they are conscious supporters of the capitalist system; therefore, they adhere strictly

to the policy of class collaboration. The craft union form of organization harmonizes with their conception of unionism. While it leaves the great mass of unskilled workers out of account and as a matter of fact makes a serious and effective organizational penetration of the mass production industries practically impossible, this corresponds very well to their policy of avoiding struggle with the employers. What could then be more natural than for them to seek, and also to find, support against the progressive movement from the employers?

The industrial union bloc, on the other hand, by raising the issue of industrial unionism, has already succeeded in setting considerable forces into motion. The encouragement given has found a magnificent response throughout the trade union movement. Indeed, the leaders of this bloc, Lewis, Howard and their official co workers, proclaim their loyalty to the capitalist system and its institutions as vociferously as do their present opponents. It appears that they make special efforts to prove themselves to be the better supporters of the Roosevelt régime. Nevertheless, the encouragement given by the very existence of this industrial union bloc to the idea of organizing the basic industries, is bound to lead to large scale struggles for organization more bitter than hitherto because these big monopoly concerns have shown no intention to yield or to compromise on this issue without a struggle. To face this struggle only a militant policy of organization will do. It is natural, therefore, that the leaders of the industrial union bloc will find it necessary to lean ever more toward these workers who are in motion, not only for support of the ideas they have advanced, but also for support in the conflict with their craft-union-conscious opponents.

It is in this sense that the two conflicting classes really begin active intervention and begin to exert serious pressure in the internal A. F. of L. conflict. The pressure comes from opposite sides and the two forces which find themselves in conflict in the A. F. of L. therefore develop in opposite directions. From the mere question of industrial unionism vs. craft unionism, important as this is, new questions and new issues from the fire of the class struggle enter in to deepen and broaden the conflict. The class struggle finds its reflection in the internal union struggles. From the purely narrow craft union movement the possibilities are opened up for a transition toward a class movement of the American workers.

From what is said above, even though I am compelled to speak directly about the leading officials who stand out as public initia-

tors, it should be clearly understood that the real forces in the present conflict in the A. F. of L. are the basic cadres of the movement. A struggle over monumental issues, as are now involved when considering it in its full implications, could, of course, not be confined to a few top leaders. Even should these leaders succeed in finding a compromise acceptable to them, the issues would remain. In this case a realization of the objectives set forth would receive a set-back, to be sure; it would be delayed. But the conflict in the top leadership reflects the conditions, the actual needs of the movement and the resistance to the fulfillment of these needs. The conflict is an outgrowth of these conditions and not the other way around. The pressure of the needs of the masses brought into being the movement for industrial unionism, and it brought into being the industrial union bloc. Let the official leaders who are publicly identified with the bloc fail, retreat or capitulate; but they will not be able to call off the movement.

As a hypothesis this is, of course, entirely correct; but it is not very likely that these leaders will be able to find a compromise in the coming period to settle the conflict within the official circles. Indeed, this is most unlikely when considering the forces that have already been set into motion, together with the fact that these two groups of officials must of necessity turn in opposite directions for their support. An actual split in the A. F. of L. would, of course, mean two rival movements struggling for supremacy. While this may not be an immediate probability it is only natural to expect a sharpening of the present conflict all along the line.

Historically the A. F. of L., as the representative of the American trade union movement, is at its crossroads. It must decide which way to turn. It still has before it the choice of adopting the necessary changes of organizational structure, of policies and of methods or forfeiting its claims to be the representative body of trade unionism. At the present moment the struggle for industrial unionism is of paramount importance. It must be carried through to the end regardless of the hostility of the reactionary and craft conscious officials. The struggle for this objective is now taking on the forms of a living movement. This movement holds out great hopes for the future. John L. Lewis and his associates have in this instance become the public initiators of the movement. However, it can become genuinely progressive only if the revolutionists take this movement as they find it to hand and apply their ideas toward guiding its practical development. Out of this will arise new possibilities of great magnitude.

Arne SWABECK

Just Wars in the Light of Marxism

WITHOUT AN afterthought the French Stalinists have thrown overboard all of their principles—which they maintained only in words, never really in their essence—and now openly proclaim their support of the military policy of the French government, the “defense of the fatherland”. That means: the defense of the brigand interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie. They “motivate” their stand for a *class truce* with the argument that a war conducted by French imperialism as an ally of the Soviet Union would not be an imperialist, a reactionary war, but rather a *just, a progressive war*. For this stand, the tragic heroes of the Third International invoke Marx and Lenin, who “always held the view that an international socialist cannot remain inactive on the sidelines of a just war, but must support it by all means whatsoever”.

As is the case with all skillful falsifications, the Stalinist deception of the French people consists precisely in the manner in which

they combine lies with truths, falsehoods with correct statements. They apply concepts valid for a *specific* epoch, for *specific* situations, for *specific* classes, to *other* epochs, to *other* situations, to *other* classes. Thus they make it difficult for the simple, honest workers, to whom such sleight-of-hand tricks are alien in their very nature, to penetrate the whole deception.

What is a “just” war in reality—that is, what do Marxists, not the imperialist brigands or their lackeys, mean when they use that term?

The expression “just war” in its application to the proletariat hails from the old Wilhelm Liebknecht, the father of our unforgettable Karl. Marx and Lenin, when they used the expression “just war”, meant a war in the *epoch of the bourgeois revolution*, that is, in the *nineteenth century*, conducted by an oppressed nation divided up among foreign states, against its oppressors with the aim of uniting itself into a single national state. Such a “just

war", for instance, was the war conducted by Cavour, the Italian "Bismark", for Italian independence. "Just wars" in this sense, were many of the wars conducted by the armies of the Great French Revolution at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. "Just wars" could also be used as a designation of the wars which aimed at the national unification of all the German principalities into a pan-German national state. For this aim—the creation of a pan-German democratic republic—Friedrich Engels, for instance, fought under arms in the Baden insurrection of 1849. In the middle of the nineteenth century, national wars of liberation against Napoleon III and the Russian Czar, who both sought to prevent the national unification of Germany, were "just wars".

That is how matters stood on the question of "just wars" in the epoch of the bourgeois revolution, the content of which, aside from the abolition of feudalism (the liberation of the peasants, etc.), consisted precisely in the *formation of great national states*. That was in the nineteenth century! Matters stand quite differently, however, with the question of "just wars" during the twentieth century, in the epoch of the *socialist* revolution. Its content is the *destruction of capitalism, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie*. That implies the overthrow (among others) also of the French imperialist bourgeoisie, which the Stalinists so demonstratively declare they will not *overthrow*, but *defend*.

How should Marxists (not Stalinists) approach the question whether a war is "just" or "unjust" in *our* epoch?

Lenin gave a clear answer to this question also, in his struggle against the forerunners of the Stalinists, the heroes of the Second International who, during the first imperialist world war, had transformed themselves into unconscionable lackeys of their national bourgeoisies.

We will therefore apply Lenin's teachings to the present concrete situation.

First of all: Every war is the continuation of politics by other (i.e., military) means. A just war is therefore the continuation of a *just* policy, a policy along the lines of *progress for all of human society*; a progressive war in contradistinction to a reactionary war. The character of a war conducted by a state must therefore be determined by Marxists according to the character of the policy of the *ruling class* in this state. The most reactionary class in the twentieth century is the bourgeoisie: in particular, the imperialist bourgeoisie based on finance-capital. The mortal enemy of all human progress in our epoch is *imperialism*, whether it be of the *as yet* "democratic" variety or of the more open and brutal Fascist variety. *The main representative of progress is the socialist proletariat of the Soviet Union together with the proletariat of the capitalist countries*; among the latter, particularly the proletariat of the highly industrialized states, i.e., the proletariat of the great imperialist brigand powers. Because of the mismanagement of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, the importance of the proletariat of the great imperialist powers in Europe and America has grown considerably beyond its rôle in the days of Lenin.

With this general compass of Marxist-Leninist knowledge—and not with the stupid, liberal formula of Litvinov—"Who fired the first shot?"—every Marxist must approach the question of whether a given, actual war is "just" or "unjust". From the reply to this question flows the tactic which an honest working class leader, one who has not sold out to his bourgeoisie, must pursue in the given war.

In the epoch of imperialism, Lenin distinguished the following types of "just", progressive wars:

I. *The civil war of the proletariat*. The civil war is also a war, the war of the oppressed classes against their exploiters and oppressors. The civil war, the continuation and the highest form

of the class struggle, is the most outstanding type of "just" war in the epoch of imperialism. The class struggle of the proletariat is a bitter, uninterrupted struggle, constantly changing in its forms and methods until it reaches the point of open war, carried on by the toiling masses against their *own* bourgeoisie and its instrument of power, the bourgeois state: that is, in its most decisive form, against the armed forces of the bourgeoisie. Stalin's command to his French underlings, transmitted through Stalin's ally, Monsieur Laval, "to support completely the policy of national defense adopted by France in order to maintain its armed forces on a par with its [imperialist!—E.W.] security" (Stalin-Laval *communiqué* of May 15, 1935), is nothing else than an intervention on the part of Stalin in the internal affairs of France *on the side of the imperialist bourgeoisie*. *It is nothing else than a stab in the back of the French proletariat fighting for its liberation*.

Messrs. Stalinists will reply to this: "But we combine our support of the military policy of France with the demand [!] for democracy in the army, for the removal of all its Fascist elements." How far Thorez, Cachin and Co. have departed from Marxism in so short a time! Have they "forgotten" that the bourgeois state remains an instrument of power in the hands of the capitalists, no matter how "democratic" or how "Fascist" it may be? Does the character of the imperialist plunder policy of the ruling class, of the bourgeoisie, change with the introduction of "democracy" into the army?

A Marxist also fights for democracy in the state apparatus and, therefore, in the army. He does so because, under the protection of democratic institutions, the proletariat can be better organized to undermine "national defense", for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the destruction of its state apparatus. A Marxist utilizes every crisis which hits the bourgeois state, for the achievement of his just goal, socialism. War constitutes one of the great crises of capitalism. The slogan for every Marxist in every one of the imperialist countries, in every war conducted by this country, must therefore be the Leninist slogan of *the transformation of the war into a civil war*. The Stalinists demand democracy in the army "in order to maintain, at the level required for their security"—the bourgeois state, its national defense, and its armed forces. The Stalinists declare demonstratively that they will oppose the utilization of the profound crisis created by the coming war for its transformation into civil war. Can a more dastardly betrayal of socialism, and a service more welcome to the bourgeoisie, be imagined?

Everything has its own logic. Where and when do the "interests of national defense" of an imperialist country begin and where do they end? The unobstructed development of industrial production as a whole, and of the "war industries" in particular is undoubtedly a prerequisite for "national defense"! Consequently, it is necessary for the Stalinist apostles of a class truce to promote class peace *even now, today*. And, to be sure. . . ! When powerful strikes broke out last summer in Brest and Toulon, against the will of the great "socialist" parties; when these strikes led to clashes with the armed forces of the state, the Stalinists, in cahoots with their colleagues of the so-called "People's Front", unmasked themselves as *strike-breakers* and denounced the fighting workers as "provocateurs". And an agricultural workers' strike? Will not such a strike impede the national defense of French imperialism? Not to mention a strike of the railroad workers! And what do the "interests of national defense" demand in case insurrections of the oppressed colonial peoples break out? But here we have come upon another type of just war in the present epoch.

II. *The wars of liberation of the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial peoples*. For the epoch of imperialism, Lenin expanded and concretized the old Marxian battle-cry into "Proletarians of

all countries and oppressed peoples of the world, unite!" How important this fraternal alliance of the proletarians in the imperialist mainland with the oppressed peoples in the colonies really is, was proved anew in the strike struggles at Brest and Toulon. There Laval, Stalin's ally, ordered colonial troops into action against the strikers. In Toulon the French government used colonial troops against its "own" workers, denounced by the Stalinists as "provocateurs". What will the Stalinists do when colonial uprisings in Africa begin to threaten the French imperial possessions with collapse and thus endanger to the extreme the "interests of national defense"? We can predict that in advance: Just as, in Toulon, Thorez, Cachin and Co. will denounce the liberation struggle of the colonial peoples as a provocation, as the devilish work of a Hitler. Just as in Toulon, they will offer their services as strike-breakers.

III. *The war of a country in which the proletariat has seized power, against its imperialist aggressors, is another type of just war.* In that case, it is not of any account who "fires the first shot". Such a war is on both sides the continuation of their politics. On the side of the workers' state, therefore, it is the continuation of the just struggle for the liberation of the working class. On the side of the bourgeois state, it is the continuation of the reactionary struggle of the capitalists for the maintenance of exploitation and oppression. In this case a Marxist must learn to distinguish between the just, progressive policy of the October revolution and the reactionary *Stalin-Litvinov League of Nations* policy which injures the true interests of the Soviet Union, disorients the international working class and betrays the oppressed peoples. It is precisely in the service of this reactionary policy that the French Stalinists want to harness the French proletariat. They declare that the war of French imperialism, because the latter has allied itself with the Soviet bureaucracy for the defense of the plunder of Versailles, is therefore a "just" war. Following this line of reasoning, it could be said with equal justice that the war of the Soviet Union, because its ruling bureaucratic stratum has allied itself with French imperialism, is a reactionary war. What conclusions the Stalinists would have to draw if they could still think their own thoughts out to the end!

It is decisive for us that so long as the bourgeoisie and not the proletariat stands at the head of the French state, a war conducted by France is a reactionary, an imperialist war. The task of the French working class lies in transforming the imperialist war into a civil war, in overthrowing their own bourgeoisie and in defending the revolution under the banner of international socialism. That is also the best, in fact, the only aid the French proletariat can bring the toiling masses in the Soviet Union as well as the proletariat of Germany. The alliance of the Stalinist bureaucracy with the wolves and jackals of French finance-capital is grist to the mills of German nationalism and chauvinism. It strengthens the tendencies toward class truce, it strengthens the trickery of the "People's Front" not only in a France allied with the Soviet Union, but even more so in a Fascist Germany under Hitler. The victorious French Commune will burst through the iron shell of "national unity" in Germany and give the signal for the overthrow of Hitler Fascism. But, should the French Stalinists succeed in culminating their betrayal of international socialism by their policy of civil truce in the coming imperialist war, and thereby save the rule of French finance-capital, the final result can be nothing short of a *new Versailles*—that is, a plundering imperialist redivision of the world; as well as a *new Brest-Litovsk*—that is, an imperialist siege against the October revolution. A Soviet Union weakened by the war and by the isolation of the international proletariat will face, at the end of such a war, a *united front* of arrogant imperialist brigands. The Stalin-Litvinov policy, which

demoralizes and devitalizes "the only true and reliable allies of the Soviet Union, the European and the American proletariat" (Lenin), and which delivers them, through the "People's Front", bound hand and foot, to the hangman of the bourgeoisie, leads the Soviet Union itself toward a catastrophe.

IV. *Wars of national liberation of an oppressed nation.* This is a type of "just" war, which really belongs to the previous century, to the epoch of bourgeois revolution. In 1916, Lenin wrote about the possibility of such a war in Europe as follows:

"That the imperialist war will be transformed into a national war is highly improbable, since that class which represents *progressive* development today is precisely the proletariat which objectively works to transform it into a civil war against the bourgeoisie . . . while international finance-capital has created everywhere a reactionary bourgeoisie. But it is not a matter of declaring such a transformation impossible: *if the European proletariat were to remain without power for the next twenty years; if this war were to end with such victories as those of Napoleon and with the subjugation of a whole group of states capable of continuing an independent existence; if imperialism outside of Europe (in the first place, Japanese and American imperialism) could maintain itself for twenty years without going over to socialism (as, for instance, in consequence of a Japanese-American war), then a great national war would be possible in Europe. For Europe that would mean a retrogressive development for several decades.*"

Clearly, nations are meant here which are *already today* oppressed. According to Lenin's conception, therefore, *not* "victorious countries" of the first world war, that profit from the Versailles robber treaty and themselves oppress colonial peoples and other nations. Note how carefully Lenin scrutinized this possibility of a just war after the conclusion of the first world war. How many "ifs" he uses to cut off every pretext that social-patriots of a later day might use in order to cover themselves up with a quotation from Lenin! It was to no avail. Under Stalin's leadership, the Comintern, created by Lenin himself, has been dragged into the swamp of social-patriotism. The Stalinists, the most unconscionable falsifiers of Leninism today, proclaim "national defense" as their policy in the countries of those Versailles victors which are allied with the Stalinist bureaucracy and designate wars carried on by these imperialist powers as "just" wars. In doing this they paint a horrible picture of how a victorious Hitler Fascism *can* defeat the given country, rob it of its oppressed colonial peoples and subjugated nations and itself oppress them nationally. Is there such a possibility? Of course. As long as imperialism exists it is possible that a victorious state will subjugate a foreign nation. In order to prevent that once and for all, it is necessary to abolish capitalism. But to propagate civil peace today on the basis of such a *possibility*, is nothing else than treachery to socialism, a betrayal of the most vital interests of the international proletariat. It is undoubtedly not excluded that at the end of the next imperialist war, Germany may be subjugated, partitioned and nationally oppressed. But what could be said of a "socialist" who on the basis of such a possibility would already today propagate a policy of civil truce with the Hitler régime? Stalin is likely to find such an apt pupil in Germany too. . . .

* * *

To recapitulate: today the Stalinists apply the thesis of the "just" war in precisely those cases where it is a matter of unjust, imperialist robber wars. The Stalinists do everything in their power to restrain the proletariat from *its* just war against its exploiters and oppressors. In this process, they abuse the rightful sympathies of the workers for the great cause of the October revolution, defiled by the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Stalinist betrayal

of socialism has resulted in the *most profound crisis of socialism*, deeper and more fatal than the crisis of 1914. In one respect alone the outlook of international socialism is brighter than in 1914. At that time, the betrayal by the leaders of the Second International came like a "stroke of lightning from a clear blue sky", unexpected in its extent even to Lenin, even to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. At that time the heroes of the Second International first adopted the *imperialist point of view of their*

national bourgeoisies on the day after the outbreak of the world slaughter. Today the heroes of the Third International show their true social-chauvinist faces *before* the outbreak of imperialist war. Today they propagate the civil truce *before* the outbreak of war. Today also, in contrast to 1914, the banner of international socialism, the *flag of the Fourth International*, has been unfurled *before* the outbreak of the war.

Erich WOLLENBERG

Once Again: The I. L. P.

An Interview with Leon Trotsky

QUESTION*—What do you mean specifically when you say, at the conclusion of your article, that the I.L.P. must still "work out a Marxian program"?

ANSWER—My whole article was a documentation of the instances in which I.L.P. policy still fails to be Marxist, to be revolutionary: its failure to break sharply with pacifism and with Stalinism, and to turn its face fully to the British masses and to reach a clear position on international organization. These defects are one and the same. Take, for example, pacifism. Despite the revolutionary phraseology of *What the I.L.P. Stands For*, it is still possible in the I.L.P. that Maxton, McGovern and Campbell Stephen can issue an authoritative statement urging the workers not to bear arms when war comes. This is a bankrupt policy; this is only defeatism against the workers, not revolutionary defeatism against capitalism. Moreover, war is an *international* product of capitalism and can be fought only internationally. Which are the workers' organizations in other countries that the revolutionists in the I.L.P. must unite with? Not the C.I. as your pacifist leaders had fondly imagined, for the C.I. is committed to social-patriotism. Not with the International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Unity (I.A.G., i.e., London Bureau) for of the ten groups forming this Bureau some have expired, others are pacifist or even social-patriotic, and only the Dutch party (R.S.A.P.) is in agreement with the I.L.P. on the fight against sanctions and for independent workers' action only. This party has long since declared for the Fourth International and this week (about November 21, 1935) declared also for a break with the Bureau. It is, then, the Dutch party and the other parties openly fighting for the Fourth International with whom the I.L.P. must of necessity solidarize itself if it is to join in the international revolutionary fight against war.

In the *New Leader* I read that both the Lancashire and London and Scottish divisions of the I.L.P. have already declared themselves to be in opposition to the pacifist statements of the Inner Executive, and the similar utterances of McGovern in the House of Commons. But this is not enough. Their fight can succeed only if it is *positive*—not simply "against pacifism", but *for* revolutionary defeatism. This can only mean that the main fight will be *for the Fourth International*.

*We reproduce here a series of questions put by a member of the Independent Labour Party of England to Leon Trotsky, and then distributed for the information of I.L.P. members. In his commentary, the author writes: "Being recently in Norway, I availed myself of the opportunity which comrade C. A. Smith once utilized, of securing an interview with Leon Trotsky. The following is an

attempt to epitomize some of his conversations as it might bear upon the politics and perspectives of the I.L.P. My questions were based upon the recent article of Trotsky's (published in THE NEW INTERNATIONAL and in Controversy [the internal discussion bulletin of the I.L.P.]) and upon recent policies and events as reflected in the *New Leader* and the world press."—E. ROBERTSON.

QUESTION—Was the I.L.P. correct in running as many candidates as possible in the recent General Elections, even at the risk of splitting the vote?

ANSWER—Yes. It would have been foolish for the I.L.P. to have sacrificed its political program in the interests of so-called unity, to allow the Labour party to monopolize the platform, as the Communist party did. We do not know our strength unless we test it. There is always a risk of splitting, and of losing deposits but such risks must be taken. Otherwise we boycott *ourselves*.

QUESTION—Was the I.L.P. correct in refusing critical support to Labour party candidates who advocated military sanctions?

ANSWER—No. Economic sanctions, if real, lead to military sanctions, to war. The I.L.P. itself has been saying this. It should have given critical support to *all* Labour party candidates i.e., where the I.L.P. itself was not contesting. In the *New Leader* I read that your London Division agreed to support only *anti-sanctionist* Labour party candidates. This too is incorrect. The Labour party should have been critically supported not because it was for or against sanctions but because it represented the working class masses.

The basic error which was made by some I.L.P.ers who withdrew critical support was to assume that the war danger necessitated a change in our appreciation of reformism. But as Clausewitz said, and Lenin often repeated, *war is the continuation of politics by other means*. If this is true, it applies not only to capitalist parties but to social democratic parties. The war crisis does not alter the fact that the Labour party is a workers' party, which the governmental party is not. Nor does it alter the fact that the Labour party leadership cannot fulfill their promises, that they will betray the confidence which the masses place in them. In peace-time the workers will, if they trust in social democracy, die of hunger; in war, for the same reason, they will die from bullets. Revolutionists never give critical support to reformism on the assumption that reformism, in power, could satisfy the fundamental needs of the workers. It is possible, of course, that a Labour government could introduce a few mild temporary reforms. It is also possible that the League could postpone a military conflict about secondary issues—just as a cartel can eliminate secondary economic crises only to reproduce them on a larger scale. So the League can eliminate small episodic conflicts only to generalize them into world war.

Thus, both economic and military crises will only return with an added explosive force so long as capitalism remains. And we know that social democracy cannot abolish capitalism.

No, in war as in peace, the I.L.P. must say to the workers: "The Labour party will deceive you and betray you, but you do not believe us. Very well, we will go through your experiences with you but in no case do we identify ourselves with the Labour party program."

Morrison, Clynes, etc., represent certain prejudices of the workers. When the I.L.P. seeks to boycott Clynes it helps not only Baldwin but Clynes himself. If successful in its tactic, the I.L.P. prevents the election of Clynes, of the Labour government, and so prevents their exposure before the masses. The workers will say: "If only we had Clynes and Morrison in power, things would have been better."

It is true, of course, that the mental content of Clynes and Baldwin is much the same except, perhaps, that Baldwin is a little more "progressive" and more courageous. But the class content of the support for Clynes is very different.

It is argued that the Labour party already stands exposed by its past deeds in power and its present reactionary platform. For example, by its decision at Brighton. For us—yes! But not for the masses, the eight millions who voted Labour. It is a great danger for revolutionists to attach too much importance to conference decisions. We use such evidence in our propaganda—but it cannot be presented beyond the power of our own press. One cannot shout louder than the strength of his own throat.

Let us suppose that the I.L.P. had been successful in a boycott tactic, had won a million workers to follow it, and that it was the absence of this million votes which lost the election for the Labour party. What would happen when the war came? The masses would in their disillusionment turn to the Labour party, not to us. If Soviets were formed during the war the soldiers would elect Labour party people to them, not us. Workers would still say that *we* handicapped Labour. But if we gave critical support and by that means helped the Labour party to power, at the same time telling the workers that the Labour party would function as a capitalist government, and would direct a capitalist war—then, when war came, workers would see that we predicted rightly, at the same time that we marched with them. *We* would be elected to the Soviets and the Soviets would not betray.

As a general principle, a revolutionary party has the right to boycott parliament only when it has the capacity to overthrow it, that is, when it can replace parliamentary action by general strike and insurrection, by direct struggle for power. In Britain the masses have yet no confidence in the I.L.P. The I.L.P. is therefore too weak to break the parliamentary machine and must continue to use it. As for a *partial* boycott, such as the I.L.P. sought to operate, it was unreal. At this stage of British politics it would be interpreted by the working class as a certain contempt for them; this is particularly true in Britain where parliamentary traditions are still so strong.

Moreover, the London Division's policy of giving critical support only to anti-sanctionists would imply a fundamental distinction between the social-patriots like Morrison and Ponsonby or—with your permission—even Cripps. Actually, their differences are merely propagandistic. Cripps is actually only a second-class supporter of the bourgeoisie. He has said, in effect: "Pay no attention to my ideas; our differences are only small." This is the attitude of a dilettante, not a revolutionist. A thousand times better an open enemy like Morrison. Lansbury himself is a sincere but extravagant and irresponsible old man; he should be in a museum not Parliament. The other pacifists are more duplicit—more shifty; like Norman Angell, who demands more sanctions now, they will easily turn into social-patriots as war develops. Then they could say to the workers: "You know us. We were anti-sanctionists. Even the I.L.P. supported our struggle. Therefore you can have confidence in us now when we say that this war is a just war." No, the I.L.P. should have applied the same policy of critical support to the whole of the Labour party, only varying our arguments to meet the slightly varied propaganda of pacifist and social-patriot. Otherwise illusions are provoked that pacifism has more power to resist than has social-patriotism.

This is not true; their differences are not fundamental. Even among the Tories there are differences on sanctions and war policies. The distinction between Amery and Lansbury is simply that Amery is more of a realist. Both are anti-sanctionists; but for the working class, Lansbury with his illusions and sincerity is more dangerous.

Most dangerous of all, however, is the Stalinist policy. The parties of the Communist International try to appeal especially to the more *revolutionary* workers by denouncing the League (a denunciation that is an apology) by asking for "workers' sanctions" and then nevertheless saying: "We must use the League when it is for sanctions." They seek to hitch the revolutionary workers to the shafts so that they can draw the cart of the League. Just as the General Council in 1926 accepted the general strike but behind the curtains concluded a deal with the clergy and pacifist radicals and in this way used bourgeois opinion and influence to "discipline" the workers and sabotage their strike, so the Stalinists seek to discipline the workers by confining the boycott within the limits of the League of Nations.

The truth is that if the workers begin their own sanctions against Italy, their action inevitably strikes at their own capitalists, and the League would be compelled to drop all sanctions. It proposes them now just because the workers' voices are muted in every country. Workers' action can begin only by absolute opposition to the national bourgeoisie and its international combinations. Support of the League and support of workers' actions are fire and water; they cannot be united.

Because of this, the I.L.P. should have more sharply differentiated itself from the C. P. at the elections than it did. It should have critically supported the Labour Party against Pollitt and Gallacher. It should have been declared openly that the C.P. has all the deficiencies of the Labour Party without any of its advantages. It should have, above all, shown in practise what *true* critical support means. By accompanying support with the sharpest and widest criticism, by patiently explaining that such support is only for the purpose of exposing the treachery of the Labour party leadership, the I.L.P. would have completely exposed, also, the spurious "critical" support of the Stalinists themselves, a support which was actually whole-hearted and *uncritical*, and *based on an agreement in principle with the Labour party leadership*.

QUESTION—Should the I.L.P. seek entry into the Labour party?

ANSWER—At the moment the question is not posed this way. What the I.L.P. must do, if it is to become a revolutionary party, is to turn its back on the C.P. and face the mass organizations. It must put 99 per cent of its energies into building of fractions in the trade union movement. At the moment I understand that much of the fractional work can be done openly by I.L.P.ers in their capacity of trade union and coöperative members. But the I.L.P. should never rest content; it must build its influence in the mass organizations with the utmost speed and energy. For the time may come when, in order to reach the masses, it must enter the Labour party, and it must have tracks laid for the occasion. Only the experience that comes from such fractional work can inform the I.L.P. if and when it must enter the Labour party. But for all its activity an absolutely clear program is the first condition. A small axe can fell a large tree only if it is sharp enough.

QUESTION—Will the Labour party split?

ANSWER—The I.L.P. should not assume that it will automatically grow at the expense of the Labour party, that the Labour party Left wingers will be split off by the bureaucracy and come to the I.L.P. These are possibilities. But it is equally possible that the Left wing, which will develop as the crisis deepens, and particularly now within the trade unions after the failure of the Labour party to win the elections, will be successful in its fight to

stay within the Labour party. Even the departure of the Socialist League to join the I.L.P. would not end these possibilities, for the Socialist League is very petty bourgeois in character and is not likely to organize the militancy within the Labour party. In any case, the history of the British general strike of 1926 teaches us that a strong militant movement can develop in a strongly bureaucratized trade union organization, creating a very important minority movement without being forced out of the trade unions.

Instead, what happens is that the labor fakers swing Left in order to retain control. If the I.L.P. is not there at the critical moment with a revolutionary leadership the workers will need to find their leadership elsewhere. They might still turn to Citrine, for Citrine might even be willing to shout for Soviets, for the moment, rather than lose his hold. As Scheidemann and Ebert shouted for Soviets, and betrayed them, so will Citrine. Leon Blum, rather by the revolutionary pressure of the French masses, runs headlines in his *Populaire*—“Sanctions— but the workers must control”, etc. It is this treacherous “heading in order to behead” which the I.L.P. must prevent in Britain.

QUESTION—Is Stalinism the chief danger?

ANSWER—Of all the radical phrasemongers, the ones who offer the greatest danger in this respect are the Stalinists. The members of the C.P.G.B. are now on their bellies before the Labour party—but *this makes it all the easier for them to crawl inside*. They will make every concession demanded of them, but once within—they will still be able to pose as the Left wing because the workers still retain some illusions about the revolutionary nature of the Comintern—*illusions which the I.L.P. in the past has helped to retain*. They will utilize this illusion to corrupt the militants with their own social-patriotic policy. They will sow seed from which only weeds can sprout. Only a clear and courageous policy on the part of the I.L.P. can prevent this disaster.

QUESTION—Would you recommend the same perspective for the I.L.P. Guild of Youth as the adult party?

ANSWER—Even more. Since the I.L.P. youth seem to be few and scattered, while the Labour Youth is the mass youth organization. I would say: “Do not only build fractions—seek to enter”. For here the danger of Stalinist devastation is extreme. The youth are *all-important*. Unlike the older generation they have little actual experience of war; it will be easier for the Stalinists and the other pseudo-revolutionary patriots to confuse the youth on the war issues than to confuse those who survived the last war. On the other hand, the willingness of the Stalinists to drive these same youth into another actual war will make the young workers properly suspicious. They will listen more easily to us—if *we are there to speak to them*. No time must be lost. Out of the new generation comes the new International, the only hope for the world revolution. The British section will recruit its first cadres from the 30,000 young workers in the Labour League of Youth. Their more advanced comrades in the I.L.P. youth must not allow themselves to be isolated from them, especially now at the very moment when war is a real danger.

QUESTION—Should the I.L.P. terminate its united front with the C. P.?

ANSWER—Absolutely and categorically—yes! The I.L.P. must learn to turn its back on the C.P. and towards the working masses. The permanent “unity committees” in which the I.L.P. has sat with the C.P. were nonsense in any case. The I.L.P. and the C.P.G.B. were propaganda organizations not mass organizations; united fronts between them were meaningless if each of them had the right to advance its own program. These programs must have been different or there would have been no justification for separate parties, and with different programs there is nothing to

unite around. United fronts for certain specific actions could have been of some use, of course, *but the only important united front for the I.L.P. is with the Labour party, the trade unions, the cooperatives*. At the moment, the I.L.P. is too weak to secure these; it must first conquer the right for a united front by winning the support of the masses. At this stage, united fronts with the C.P. will only compromise the I.L.P. Rupture with the C.P. is the first step towards a mass basis for the I.L.P. and the achievement of a mass basis is the first step towards a proper united front, that is, a united front with the mass organizations.

QUESTION—Should the I.L.P. forbid groups?

ANSWER—It can scarcely do that without forbidding its leadership, which is also a group, a Centrist group, protected by the party machinery, or without denying the very fractional principle by which it must build its influence in the mass organizations.

Factions existed in the Bolshevik party as temporary groupings of opinion during its whole life—except for a brief period in 1921 when they were forbidden by unanimous vote of the leadership as an extreme measure during an acute crisis.

QUESTION—How far can factions develop with safety to the party?

ANSWER—That depends on the social composition of the party, upon the political situation and upon the quality of the leadership. Generally it is best to let petty bourgeois tendencies express themselves fully so that they may expose themselves. If there are no such tendencies, if the membership is fairly homogeneous, there will be only temporary groupings—unless the leadership is incorrect. And this will be shown best in practise. So, when a difference occurs, a discussion should take place, a vote be taken, and a majority line adopted. There must be no discrimination against the minority; any personal animosity will compromise not them but the leadership. Real leadership will be loyal and friendly to the disciplined minority.

It is true, of course, that discussion always provokes feelings which remain for some time. Political life is full of difficulties—personalities clash—they widen their dissensions—they get in each other's hair. These differences must be overcome by common experience, by *education of the rank and file*, by the leadership *proving* it is right. Organizational measures should be resorted to only in extreme cases. Discipline is built by education, not only by statutes. It was the elastic life within it which allowed the Bolshevik party to build its discipline. Even after the conquest of power, Bukharin and other members of the party voted against the government in the Central Executive on important questions, such as the German peace, and in so doing lined themselves with those Social-Revolutionists who soon attempted armed insurrection against the Soviet state. But Bukharin was not expelled. Lenin said, in effect: “We will tolerate a certain lack of discipline. We will demonstrate to them that we are right. Tomorrow they will learn that our policy is correct, and they will not break discipline so quickly.” By this I do not advise the dissenting comrades to imitate the arrogance of Bukharin. Rather do I recommend that the leadership learns from the patience and tact of Lenin. Though when it was necessary, he could wield the razor as well as the brush.

The authority of the national leadership is the necessary condition of revolutionary discipline. It can be immensely increased when it represents an international agreement of principles, of common action. Therein lies one of the sources of strength of the new International.

QUESTION—What do you think of the I.L.P. colonial policy?

ANSWER—So far, it seems to be mainly on paper. Fenner Brockway has written some very good articles on the Mohmand

struggles, and upon Ethiopia. But there should be many more—and beyond words, there should be action. The I.L.P. should long ago have created some kind of colonial bureau to coordinate those organizations of colonial workers who are striving to overthrow British imperialism. Of course, only the real revolutionists in the I.L.P. will bother to work for such policies. It is the test of their revolutionary understanding.

QUESTION—What should be the basic concept of illegal work?

ANSWER—Illegal work is work in the mass organizations—for the I.L.P. it is systematic entry and work in the trade unions, co-operatives, etc. In peace-time and in war, it is the same. You will perhaps say: "They will not let us in. They will expel us." You do not shout: "I am a revolutionist," when working in a trade union with reactionary leadership. You educate your cadres who carry on the fight under your direction. You keep educating new forces to replace those expelled, and so you build up a mass opposition. Illegal work must keep you in the working masses. You do not retire into a cellar as some comrades imagine. The trade unions are the schools for illegal work. The trade union leadership is the unofficial police of the state. The protective covering for the revolutionist is the trade union. Transition into war conditions is almost imperceptible.

QUESTION—What specifically do you think the I.L.P. should do in order to build a new International?

ANSWER—The I.L.P., if it intends to become a genuine revolutionary party, must face honestly the question of the new International.

The Second International is bankrupt, the I.L.P. has already said. It now recognizes the betrayal of the Third International. It should also realize that the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity is a myth. It should draw the only possible conclusion and add its name to the Open Letter for the Fourth International.

QUESTION—You mention that the I.B.R.S.U. offers no basis for the struggle against war. What is the policy of this Bureau? What is its future?

ANSWER—The Bureau has no common policy; its parties are going in all directions. The S.A.P. of Germany now marches steadily Rightwards toward social democracy and Stalinism. Today I have news that the congress of the R.S.A.P., one of the largest parties in the Bureau, has voted by an overwhelming majority to sever its old close cooperation with the S.A.P. and also to break off completely with the Bureau and to associate with the parties which work to build the Fourth International. It even passed a vote of censure on the Central Committee for having maintained a connection with the S.A.P. as long as it did.

The Spanish P.O.B. is, in a certain sense, similar to the I.L.P. Its leadership is not internationalist in perspective but its membership includes an important section who are for the Fourth International. The U.S.P. of Rumania is also developing towards a revolutionary-internationalist position. Recently it expelled the tiny Stalinist faction within it, and it is already being accused of "Trotskyism". I hope that in the near future they will recognize the necessity of joining in the great work of building the Fourth International.

As for the other members of the Bureau, they are either non-entities or they have no real relation to the Bureau. The Italian S.P. (Maximalist) is not a party, only a microscopic group living for the most part in exile. The Austrian Red Front only two years ago had 1,000 members in illegality. Today it is non-existent, dissolved. Why? Because it had no program—no banner!

tion of no political importance, while the Bulgarian L.S.G. is The Polish I.L.P. is only a topic for humor, a caricature organization never heard of. Like the Norwegian *Mot Dag*—another "member" of the Bureau—it is only a small Left wing group of intellectuals which is in process of decomposition. Here in Norway, the one workers' party is the N.A.P. It belonged to the Bureau for two years, but does so no more and is in no way desirous of building a new International. Just now I have received word that the N.A.P. decided (on the very same day that the Dutch party withdrew from Bureau) to sever even formal connections—for opposite political reasons. Only two parties of consequence remain to be considered—the I.L.P. and the Swedish S.P. Already the latter grows cold to the Bureau as the S.P. turns to the Right like the N.A.P. It is altogether likely that it will follow.

The Bureau suffers the fate of all Cenrist organizations in times of acute class struggle; it is destroyed by the release of the centrifugal forces within itself. We predicted that the I.A.G. would lose both to the Right and to the Left. It is happening before our eyes, and even more quickly than we had expected. History could not arrange a better demonstration of the correctness of our analysis of Centrism. If the I.L.P. does not soon make up its mind it will find itself sitting in lonely possession of the Bureau.

QUESTION—Was not Doriot also a member of the "Seven Lefts"?

ANSWER—Certainly. He may never, for his own reasons, have adhered formally, but he was chosen with Schwab and Gorkin to form the Bureau's World Committee for Peace Work. The committee, of course, never functioned. Later, when Doriot came to terms with Laval he slipped out of the committee as quickly as possible. Before, the I.A.G. had met in St. Denis, under his protection. Later, when they called him on the 'phone it was always busy—connected with the government. Doriot is quite openly a traitor. It is interesting that at the last I.A.G. conference Doriot was the loudest in condemning the Trotskyists for their slogan of the new International, and the S.A.P. quoted him with enthusiastic approval.

QUESTION—May not the Bureau recoup its losses from other forces?

ANSWER—The course of events is not that way. Zyromski, in France, has been the great hope of the I.A.G. He was, together with Pivert, a year in the *Bataille Socialiste*. Since that time, the *Bataille Socialiste* has ceased to exist. The reason? Like the Austrian Red Front, it had no clear program, no banner. Pivert has moved further Left and Zyromski has had to solidarize himself with the Right, with Blum himself. Zyromski now plays the perfidious role of Stalinist social-patriot within the S.F.I.O.

Pivert has now built up another Left group, but this too will not last six months. It is composed of one element afraid of the patriots and another afraid of the Bolshevik-Leninists. The group calls itself "Revolutionary Left". It is a little Left, but it is not yet revolutionary.

QUESTION—What do you think of the Lovestoneite argument, which we hear in the I.L.P., that the C.P.S.U. must still be a good party because it exists in a workers' state.

ANSWER—That is not a Marxian argument, that is metaphysics. If a workers' state automatically produced a good government there would be no need for a communist party within it. The fact is that the C.P. as the government of the workers' state is not a "thing-in-itself" but is subjected to the play of different historical forces. It can deviate, degenerate, become a danger to the existence of the workers' state. That is precisely what has happened in Russia.

The Stakhanovist Movement

Its real meaning and the bureaucratic distortions

DURING THE night of August 31, Alexei Stakhanov, a coal miner, 29 years of age, peasant by birth, cut 102 tons of coal during a six-hour shift with a pneumatic drill, the average production being 6-7 tons. (The best average production in Europe [Poland, Ruhr] is about ten tons, and the maximum, 16-17 tons.) The "Stakhanovist movement" dates its birth from that day.

Shortly thereafter, the Soviet papers blazed with reports about other record-breaking feats. Boussygin, a smith (at the Gorki automotive plant) forges 112-127 crank-shafts an hour (while the smiths in the Ford plants produce 100 an hour). At turning wheels on a lathe, the norm being six pair a shift, a Stakhanovist worker turned out 12 pair which record was quickly surpassed: first by 15, then by 17 and 18 pair. In the Ural copper mines, a driller Ivanchikov produced during a single shift 970% of the norm, i.e., ten times the average productivity. That day he earned 320 rubles, that is to say, an amount representing almost twice the average *monthly* wage of a Soviet worker. The Vinogradov sisters, weavers by trade, from attending 70 looms passed to 144. In the Krivorog metallurgical basin, a Stakhanovist miner succeeded in surpassing the norm first 2,300%, then 2,500%! Stakhanov's own record was beaten very quickly: the miner Gobatiuk produced 405 tons of coal during a single shift; a few days later, the driller Borisov produced almost 800 tons, passing all records, and over-fulfilling the norm 46 times!

How Are the Records Attained?

These are fantastic figures! Let us endeavor to examine whether they are real, what are the underlying causes for the results obtained, and by what means they are attained.

First of all we must make a general observation. During the recent years Soviet industry has grown enormously and has become enriched by a new and an advanced technology. But up to now the growth of Soviet industry has been expressed principally by quantitative indices, by increase in the *volume* of production. There has been an uninterrupted growth in the number of factories—often of the most modern type—and of the most perfected machines, but the *output per machine* has increased very slightly up to last year. In other words, the existing technology has been functioning on an extremely low level, yielding only a tiny fraction of what the very same technology yields in America or in Germany. It is precisely this low level of utilization of advanced technology that has created the very possibility of this dizzy leap in production. If a motor geared to 1,000 revolutions a minute is run only at 100 revolutions, it is relatively not difficult, under normal conditions, to speed it up to 1,000 revolutions, but it is very difficult (and frequently dangerous) to speed it up to, say, 1050 revolutions. The motors of Soviet industry have been turning at a very low speed. This difference in level between the possibilities lodged in advanced technology and its extremely weak utilization was, in the sphere of production, the necessary preliminary condition for the Stakhanovist movement.

Let us examine in greater detail the work of Stakhanov himself. A driller, as Stakhanov relates, used to work no more than 2 1-2 or 3 hours maximum with his pneumatic drill, and the rest of the time he had to do shoring, i.e., had to perform auxiliary tasks while the drill remained idle. During a working day of two shifts, the pneumatic drill was in use only 5-6 hours instead of 12. At the present time, Stakhanov's drill functions during the full 6 hours (instead of 2 1-2), and the work of shoring is performed

by others. In other words, an elementary division of labor has been introduced, which has immediately yielded a very great increase in the productivity of labor. A number of other improvements have been introduced into the process of production itself with the resulting increase in efficiency. But the addition of auxiliary workers makes it necessary to introduce immediately important corrections into the records, a factor which Ordjonikidze himself recognized during the Stakhanovist Congress recently held in Moscow. "It is sometimes thought that a single man [Stakhanov—N.M.] produced 102 tons. This is not true. These 102 tons were produced by an entire brigade." Thus, if the output attained is divided by the whole number of workers in the brigade, we obtain not the figure 100 tons or more per worker, but at the most 30-35 tons which, in comparison to the previously attained maximum productivity of 14 tons, represents a considerable increase but of far more modest proportions. We have here an increase in the productivity of labor from 2 to 2 1-2 times, and not from 15 to 20 times.

Irregularity of the Results

Another essential cause for the *records* must be sought in the fact that we are dealing here not with an average workday under normal conditions of production, but with a very special preparation, often over a considerable period of time; and, moreover, the record-maker works in a state of extraordinary intensity, which of course he is unable to sustain for any considerable period of time. (We may note, as an interesting fact, that a *special* function has been created in the Stakhanovist brigade, that of a worker who relieves the tired men, a function which by its nature denotes a *particular* over-exertion of labor power.) Thus, the records, in their majority, are obtained under entirely special and artificial conditions, and by means of enormous intensity. That is why the records not only are unstable but also are not indicative, as a perspective, of a rise in the *average* productivity of labor.

In most cases, the records themselves bear a *unique* character. It is not without good cause that Ordjonikidze, when introducing one of the Stakhanovists, Sorokov, as a most extraordinary phenomenon, remarked at the Stakhanovist Congress (Nov. 14-17, 1935) that: "This comrade has made records not for a couple of days, but over a period of three months." What a Stakhanovist succeeded in producing yesterday, he is unable to produce the next day. The basic causes for this are: the general lack of organization in industry, all sorts of disproportions within each individual plant, between different branches of industry, and so on. The brigade of the Stakhanovist Sukhorukov produces 150 carloads of coal one day, 80 carloads on the next, and so on, along the same feverish curve (*Trud*, Oct. 20, 1935). The brigade of the Stakhanovist Zhukov produces 80-90 tons of coal one day, and the next day only 8 tons (less than a tenth!), and a day later 92 tons, only to have the productivity drop again to 20 tons on the day following. (*Trud*, Oct. 24, 1935). According to the newspapers, the causes for this are: hours of idleness due to a balky motor, poor functioning of the conveyor belt, etc., and probably also often due to the over-fatigue of the Stakhanovist, worn out from the preceding day. At the Lenin locomotive construction plant the "successes of the Stakhanovists did not prove lasting. Just a few days later, the output of the lathers fell off sharply. Now there are days during which they do not even produce the norm" (*Trud*, Nov. 1, 1935). At an investigation made among 20 miners who lagged behind, it was established that only one of them could

be classified in the category of "loafers" while the others lagged behind because of lack of organization in production, and for other technical causes. The November 2 issue of *Trud* publishes interesting extracts from the "diary" of a Stakhanovist miner. From these notes, a salient fact emerges that out of *fifteen days*, the author of the diary worked only *two full days*; he did no work at all during five days, and worked only part time during the remainder, being continually shifted from one place to the next: either the machine was not ready or the coal seam was not prepared, or there was no timber for shoring, or there were no coal cars to load, and so on and so forth. The most famous record-holder after Stakhanov himself, Boussygin (already mentioned above) finds himself in a similar situation. Hardly had the newspapers broadcasted the news of his records (Boussygin, you see, has licked the smiths of Ford) when it turned out that Boussygin, the very next day "was unable to work full speed, his drill not having been properly prepared". On the following day Boussygin "stood idle for two hours because the section administration had not prepared the drill, and had not changed the dies". Still a day later Boussygin remained idle for 1½ hours, and in addition to this he began producing a "completely waste product. It was established that there was a mix-up in the grade of steel in the supply section" (*Pravda*, Nov. 23 and 24, 1935). This is the situation in which one of the most famous Stakhanovists finds himself, who works under exceptionally privileged conditions. Boussygin "raised such a row that the whole shop was aroused", "Boussygin sounded the alarm", "Boussygin went through the shop accompanied by the director", Boussygin declares, "I have many points to bring up, many things will have to be altered", and so on. Boussygin can take all these liberties; but the rank and file worker does not dare let out even a peep. The administration is naturally afraid of Boussygin and of other record-holders like him; places them in working conditions that are particularly favorable, provides them with special service and ahead of everybody else. One can without difficulty picture to himself the situation in which a rank and file worker, not a Stakhanovist, finds himself. Even *Trud* itself pleads: "We must not concern ourselves solely with the workers who have already made records."

Again we see the entire unreality of the record of Boussygin—as well as of other record-holders—who, we are told, has apparently passed the American norms. Boussygin has succeeded several times in producing 127 crankshafts an hour while the smiths in Ford's plants produce only 100, but the difference between them lies in this: that the Ford smiths do it every hour, yesterday as well as today, before yesterday and tomorrow—in other words it is the *average norm*, the American standard, and not a *record*. But Boussygin produces 127 in one hour, and during the next hour, possibly none at all.

"Emulation"

A regular ballyhoo has been raised about these records. A woman weaver, Odintsova, announces to the Stakhanovist Congress that she is preparing to take on 150 looms. The two women record-holders, the Vinogradov sisters yell out to her: "And we will take on 208 [laughter, applause]." Such incidents are numerous and the leaders in charge of the Congress laboriously fan this "sporting" spirit, approving it, provoking it, etc. It goes without saying that this ballyhoo, which accompanies the Stakhanovist movement, is an altogether unhealthy phenomenon, towards which the mass of the Soviet workers can not only have an entirely negative but also even a hostile attitude. Lenin once remarked on the subject of the records attained by American rationalization: "Under capitalism, this is a torture, or a trick." There are elements of "torture and trick" in the Soviet records as well.

We have already pointed out the fact that these records are not indicative of a perspective of *growth* in average productivity. We shall now show, using as an example the mine in which Stakhanov works, how slight an effect these records have upon the average productivity. In this mine, aside from Stakhanov himself, also work a number of record-holders who have even "surpassed" him. The mine yielded 8,120 tons of coal in October as against 8,065 tons in September, that is to say, an increase of only seven-tenths of 1% in productivity. However, if we were to take into account not only the quantity of the coal mined but also the amount transported to the surface and loaded into cars, the growth would be even less. In other branches of industry an analogous situation obtains. Of course we must not lose sight of the fact that we are still at the beginnings of the movement.

Why Has the Stakhanovist Movement Arisen?

Is one to conclude from what has been said above that the Stakhanovist movement—considered not as a number of isolated records but as a movement for raising the productivity of labor—is a "bluff", devoid of all perspectives? Not at all. In our opinion this movement, purged of the spirit of record-setting and of ballyhoo, has a great future before it. Let us endeavor to indicate the fundamental causes of it.

While we have pointed out the weak utilization of the new and often powerful technology as the basic cause for the very *possibility* of an important rise in the productivity of labor; while on the other hand, we have indicated the necessity of a sharply critical approach to the record-making results, there still remains to be answered a question of paramount importance: *Why* did the Stakhanovist movement "suddenly" spring up at the end of 1935? What served as the impetus for it? Why did it not arise, say, one or two years ago, when the advanced technology was already available?

In his remarkably platitudinous speech to the Stakhanovists, Stalin gave the following explanation of this phenomenon: "It has become happier and gayer to live. And when people live gaily, work proceeds apace." (*Pravda*, Nov. 22, 1935.) The matter is a very simple one, it appears: the Soviet worker raises the productivity of labor out of "gaiety", and he owes his gaiety of course to Stalin! Molotov, who subjected practically every speaker at the Congress to a stiff cross-examination, asking each one why he worked now with the Stakhanovist methods and not previously, supplied a more realistic estimate: "In many places, the immediate impetus to high productivity of labor on the part of the Stakhanovists was the mere desire to increase their wages." (*Pravda*, Nov. 19, 1935.) America, which Stalin was not fated to discover, was thus shamefacedly discovered by Molotov.

Through all the dispatches in the press, through all the speeches of the Stakhanovists the *leit-motif* is: personal material interest. This is the fundamental stimulus of the Stakhanovist movement, and it is precisely this, and this alone that assures its indubitable growth in the immediate future. These conditions of personal interest have been created only in the very recent period, in connection with the course toward the stabilization of the ruble, the elimination of the system of food cards, and the general normalization of the system of provisioning. Only a few months ago the amount earned in rubles played a relatively modest rôle in the worker's budget, which was largely based upon the products distributed by the factory coöperative, and upon the factory kitchen, etc. Under these conditions a larger or smaller amount earned in rubles did not greatly matter. But, under the new conditions, when the ruble is once again becoming the "universal equivalent" of commodities—to be sure, a very imperfect and as yet unstable "equivalent", but an equivalent nevertheless—the Soviet workers,

in the struggle for higher wages, are impelled to raise the productivity of their labor, because *piece-work wages* which have been introduced everywhere in the U.S.S.R. automatically expresses in rubles the growth of the productivity of labor of every individual worker. *Piece-work rates*, which were introduced a long time ago, have become the prevailing wage form, both in industry and in transportation, even in those branches where it has created difficulties because of the collective, "brigade" character of the work.

In the coal mining industry, for instance, piece-work was already the prevalent form, but there still frequently obtained the so-called brigade piece-work wages, that is, a brigade of workers received wages for the entire group for the amount produced by the brigade, and within the brigade the wages were divided almost equally. Now the transition is beginning—and it will indubitably be quickly effected wherever it has not been made as yet—to a *differential piece-work rate*, that is to say, each worker will receive pay in proportion to what he produces. *In proportion as the new technology has created the pre-condition for the Stakhanovist movement, the piece-work wage, under the conditions of the monetary reform, has effectively brought this movement into being.* And in the contradictory Soviet economic life with its elements of socialism and capitalism, the Stakhanovist movement has not only become economically necessary but to a certain extent also progressive—in that it raises the productivity of labor. It is of course not progressive in the sense that it "prepares the conditions for the transition from socialism [?] to communism [!]" (Stalin, *Pravda*, Nov. 22, 1935); but in the sense that, within the framework of the existing transitional and contradictory economy, it prepares by means of *capitalist* methods the elementary pre-conditions for a socialist society. In the pre-Stalinist epoch, money and piece-work wages were never considered as categories either of communism, or even of socialism. Piece-work wages were defined by Marx "as the form of wages most suited to the *capitalist* mode of production" (*Capital!*). And only a bureaucrat who has lost the last shred of Marxian honesty can present this forced retreat from the allegedly already realized "socialism" back to money and piece-work wages (and consequently, to accentuating inequality to the over-exertion of labor power and to the lengthening of the working day) as "preparing the transition to communism".

The introduction of piece work inevitably brings in its train a deep-going differentiation in the ranks of the Soviet working class itself. If this differentiation has been curbed until recently by the system of regulated provisioning—food cards, coöperatives and factory restaurants—then under the conditions of the passage to a monetary economy, it will take on the broadest development. There is hardly an advanced capitalist country where the difference in workers' wages is as great as at present in the U.S.S.R. In the mines, a non-Stakhanovist miner gets from 400 to 500 rubles, a Stakhanovist more than 1,600 rubles. The auxiliary worker, who drives a team below, only gets 170 rubles if he is not a Stakhanovist and 400 rubles if he is (*Pravda*, Nov. 16, 1935), that is, one worker gets about ten times as much as another. And 170 rubles by no means represents the lowest wage, but the *average* wage, according to the data of Soviet statistics. There are workers who earn no more than 150, 120 or even 100 rubles. A very skilled and specialized worker, Kaslov (motor construction factory at Gorky) earned, for *half* the month of October, 950 rubles, that is, more than 11 times the wage of the team driver and more than 16 times that of the worker who gets 120 rubles. The Stakhanovist textile workers get 500 rubles and more, the non-Stakhanovists, 150 rubles or less (*Pravda*, Nov. 18, 1935). The examples we give by no means indicate the extreme limits in the two directions. One could show without difficulty that the wages of the privileged

layers of the working class (of the labor aristocracy in the true sense of the term) are 20 times higher, sometimes even more, than the wages of the poorly-paid layers. And if one takes the wages of specialists, the picture of the inequality becomes positively sinister. Ostrogljadov, the head engineer of a pit, who more than realizes the plan, gets 8,600 rubles a month; and he is a modest specialist, whose wages cannot, therefore, be considered exceptional. Thus, engineers often earn from 80 to 100 times as much as an unskilled worker. Such inequality is established now, 18 years after the October revolution, almost on the eve, according to Stalin, of the "passage from socialism to communism"!

And to this should be added other personal privileges of the Stakhanovists: places reserved for them in the rest homes and the sanatoria; lodging repairs; places for their children in the kindergartens (*Trud*, Oct. 23, 1935); free admittance to the movies; in addition, Stakhanovists are shaved without having to wait in line (*Donbess, Trud*, Nov. 11, 1935); they have the right to free lessons at home for themselves and their families (*Trud*, Nov. 2, 1935, and elsewhere), to free medical visits day and night, etc., etc.

We believe that the Stalinist leadership is putting the Stakhanovists in a very privileged position not only in order to encourage the rise in the productivity of labor, but for the purpose of *favoring*, just as *deliberately, the differentiation of the working class*, with the political aim of resting upon a base, much narrower no doubt, but also surer: the labor aristocracy.

The accentuated differentiation in the working class, the formation of an aristocracy emerging from it, sharpens extremely the internal antagonisms. Also, it is not surprising that the *Stakhanovist movement should be received in a hostile manner by the working mass*. This the Soviet press is unable to dissimulate. The hostility takes various forms: from joking to . . . assassination. And among the mockers are found communist workers and even workers who hold small responsible posts in the party or the unions (*Trud*, Nov. 3, 1935).

The leaders summon to struggle against the "sabotagers". The Stalinist Governor-General of the Ukraine, Postychev, declares: "The struggle against the sabotagers and those who are resisting the Stakhanovist movement . . . is now one of the main sectors of the class struggle" (*Pravda*, Nov. 13, 1925). The lieutenant of Stalin at Leningrad, Zhdanov, says the same: "In certain enterprises, the Stakhanovist movement has met with a certain resistance, even on the part of backward workers. . . . The party will stop at nothing to sweep out of the road of the victory of the Stakhanovist movement all those who resist it." (*Pravda*, Nov. 18, 1935.)

Do these threats have an effect on the workers? Extracts which we give further on show us that in any case the workers are not inclined to yield without a fight wherever their vital interests are involved.

Trud of Nov. 18 communicates that "in pit No. 5 the miner Kirilov beat up the section boss who demanded of him a good job of propping behind the Stakhanovist miner Zamsteyev". Let us see what happened: the application of Stakhanovist methods in the coal pits led to a considerable reduction in the number of miners (for example, in the pit where Stakhanov works, their number was reduced from 36 to 24). Unemployment does not threaten them, but a part of them are transferred to the auxiliary work of propping, much more poorly paid. This is the situation in which the miner Kirilov found himself.

In the same number of *Trud* is related how two workers "conducted a malicious agitation against the Stakhanovist methods. Jagtirev sought to persuade the Stakhanovist worker Kurlitchev not to work. As a result the work on this section was impaired". The Stakhanovists complain that it is only "when there is supervi-

sion that the work moves ahead" (*Trud*, Sept. 24, 1925). In Odessa, in the heavy machinery construction plant, the worker, Poliakov hurred himself at the Stakhanovist Korenoz with an iron beam. Poliakov has been expelled from the trade union, driven from his job and it is planned to hand him over to a tribunal as an example (*Trud*, Oct. 23, 1935). In Marionpole, in the Azorstal plant, two workers, Chisjakov and Khomenko were sentenced to four and two years imprisonment for having threatened to kill a Stakhanovist brigader. In the *Krasny Shtampovchik* plant, a Stakhanovist worker found a dirty broom on her loom with the following note: "To comrade Belozh: This bouquet of flowers is offered in honor of her realization of three norms." (*Trud*, Nov. 1, 1925.) Six days were needed to find those guilty. Among them was the shop steward, Muraviev. They were fired. But their superiors demanded that the matter be taken to the tribunal. *Trud* (Nov. 12, 1935) reports that "the textile workers, who have carried through their work intensively, have confronted and still confront great obstacles. Class struggle [!] manifests itself at every step". A small example: ". . . the windows of the shop were opened to let out the bad air, thus soiling the factory". In another factory: "The shuttle-boxes were soaped on dozens of looms. Behind all this are to be seen acts of sabotage. In the factory *Bolshevik* the shameless enemy [that is, the workers themselves.—N.M.] openly jeered the worker Udotzev, who operated 144 automatic looms." A Stakhanovist worker relates how they jeered him: "They came to me saying: how thin you are! how pale you have become! are you slipping?"

Izvestia of the 28th, reports that in section 25 of the Moscow box factory, the workers Kolnogorov, father and son, "reproached the Stakhanovist Solovin with having lowered the piece rates, they incited the workers Naumov and Niepekin, who lived with the Kolmogorovs, to place lighted paper under Solovin's feet, while he slept. This bestial act caused serious burns to Solovin. The criminals were arrested".

In the Aviakhin factory, the worker Krikov regularly surpassed the norm while the more qualified workers produced less than he: "On October 14, everything became clear. Karpov said the following to Krikov: Don't work so hard and don't surpass the norm. Demand, on the contrary, that they raise the piece rates. . . ." Krikov reported this fact to the administration and the worker Karkov who was at first discharged, and was reinstated with a severe censure after having repented (*Pravda*, Nov. 17, 1935).

The same number of *Pravda* relates that at Smolensk, "the backward workers began to persecute the Stakhanovist lather Likhoradov. . . Things reached the point where a certain Sviridov broke a gear wheel and tore off Likhoradov's power belt". Likhoradov himself says (*Pravda*, Nov. 17, 1935): "When I had made seven hoops [that is, exceeding considerably the norm.—N.M.], it created quite an affair. The hostile elements were ready to wallop me."

The Soviet journals call the workers who resist the Stakhanovist movement "damagers". "The favorite method of those who fight against the Stakhanovist movement consists in causing damages and in breaking the machinery," writes *Trud*. *Pravda* (Nov. 3, 1935) communicates that in Tambov, four Stakhanovist workers, "arriving at work, found their tool boxes shattered and their tools stolen". The struggle is so acute that on certain occasions, fortunately rare, it takes on the character of terroristic acts. "On the evening of October 25, the best Stakhanovist of the *Trud* factory, the locksmith Shmirev, was killed. . . The criminals have been arrested." (*Pravda*, Oct. 19, 1935.) A few weeks later, *Pravda* announces that the "murderers have been sentenced to death by the military tribunal".

In the Ivan pit, the best Stakhanovist, Nicolas Tsekhnov, was killed "in order to prevent the introduction of the Stakhanovist system in the section. . . The criminals have been arrested" (*Izvestia*, Oct. 30 and Nov. 2, 1935). We have already mentioned the fact that Stakhanovists often work at the expense of their neighbors. *Trud* (Oct. 23, 1935) communicates: "The Stakhanovist is overloaded with work; and his neighbor loafes." The same journal says elsewhere: "The successes of the Stakhanovists have led to the reduction of the number of workers in certain branches: a new struggle has begun." Shura Dimitrova, a Stakhanovist worker, declared squarely to the chairman of the factory committee: "This makes me sick. Either you fix it so that everybody has work to do or else you bring back the workers without my having to stop working like this." It is not difficult to imagine what state of mind prevails in the plant under such conditions. The foreman of the *First of May* factory [in Leningrad], Soldatov, says: "When there weren't any Stakhanovists, nobody loafed; and with the Stakhanovists, loafing has begun." (*Trud*, Oct. 2b, 1935.)

We have given such a large number of quotations in order to show all the acuteness of the struggle inside the working class on the Stakhanovist movement. If the Stakhanovist movement does not yet threaten the Soviet worker with unemployment—industry, in its powerful upswing, is still capable of absorbing all the working hands that are free—it does threaten them with unemployment on the job, with being shifted to auxiliary jobs, with physical over-tension, with wage reductions, etc. The further differentiation of the working class means the enhancement of economic inequality and antagonisms.

It would be absurd to think that the majority, or even a considerable portion of the working class, can become Stakhanovist. The rise in wages of the Stakhanovists is already, without doubt, the object of uneasiness in the bureaucracy. Occupied with the stabilization of the Soviet money, it cannot "fling" rubles in all directions. Stalin has declared openly that the present technical norms must be revised "as non-conformable any longer with the reality; turn back and put on the brakes . . . they must be replaced with new, higher technical norms" which "are needed, moreover, in order to push the backward masses towards the more advanced". That's clear enough. These new norms, according to Stalin, must "pass somewhere between the present norms and those obtained by the Stakhanovs and the Boussygins (*Pravda*, Nov. 22, 1935). And after the raising of the technical norms will undoubtedly follow a decrease in the piece rates, that is, a blow at the wage level. In a number of enterprises, the piece rates were reduced by the manager right after the first records of the Stakhanovists. That's what the Soviet worker senses and that's what alarms him. And he seeks the road of self-defense, and protests in his own way, as we have seen from the facts reported.

It is very probable that we are on the eve of serious defensive economic struggles of the working class in the U.S.S.R. This struggle will inevitably take on, at the beginning, a discordant and partisan character. The working class in the U.S.S.R. has no trade unions, has no party. Those completely degenerated bureaucratic organization which call themselves trade unions, are considered by the bureaucrats themselves (those of other organizations) as a bankrupt appendix of the economic organisms of the state. This avowal is openly made in the Soviet press.

The questions of the defense of the economic interests of the working class in the U.S.S.R. will, in the very near future, acquire an enormous importance. The workers will inevitably aspire to create *their* organizations, however primitive they may be, but at least capable of defending the direct interests of the workers in the field of the working day, of rest, of vacations and of wages, and to put up a wall against the pressure of the bureaucracy in the

direction of intensification, under cover of the Stakhanovist movement or any other.

The task of the Bolshevik-Leninists is to help the working class of the U.S.S.R. in this struggle against the enormous bureaucratic deviations in the field of the raising of the productivity of labor. Especially must the advanced Soviet worker be helped—on the basis of active participation in increasing the economic power of the country—to formulate correctly, to launch and to popularize among the masses demands, fundamental slogans, a sort of minimum program of the defense of the interests of the working class

against the bureaucracy, its arbitrariness, its violations, its privileges, its corruption. It is very likely that on the basis of the industrial successes and of a certain rise in the standard of living of the masses, at least of its upper layers,—a rise lagging far behind the industrial gains—the Soviet worker, in this manner, that is, by the defense of his elementary economic interests, will once more associate himself with political struggle. Thus will be opened before the October revolution a perspective of regeneration.

N. MARKIN

December 12, 1935

The Spirit of the U. S. Constitution

“THE SUPREME Court was never given the power it wields. It has usurped that power.” This cry, now being raised by the Rooseveltian liberals, has been on other occasions also a useful plank for demagogues. LaFollette ran his 1925 presidential campaign on that issue. Borah raised it in 1923. Teddy Roosevelt toyed with it on occasion and, of course, Jefferson and Jackson made excellent political capital out of it. So often has this cry of usurpation been raised, that one might well ask its present trumpeters: how is it that the Supreme Court has always bobbed up, unscathed and with ever growing power, after every “assault” upon it?

This cry of usurpation is, indeed, a very dangerous piece of demagogery. It implies that an otherwise pure democratic system of government has been perverted by the unnatural powers usurped by the Supreme Court, and that the pure stream of democracy may be restored by removing the Supreme Court. The notion of usurpation reeks of parliamentary cretinism: it is blind to the class rôle of the government as a whole—including the most representative organ, Congress—and the dependence of all governmental phenomena upon the real relation of forces outside in the world of capitalist ownership and class struggle.

But this “blindness” is itself a class phenomenon. That the Supreme Court is but one of a host of instrumentalities and principles embodied in the Constitution by its makers to thwart forever the possibility of majority rule; that the Founding Fathers had as their fundamental aim the erection of such permanent barriers; that the hostility to majority rule is, in fact, the very essence of the Constitution—such ideas are repugnant to the ruling class, which prefers to perpetuate the myth that the Constitution is a democratic document. “The ruling ideas of the epoch are the ideas of the ruling class.” In their very “dissent”, therefore, the Roosevelt liberals reveal their class loyalty and continue to perpetuate this democratic myth, the classless theory of the state.

Clio’s voice is muted by such powerful forces. The true history of the writing of the Constitution is available enough in the libraries for the student; but in the main it is the democratic myth which prevails in the textbooks and the universities, not to speak of the movies, radio and politics.

And now poor Clio may well despair, for—no doubt after re-reading the press-clippings of LaFollette’s 1924 campaign—the communist party has issued a manifesto (*Daily Worker*, Jan. 11) and numerous “historical” articles, embracing the “usurpation” theory; the Stalinists have, indeed, become the chief purveyors of this anti-Marxian and factually-discredited theory.

The question of the powers given to the Supreme Court is, however, but one aspect of a much broader question that needs to be answered first: what is the nature of the Constitution? To answer this question at all, one must recall the main characteristics of the historical epoch which produced the Constitution.

When imperial Britain’s leading strings began to turn into fetters on colonial America’s further development, and the New England merchants and the Southern planters took to the road of independence, they faced the fact that the struggle against England involved serious dangers at home. The strong hand of England had upheld the oligarchical rule of merchant and planter over small farmer and artisan. What would happen when this strong hand was gone?

Nor was it merely that merchant and planter would now have to rule without England’s aid. To fight England required the drawing into political life of the workingmen and farmers; once the colonies were free, would merchant and planter be able to dismiss the lower classes back to their subordinate rôle? The events of 1764-1766, when the workingmen backed up by mob violence frightened the merchants off for years. They wondered “whether the Men who excited this seditious Spirit in the People have it in their power to suppress it”. Many of those who became Tories did so, like Joseph Galloway of Pennsylvania, because they “feared the tyranny of mob rule more than the tyranny of Parliament”. Even James Otis roundly denounced mob riots, saying that “no possible circumstances, though ever so oppressive, could be supposed sufficient to justify private tumults and disorders”. The merchants and planters would have preferred to fight England by methods which did not require drawing the masses into the struggle. The formation, by Boston and New York workingmen, of the Sons of Liberty, which performed the actual work of violence in 1764 and 1765, and which did not grow into a revolutionary inter-colonial organization at that time only because the Stamp Act was repealed, was an alarming sign that the masses might go forward for their own objectives once the fight with England was over.

The menace of farmers’ demands was even more disturbing. In New England, the wealthier families had been able to take the lion’s share of the coastal lands only by suppressing the demands of the poorer farmers and the former indentured servants. The tidewater planters had preëmpted the rich tobacco lands, forcing former servants into the backwoods. The struggle over taxation found the same classes in opposition, the farmers particularly complaining that they paid on their whole estate while merchants easily concealed assets. Especially bitter was the struggle over paper money, the debtors desiring to pay off debts and taxes with progressively depreciating paper money, while the prospering merchants wanted stable currency; uprisings of debtors threatened, and Riot Acts were passed against them; it was only Parliament’s prohibition of paper money (1763), that turned the farmers’ attack from their home merchants to England. These economic oppositions naturally also found expression in a struggle over representation. Under the colonial charters, office-holders were required to have larger properties than voters, thus weeding out many representatives of the lower classes; property franchises were general throughout the colonies, leaving mechanics and artisans, and some

of the farmers, especially former indentured servants, voteless; even more irksome was the inequitable representation of the "back country" as against the coastal counties, which was one of the most bitterly contested issues throughout the colonial period.

Class stood arrayed against class. This is the main explanation for the hesitation and dilatoriness of merchant and planter in launching the final struggle against England. But they finally had to plunge.

The exigencies of revolutionary warfare gave more and more power to the artisans and backwoods farmers. Not only England's restraining hand disappeared, but a large part of the upper classes—British placemen, commercial agents, great landowners and merchants—sided with England, and had to be suppressed. The local Committees of Safety took over most governmental powers. They took charge of providing armed forces for the struggle. But, since the loyalists were far more numerous than the British army ever became, the apparatus for suppressing the loyalists was even more important. It was, in fact, civil war; and to wage it successfully meant political activation of the masses. Disarming parties went from house to house to seize loyalist weapons. Terrorization of loyalists by mob violence, tarring and feathering, arbitrary arrest, forcible exile, suspension of all their civil rights, forced confessions or recantations, confiscation of property, and not a few executions; "the patriot organization for holding in check and destroying loyalism was fully as systematic, elaborate and far-reaching as the military establishment which Washington and his generals directed against the British regular army," says a noted authority, Fisher. The local committees had, of course, no legal basis; they had no status other than revolutionary necessity. As the revolution progressed, however, they had grown so accustomed to dealing with the loyalists, that they regarded it as an established and legalized procedure; an account of tars and feathers inflicted on a New Jersey loyalist closes with the words: "The whole was conducted with that regularity and decorum that ought to be observed in all public punishments."

The astute leaders of the merchants and planters were clearly aware of the dangers involved in thus drawing in the masses into state power. Alexander Hamilton tried to check confiscation of property and expulsion of loyalists but was powerless, even after the treaty of peace of 1783. In 1784 the loyalists in New York were disfranchised and disqualified from holding office, and debts due them were cancelled on condition that one-fortieth was paid into the state treasury. Hamilton saw his natural allies driven out by an agrarian majority who were his natural enemies. Earlier in the struggle, contemplating the "rule of the mob", John Adam was so troubled that he asked:

"Is this the object for which I have been contending, said I to myself . . . are these the sentiments of such people, and how many of them are there in the country? Half the nation, for what I know; for half the nation are debtors, if not more; and these have been in all countries the sentiments of debtors. If the power of the country should get into such hands, and there is a great danger that it will, to what purpose have we sacrificed our time, health and everything else?" (*Works*, Vol. II, p. 420.)

The masses had their way, too, about issuance of a progressively depreciating currency. Having "commonly pledged the half or whole of their estates for the preservation of their sacred liberties", the provincial bodies evinced a uniform determination to pass the sacrifice on by way of a depreciating currency. Any opposition to this course was frustrated by the need of mass support for the struggle. As the currency depreciated and men refused to sell lands, houses or merchandize for nearly worthless paper, their stores were closed or pillaged, merchants mobbed, fined and imprisoned, as the agrarian-controlled legislatures declared the Con-

tinental legal tender. Congress, if anything, outdid the state legislatures, for after a solemn declaration that the Continentals would not be depreciated—"A bankrupt, faithless republic would be a novelty in the political world, and appear among respectable nations like a common prostitute among chaste and respectable matrons"—Congress adopted six months later a plan to redeem the money at one-fortieth of its nominal value. Progressive depreciation enabled the farmers to pay off debts and taxes; the last years of the war was a debtors' paradise. Madison is authority for the statement that the paper-money laws and the "stay-laws" against foreclosures were the primary reason for calling the Constitutional Convention.

The small farmers controlled the revolutionary state governments which superseded the colonial charters. They did not do away with property qualifications for suffrage, so that a large part of the mechanics and artisans, as well as some former indentured servants, remained voteless, a condition for which the agrarians were to pay dearly when the Constitution was submitted to the electorate; but the new state governments gave sufficiently more equitable representation to the back country to enable the farmers to hold consistent majorities.

The form of government introduced by the agrarian majorities confirmed all the fears of the conservatives. The colonial governments had been, generally, subordinated to a royal- or proprietary-appointed governor who appointed the members of the upper legislative house, convened and dissolved the legislature, had an unqualified veto power over it, and appointed the judges and all other civil and military officers. In sharp contrast to this, the new state governments were based on the principle of legislative supremacy. The governor's veto power was entirely abolished in all but two states, his appointive power taken away or restricted, his term of office cut to one year in ten states, in New York and New England he was elected by the voters, in the other eight states by the legislature. The supremacy of the legislature is also shown by its powers over the judiciary; in nine states the judges were elected by the legislature, in the others they were controlled by the legislature's hold on governor and council who did the appointing. Annual elections of judges in three states, removal in six states by the executive on an address from the legislature, and simple methods of impeachment by the legislature, guaranteed considerable direct control over the judiciary. Most important of all, the judges had no power of voiding laws of the legislature. The theory of division of powers among legislative, executive and judicial departments, the system of checks and balances, embodied later in the Constitution, find no semblance in the constitutions of the revolutionary state governments.

The first federal constitution, the Articles of Confederation, framed under the impulse of the revolution, is also a democratic document. All the powers were vested in a single legislative body, the Continental Congress, which was unchecked by an executive or judiciary.

Fiercely opposed to the levelling doctrines of these governments, merchant and planter nevertheless submitted for the duration of the revolution; for the brunt of the struggle lay on the farming masses and the artisans, who took seriously the democratic implications of the theory of natural rights by which the revolution was justified. The sailors' and workers' interests were directly bound up with perpetuation and expansion of colonial commerce, and the farmers of the Northern and Middle Colonies were dependent for cash incomes on the sale of their cereals and meats to the West Indies and Europe; this provided common ground with the merchants and planters. But the masses had their own grievances against England: prohibition of paper currency, vetoing of debtor legislation, raising of cost of goods by duties, levying of direct

taxes, and these were the issues which made the revolution *popular*. The literature of the time shows, too, that the masses understood that further liberty could come only after England was out of the way. In their opposition to the democratic state governments, their paper money and stay-laws, merchant and planter dared not come into fundamental opposition to the objectives for which the masses were laying down their lives. As one contemporary put it: "Thoughtful patriots, who deplored the confusion, the turmoil and the mobs, nevertheless felt satisfied that it was a phase through which we must pass, a price which we must pay for independence. The long years of anarchy were trying, terrible and disgusting; but to remain the political slaves of England was, they said, infinitely worse." They bided their time.

Once the treaty of peace was signed in 1783, the conservatives began to fight back. One of the main issues was depreciating paper money. In 1785 seven legislatures emitted new paper money, and the atmosphere of the struggle against it was one of impending civil war. When an armed mob in New Hampshire demanded unlimited paper money; when mobs in Massachusetts prevented the courts from sitting on foreclosure cases, and Daniel Shays attempted to close the courts altogether by armed force; when event after event showed merchant and planter that only a decisive transformation of the situation would insure their domination, there was talk among them of a military dictatorship, if necessary.

In the ensuing struggle from which they emerged so victorious, they were aided by the historical impotence of the agrarian population, with its narrow, provincial outlook. The agrarian opposition remained locked up in each state, often unconnected within the boundaries of one state; of a tendency toward a national coordination or organization of the agrarian forces, there was not a sign. The agrarians proved incapable of understanding the need of a centralized government for the further development of commerce and industry. The only opposition to merchant and planter which might have been successful was one which could combine democratic demands with centralized governmental power. Such a program could not come from the agrarians, with their hopelessly local outlook. They opposed every attempt to increase the powers of the government while it was still under the democratic Articles of Confederation. They levied duties on goods transported from one state to another, and carried on commercial wars of retaliation with each other, so that shipping and manufacturing were handicapped by multiple and conflicting tariff policies. The finances of the Confederation were dependent on payments by the agrarian legislatures, which held them back, with the result that even the interest on foreign obligations was unpaid, the revolutionary soldiers did not receive the funds voted them, and the government was paralyzed. Rival claims of the states, the inability of the government to provide protection and facilities for settlement, kept the Western lands closed. The lack of a national currency was an impediment to national commerce and industry. These various needs provided the conservatives with powerful arguments in favor of the Constitution; actually they were arguments only in favor of a strong national government, and in no way justified the anti-democratic character of the Constitution. But this was a distinction which the agrarians were incapable of making.

So long as the revolutionary struggle provided a common objective for all classes, and the national army and navy and the Continental Congress (permitted wide powers during the struggle) provided a national framework, the farmers had, by their local assumption of power against the loyalists, constituted the flesh and blood of a powerful, national state power. But when the classes went their separate ways, the power of the farmers frittered itself away in petty local struggles; they even lost control of some of the state legislatures. This incapacity for large-scale common action is all the more damning as a characteristic of the agrarian

population, if one takes into consideration that the American agrarians were not subsistence farmers, but commercial farmers dependent in large measure on cash crops. Money payment of taxes, that sure index to the development of a highly-developed commercial agriculture, was established in Massachusetts as early as 1694 and soon became universal. Under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, they had fought against the England which closed its ports to their cereals and meats and hampered trade with the foreign West Indies and Europe; but when England, after the Revolution, continued to close its ports to their produce, they would not give the national government the necessary powers to institute retaliatory measures. Further development of commercial agriculture clearly depended on a strong state power, the growth of cities, the development of commerce and industry; the agrarians could see no further than their county-seats.

The largest section of the population, then, the freehold farmer, was incapable of bringing forward a program which combined the necessary national centralization with democratic forms of government. The artisans and mechanics in the towns, resembling more the prototype of the manufacturing *entrepreneur* than the proletarian, earning comparatively good wages, and daily aware of the dependence of his well-being on the development of capitalist enterprise, constituted too small and rapidly changing a class to bring forward the necessary program.

The former revolutionary vanguard, the ideologists like Samuel Adams and Josiah Warren, Jefferson, Madison and Patrick Henry, who had rallied the farming masses against England with their passionate enunciations of the rights of man, not only did not come forward to provide leadership to the masses in the new situation, but sided with their enemies. This significant fact is obscured by the struggles which came *after* the Constitution, and therefore deserves emphasis. Adams, Warren and their associates from the commercial bourgeoisie returned after the Revolution to their class allegiance, and played no further rôle; this is sufficiently indicated by the fact that Samuel Adams, in the debates over the Constitution, supported the principle of judicial supremacy.

Jefferson, Madison and Henry represented the interests of the planting aristocracy of the tidewater regions of the South, large-scale commercial farmers producing one main cash crop (tobacco). They were scarcely the bearers of a democratic tradition; they were then passing from the use of dictatorially-treated indentured servants to chattel Negro slaves as their main labor supply; they had preëmpted the best growing lands and driven the smaller farmers back into the piedmont region; in the state legislatures they were fighting the representatives of the back-country. Before the Revolution one of their chief links to the small farmers of New England and the middle colonies had been their common interest in depreciating paper currency; for the peculiar business relations between the planters and their British agents (who extended credit before selling the crop, resulting in chronic overbuying by the planters) made the planters perennial debtors; British claims after the war were almost entirely against the plantation provinces. But having successfully repudiated their debts to England, the planters had become terrified during the war at the effects of paper money, and joined now with the merchants to prohibit it. Indeed, the sole link between the Southern planters and the small farmers was a reactionary one: the provincial demand for states rights against centralized government. But the planters were also the chief speculators in Western lands, and could not cash in without the aid of a centralized government. Concessions were made to them in the constitution (three-fifths of slaves to be counted for representation and taxation; importation of slaves not to be forbidden before a lapse of twenty years; as a check on commercial agreements detrimental to the planters a two-third Senate vote for ratifying treaties; equal representation

of states in the Senate) but they had nothing to do with democracy.

The planters were later to fall out with the commercial bourgeoisie, when Hamilton's bold and far-seeing policy of developing commerce and industry showed by its first fruits that the planters were eventually to become subordinate; and then the planter ideologists, seeking the agrarian masses as allies, reverted to the democratic slogans of the Revolution. But on the main issues *against the agrarian masses*, the planter ideologists joined the mercantile aristocracy in drafting the Constitution.

Merchant and planter vied with each other in denouncing legislative supremacy and finding ways and means to do away with it in the Constitution. Randolph of Virginia, seeking a "cure for the evils under which the United States labored", declared that "in tracing these evils to their origin, every man had found it in the turbulence and follies of democracy; that some check therefore was to be sought for against this tendency; and a good Senate seemed most likely to answer the purpose". Another planter ideologist, Madison, declared the problem before the Constitutional Convention was to secure private rights "against majority factions", and warned:

"An increase of population will of necessity increase the proportion of those who will labor under all the hardships of life and secretly sigh for a more equal distribution of its blessings. These may in time outnumber those who are placed above the feelings of indigence. According to the equal law of suffrage, the power will slide into the hands of the former. No agrarian attempts have yet been made in this country, but symptoms of a levelling spirit, as we have understood, have sufficiently appeared, in a certain quarter, to give notice of the future danger." (*Debates*, Elliot, Vol. V, p. 243.)

Such was this great democrat's conclusions from Shays' Rebellion!

The banner-bearer of "Jeffersonian Democracy" was American Minister in Paris during the Constitutional Convention. In a letter to Madison, dated December 20, 1787, Jefferson wrote:

"I like the organization of the government into Legislative, Judiciary and Executive. . . . And I like the negative given to the Executive with a third of either house, though I should have liked it better had the Judiciary been associated for that purpose, or invested with a separate and similar power."

In other letters of that year Jefferson said the bill of rights was needed "to guard liberty against the legislative as well as the executive branches" and was to be favored because of "the legal check which it puts into the hands of the judiciary". That his later quarrel with the Federalist-controlled Supreme Court was not as the champion of democracy, but as the reactionary defendant of states rights, is seen from a letter of 1798 in which Jefferson, speaking of his own state of Virginia, writes that "the laws of the land, administered by upright judges, would protect you from any exercise of power unauthorized by the Constitution of the United States" (*Writings*, Vol. IV, p. 475; Vol. V, p. 76; Vol. VII, p. 281.)

Patrick Henry, though he was not at the Constitutional Convention, declared that it was "the highest encomium of this country, that the acts of the legislature, if unconstitutional, are liable to be opposed by the judiciary".

The position of the planter ideologists is here emphasized because their later struggle with the Federalists has tended to obscure their essential agreement with the Federalists on the drafting of an anti-democratic Constitution.

How thoroughly did the Convention extirpate the democratic conquests won by the masses in the Revolution! So long as the Constitution endured, there would never again be a "debtor majority" that could legally have its way. The so-called division of powers, of checks and balances, had no other function except to

prevent such a majority. No matter how far the suffrage would be extended, the majority would never rule. "Who would have thought, ten years ago, that the very men who risked their lives and fortunes in support of republican principles would now treat them as the fictions of fancy?" declared an agrarian at the New York ratifying convention. The Constitutional Convention combined its anti-democratic aims with political astuteness, however; democratic ideas had made sufficient progress among the masses to put an insurmountable obstacle in the way of any plan of government which did not pretend to confer the form of political power upon the people; this form was provided in the House of Representatives, for as Elbridge Gerry nicely put it, "the people should appoint one branch of the government in order to inspire them with the necessary confidence". It was a wise move and has served to obscure the essentially undemocratic character of the Constitution ever since.

Having given the people the semblance of power, the representatives of property reserved for themselves the reality: A small Senate. Executive control over the Congress. Judicial supremacy over the Congress*. Presidential power to send troops into states to suppress domestic insurrection. Overwhelming obstacles to amendment of the Constitution. Various limitations on the power of the states, especially a prohibition against emission of paper currency. In masterly fashion and with eyes ever on their objective of safeguarding property rights and forever preventing majority rule, merchant and planter ideologists wrote a document which has effectively served their descendants for a hundred and fifty years.

To a Marxist, it is obvious that the relationship of forces made inevitable the forcing through of the planter-merchant plan of government. With an extraordinary cadre of leadership, easily the equal of that available in any bourgeois revolution; with the two different sections of the ruling class united harmoniously for the struggle to establish the Constitution; with the working class, the only possible class which could oppose the anti-democratic program and yet propose a program of national centralization, as yet present only, one might say, in the interstices of commercial capitalism; with the vast majority, the agrarian masses, dispersed over a large territory with no facilities for common action and with no understanding of the national tasks—it was a foregone conclusion that the Constitution would be imposed.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note with what intelligent strategy the conservatives moved. The Constitutional Convention itself was called ostensibly to suggest amendments to the Articles of Confederation, which would be submitted to the state legisla-

*The numerous ignorant and mendacious statements on this question recently made by the Stalinists would require too much space to correct. But one must expose their fantastic assertion that the Constitutional Convention three times voted down proposals to delegate to the Supreme Court the power of judicial review (*Sunday Worker*, Jan. 19). What the Convention thrice voted down was a proposal that the judges be associated with the President in the exercise of the *veto power*. Madison, who supported the proposal, as "an additional opportunity [for the court] of defending itself against legislative encroachments", nevertheless hesitated to extend the court's jurisdiction to every and all cases under the Constitution. On the

other hand, those who spoke against the proposal were among the most outspoken advocates of judicial supremacy; Elbridge Gerry, for example, in opposing it declared that the judges already had the power to pass on the constitutionality of all legislation. The debate on the veto power proposal is significant, in actuality, as proof of the opposite of the Stalinist claim; for in the debate was clearly enunciated the principle of judicial supremacy. The interested reader should consult Charles A. Beard, *The Supreme Court and the Constitution* (1912), which, to any serious student, conclusively proves that the framers of the Constitution intended to give such powers to the Supreme Court, and that this was generally understood.

tures, the unanimous consent of which was required under the Articles. Circumspection was necessitated by the often-voiced opposition of the agrarians to any considerable overhauling and strengthening of the Articles. By every means at their command, the merchants and planters managed to send their best minds to the Convention. When the fifty-five delegates met, they boldly put aside the Articles and prepared an entirely new document. Instead of submitting it to the Confederation and the agrarian-controlled state legislatures for further revision and perhaps total rejection, they embodied in the Constitution itself the means of its adoption, that it be submitted to special state conventions and go into force as soon as nine conventions approved it. The lack of legal continuity between the Confederation and the Constitution has been a source of embarrassment to constitutional commentators; Professor Burgess, more forthright than the rest, terms it a *coup d'état*.

The ablest pens in America deluged a literate population with dire threats of total chaos if the Constitution were not adopted. The agrarians complained truly enough that if they only had equally talented spokesmen they might have a fairer chance of victory. The opposition, in fact, was left largely in the dark. The Constitutional Convention had not only carried on its deliberations behind doors closed to the public, but had kept no official minutes of the proceedings and debates. It was not until fifty years later, after Madison's death and the publication of his journals, that any real insight into the deliberations became public property.

Without leadership and without an alternative program, the agrarians fought desperately but hopelessly. They had shortsightedly failed to abolish property qualifications for suffrage; they paid for it now by losing the possible votes of the lower classes in the towns. The conservatives put forward their ablest men for the special conventions, including the honored names of the Revolution; poured enormous funds into the election; flooded the country with literature and newspapers and talked the agrarian delegates to exhaustion in the conventions. With a clear vision of their objectives, they made a single mighty effort; after Shays' Rebellion many of them had declared themselves ready to use military force and we may be sure they would have had they failed to carry the Constitution; but, though by a narrow-enough margin, they carried it and thereby riveted its principles on the American masses for as long as the masses continue to play within the rules laid down for them by their masters.

The Founding Fathers were more terrified of majorities than they need have been. "The press is indeed a great means of diminishing the evil; yet it is found to be unable to prevent it altogether," said Gouverneur Morris, who naturally could not foresee the infinitely greater scope of modern methods of indoctrination—movie, radio, tabloid, public school, etc.—and the power of modern political machines with their armies of precinct captains, ward-

heelers and thugs. Any serious struggle of the masses can find at best only an extremely imperfect reflection in the parliamentary arena. Witness the fact that no workers' representative of any variety sits today in Congress.

The arena of constitutional government is, in fact, an arena in which only those whose differences are subordinate to their fundamentally common interests, can settle their differences with each other. Any serious outbreak of the class struggle will find the Constitution scrapped by both sides.

But even the sections of the bourgeoisie, in their struggle with each other, win advantages or lose them not in the realm of government but in the more important realm of production. The slaveholders controlled the national government, lock, stock and barrel, from 1848 to 1860, yet it was precisely in those years that industrial capitalism finally outstripped the South. Teddy Roosevelt "busted" the trusts, Wilson brought the "New Democracy" to Washington—to the end that it had finally to be admitted that trustification was here to stay. How much more true, therefore, must it be that the working class will win its battles outside the parliamentary arena!

This was once a commonplace of the Left wing labor movement; only the degeneration of the Comintern makes it necessary to stress such an elementary fact. In every capitalist country, including America, the strike weapon was illegal until long after the workers, by struggle in the industrial arena, had actually won the right to strike by the simple method of persisting in its use. Only after this became an accomplished fact were the laws revised. To strike is now a right under bourgeois democracy: yet the specific content of the right varies from state to state and from year to year; for its actual content is based, not on the given law, but on the real relation of class forces in the given situation.

The electoral struggle has its functions in a well-rounded revolutionary movement; Liebknecht, Lenin and Trotsky have shown us how a tribune ascending the rostrum can call the masses to struggle. But the object of struggle will be secured, not in the parliamentary arena, but in the field and factory and street. Only that power welded by hands joined in field and factory and street can be relied on by the proletariat today.

Let the liberals and the Stalinists build their reformist edifices; they will crumble at the first blow. We, however, still stand with Marx in his answer to the reformists of his day:

"It is only in an order of things in which there will be no longer classes or class antagonism that *social evolutions* will cease to be *political revolutions*. Until then, on the eve of each general reconstruction of society, the last word of social science will ever be:

"'Combat or death: bloody struggle or extinction,

"'It is thus that the question is irresistibly put.'"

Felix MORROW

The Question of Organic Unity

IT IS AN instructive and, in its own way, an entertaining political exercise to sit down for a few hours with a file of the *Daily Worker* and to compare recent issues with those of three or even two years ago. It is hard in any other way, even for those who follow events carefully day by day, to realize the breath-taking extent of the turn of the Communist International. To a man from a political Mars—let us say, a serious and interested observer from outside the labor movement—the contrast could appear only as a lawless and inexplicable fantasy. Can the horned social-Fascist sprout comradely wings almost over-night? Can a ponderous Federation of Labor change, chameleon-like, from a main agent of finance capital to the chief bulwark of the workers?

Can the church, the overpowering ideological tyrant of the masses, become at one breath the great ally against war? Can the dove of peace so gracefully settle over Geneva, that charnel house of imperialist bandits? Our eyes, scanning the past and present of the *Daily Worker*, bear the witness that these things can indeed be, that in fact they are. Moreover—it is the *Daily Worker* itself again which informs us—they can be without contradiction, representing all of them merely the consistent revolutionary Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist line of the Comintern, one and indivisible.

Now there is a certain truth in the contention of the *Daily Worker* that the line of the Communist International during the two periods is consistent, though the consistency is of course not

one of avowed policy and approved tactic. It is consistent in the sense that the line in both periods, in the face of differing international conditions, represents the interests of the reactionary bureaucracy now in control of the Soviet Union. There is a historical lawfulness underlying the chaotic surface, which clarifies and gives meaning to that surface. Marxists do not explain political events in terms of the psychological aberrations and peculiarities of individuals, even when these individuals are Stalins or Mussolinis. The new line of the Comintern is neither the result of Stalin's suddenly "coming to his senses after the adventurism of the Third Period", nor of his unexpectedly slipping from revolutionary grace after years of Leninist intransigence. The new line is the necessary consequence of the whole course of Stalinism as it works out in the period following the defeat in Germany and the intensification of the war crisis.

However, what I am here concerned with are certain features of the new line itself, certain new problems to which it gives rise, and in particular the problem of "organic unity" which is posed as a result of the application of the new line on an international scale.

It must, first of all, be understood that the new line of the Communist International was not "created" by the Seventh Congress. The turn began—at first somewhat erratically and on local fronts—a few months after Hitler came to power. It had already gained powerful international momentum by last summer. The Seventh Congress formulated a confused, hypocritical and deceptive account of what had already, in considerable part, taken place. The Seventh Congress, however, also speeded up the application of the new turn, drew out its implications more fully and whipped the few falterers into harness.

If we examine the political meaning of the resolutions and speeches of the Seventh Congress, we naturally enough find it resting firmly on the doctrine of socialism in one country, the heart and lungs of Stalinism. That is to say, it rests on the denial of revolutionary internationalism, on the *bureaucratic* conception of utopia in one's own pasture and the devil take the neighbor's. This doctrine was firmly embedded in the Sixth Congress, and in the program of the C.I., which was its product. Its immediate consequence, indeed its concomitant, was the *bureaucratization* of the party: in other words, the denial of one primary principle of Marxism was achieved only by the denial of another—of the principle of democratic centralism in the structure of the party.

But it was of course impossible for Stalinism to stop at this point. And in the records of the Seventh Congress we find that the gangrene, spreading inevitably from its original source throughout the organism, has poisoned in turn the other fundamental principles of revolutionary Marxism. This is above all clear in the case of two decisive questions: the theory of the state, and the principles of the struggle against imperialist war. The Seventh Congress bases itself on Kautsky's conception of the state, and on social-patriotism.

The adoption of the revisionist theory of the state—the abandonment of the uncompromising conception of the state as the executive committee of the class enemy—is shown in every crucial position adopted by the Seventh Congress. The possibility of coalition governments—governments in collaboration with bourgeois parties (so long as these are "anti-Fascist")—was not merely recognized but advocated. In the place of the Marxian policy of defense of the democratic rights of the workers and exploited masses, the resolutions of the Congress advocate defense of bourgeois democracy: that is, defense of one form of the class rule of the bourgeoisie. The revolutionary struggle for workers' power gives way, in the speech of Dimitroff, to the purely negative

and defensive conception of a coalition government of the "anti-Fascist People's Front" which by a mysterious process of dialectic will pass into "the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants" and hence into socialism.

Thoroughgoing social-patriotism is erected into basic dogma. Support of the governments of any country allied with the Soviet Union in a war crisis is made obligatory. The Geneva League of Imperialists becomes the stronghold of world peace. All communists are called upon to support League (i.e., imperialist) sanctions against "aggressors"—in other words, to support their imperialist governments when these governments chance to fit into the momentary plans of Stalin. The wars of "democratic" nations against Fascist nations (France against Germany, the United States against Japan) are no longer imperialist but "just" and "progressive" wars.

The results of the cumulating abandonment of Marxian principles by the Comintern, both before and since the Seventh Congress, are showing themselves in every field of practical activity. Throughout the world, the dual "red" trade unions have been rapidly thrown overboard, and their members ordered back into the main body of the trade union movement. But far from representing a correction of the sectarian isolationism of the "Third Period", the movement back into the mass trade unions has been carried out in the form of a capitulation to the old-line reformist trade union bureaucrats. The Comintern has even gone so far as to announce willingness to dissolve the party fractions in the unions, or in other words to abandon every form of revolutionary activity in the basic organizations of the working class.

Beginning with France, the slogans for a People's Front of capitulation to a middle class program have been mechanically extended to all countries. In England, the communist party has formally applied for admission to the Labour party. In France, the communist party, through the People's Front, has steadfastly supported the Laval-Herriot government and has become the most ardent defender of "the (bourgeois) republic" against its opponents from the right—and from the left. In Czechoslovakia, the communist electors voted for Benes in the recent election. In Great Britain, the communist party put forward only three independent candidates in the General Elections. In all countries, including the United States, the communist parties are supporting in elections socialists, "labor" candidates, and even various types of "fusion" and liberal tickets. In Wisconsin, the communist party has entered into the strange *mélange* of the LaFollettes, Hoan, farm coöperatives, milk producers, etc., which will probably support Roosevelt in the Fall elections. The "anti-war" meetings and demonstrations are turned over almost exclusively to ministers, generals, rabbis, Negro fakers, lazy liberals, and "sympathetic" Congressmen and politicians out for a few votes. The Stalinists have become the great expounders of "the French approach", "the American approach", "the Spanish approach" . . . in a most confused and reactionary form." Communists now "love their country" and "their country's flag" (see the *Daily Worker*, Dec. 20).

In all of these concrete day-by-day developments, one general fact is of central importance in the present connection: on each issue the communist parties in their new turn approach the practices and methods of social democracy. Consequently, in the concrete question of the relations to social democracy we find this same trend. The united front with the socialist comrades has become a central slogan. And a united front *at all costs*, on any terms. The Stalinists declare themselves willing to achieve the united front at any sacrifice of program, principle, or organizational prestige. They will turn over full profits on a debate with the same "conciliatory" spirit that they let socialists write the program and make the key speeches.

But, naturally, this presupposes what has likewise been accomplished during the last year and a half, and given theoretical formulation at the Seventh Congress: namely, the abandonment, in its entirety, of the theory of social-Fascism. One remembers with at least a touch of irony how even two years ago any attack on this theory was greeted by howls of "Trotskyism". No spokesman for the C. I. has bothered to clarify what was wrong with the theory or why it was abandoned. It was just quietly, in the dark of political night, dumped overboard. And the social-Fascist, objective twin (*not* antipodes) of Fascism, has become the closest comrade.

When we search to the political roots, there is of course nothing surprising in the *rapprochement* with social democracy. The truth of the matter is this: the present program of the C. I., in the key questions of principle, *is itself a social democratic program*. Consider the great polemics which Lenin directed against social democracy. They were directed precisely against those ideas which form the foundation arches of the current C. I. program: against the abandonment of revolutionary internationalism, against the revisionist theory of the state, against social-patriotism. And the present social democratization of the C. I. program leaves it not less, but on the whole more to the Right than classic social democracy. It is the dregs of social democracy, in their most vicious form, which the C. I., in political fundamentals, has taken over. Consequently, proceeding from reactionary social democratic principles, the C. I. is necessarily led to reactionary social democratic practise. And, with the same necessity, it is led to the *rapprochement* with the organization which holds first title to these principles and practises: to the parties of the Second International.

II.

On their side, the parties of the Second International have not stood still during the past two and a half years. It is incorrect to say—as has sometimes been said—that the C. I. did not react from the catastrophe in Germany, the Austrian and Spanish events, and the sharpening of the war crisis. The new line of the C. I. represents just this reaction. The new line is the frantic, mechanical and disastrous response of the opportunist and reactionary bureaucracy of the Soviet Union to the recent international developments. Because of the rigidly bureaucratized structure of the communist parties, this response has been translated directly and entirely throughout the sections of the C. I. The new line does not in any sense represent a deepening of the experience of the masses in general or of the membership of the communist parties. It has been imposed arbitrarily from above, and serves only to disorient further the rank and file members, and non-party workers under Stalinist influence. It is the further extension of a disease, not a step on the road back to health. And, thanks to the monolithism of the C. I., the new line is carried out immediately and uniformly on an international scale. This does not mean that it does not meet with a certain resistance from the genuinely proletarian elements in the Stalinist ranks. But such resistance is prevented from developing in a normal fashion; it is suffocated almost at birth. Critics are simply tossed aside as "Trotskyists", and the bureaucracy goes along at its own pace.

On the other hand, the response to the events of the past two and a half years within world social democracy has been thoroughly different in character. Partly this follows from the differing structural form of the Second International from that of the Third International. The international organization of the parties of the Second International is far looser; uniformity is not demanded from the affiliated national organizations; and a very considerable variety of principle and practice is possible. Variety of opinion

of course revolves on the whole within certain more or less definite limits; but at the present time, largely because of the impact of world events, these limits are wider than normal. As a consequence we find that the response to the present crisis by world social democracy is openly expressed not merely by the reaction of the international and national bureaucracies—as in the case of the C.I. and its sections—but by ferment and turmoil from within the parties, deeper down into the ranks of the members. These represent, usually in distorted and confused forms, more genuine efforts to learn from historical experience and to draw more appropriate conclusions than is possible to hardened bureaucracies.

The ferment partly takes the form of the factional struggles now being waged within the social democracy, one phase of which has recently come to a head in this country. We are confronted by a maze of conflicting currents. There are the politically ossified reformists who resist every clamor of history—such as the "Old Guard" group in this country or the trade union officials of the British Labour party. There are the Right-Centrists, of whom the Austro-Marxists are the most outstanding, who, without undergoing any genuinely progressive development, nevertheless have found it necessary to alter their phraseology in order to provide sufficient red coloration to hold the allegiance of their Leftward moving following. The old formula of "peaceful evolution toward socialism" no longer serves; and they now include phrases about armed defense by the workers "if the counter-revolution resorts to force". Social-patriotism of the 1914 defense-of-the-fatherland variety gives way to new forms involving defense of the Soviet Union and of democracy against Hitler and Fascism. Blum, as well as Bauer, Dan and the rest, is probably to be included in this tendency. A certain distance further to the Left are to be found such forces as the Socialist League in England and the Thomas group in this country, in the case of which outright social-patriotism is replaced by a kind of Left pacifism. Further to the Left are the Centrists of the type of the Militants in this country, who can issue programs close to Marxism on many of the key questions.

Now, the crucial point is that all of these (and other) varieties of *Centrism* which are appearing openly within the social democratic parties reflect much deeper movements to the Left on the part of the rank and file membership of the parties. These movements are the response of the membership to the triumph of Hitler, the Austrian and Spanish events, the war crisis and the general deepening of the capitalist contradictions. They are reflected at various stages of their development by the factional groupings and re-groupings in the leadership, and by new programs, resolutions and policies which more or less accurately express them. In certain cases, the leadership and programs—as, for example, in the case of the Right Centrists—represents objectively an effort to *prevent*, to turn aside and barricade the Leftward movement from below from finding its full historical expression in the revolutionary Marxian position. In others the factional programs and ideas are in a sense steps on the road to clarification. However, with the exception of certain sections of the French socialist youth and smaller sections of the French adult party, almost no open and organized expression of the completion of the Leftward movement within the ranks of the social democracy is yet to be found. Such expression—i.e., a Marxian program and Marxian tactics—presupposes the active intervention of Marxists; the Leftward movement can be consummated only by becoming fully conscious, by its union with Marxism. That this should have been accomplished, if only so far to a minor extent, in France is due to two factors: the advance in France of the class struggle toward a revolutionary crisis; and, second, the direct intervention of the Bolshevik-Leninists in the internal development of the French Socialist party.

From even so brief a survey of the social democracy, a conclusion of primary importance emerges: Understood concretely, in terms of historical actuality, that is of change, movement, and development, the parties of the Second International stand today *to the Left* of the parties of the Third International. Even the programs of the Left Centrist groupings are far to the Left of the current program and strategy of the C. I., as the positions on war so strikingly reveal. But more than this is involved. The fundamental point is that *now* (it is about *now* that we are speaking), in terms of the dynamics of development, the parties of the Second International contain within them far greater progressive *potentialities* than the Stalinist parties.

III.

A review of the present positions of the parties of the Second and Third Internationals provides the requisite background for a correct understanding of the problem of "organic unity" as it now presents itself to the labor movement.

Abstractly considered, in the full literal sense, "organic unity" refers to the actual fusion of the parties of the two Internationals, and of the two Internationals themselves. But this would be the completion of a *process*, and cannot be treated merely in the abstract. Actual organic unity has not of course been accomplished, nor indeed is it to be anticipated in the immediate future. But the process, the completion of which *may* be actual fusion, has already made an extensive beginning.

Let us review certain facts, some of which have been mentioned above, in another connection: The theory of social-Fascism has been entirely abandoned. In all countries the communist parties have either achieved, or are conducting mighty campaigns for, the united front in all fields with the respective parties of the Second International. In Germany and even more in Austria, local united fronts of the underground organizations are apparently widespread. In Great Britain the application for admission of the communist party to the Labour party has been formally made on a thoroughly capitulationist basis. In France the united front was established some time ago, and has been merged into the amorphous and reactionary People's Front. In election campaigns the communist parties put forward increasingly fewer independent candidates, and support "labor" or non-working class candidates. The "red unions" have been almost wholly liquidated into the mass Federations which, in most countries, are under social democratic leadership. For the first time in a decade, last autumn, a meeting of the Second International heard spokesmen of the C. I.; and a majority of the parties represented declared for a united agreement, though action was postponed at the insistence of the dissenting minority. In all "democratic" countries, on the Ethiopian question, the communist parties have lined up with the Right wing of the social democracy.

The process is clearly illustrated in this country. Here the red unions are all back in the fold. Every day the campaigns in the *Daily Worker* for the united front, with sly hints about future "unity", wax louder. Browder and Thomas are debating each other from New York to Chicago. The National Student League and the Student League for Industrial Democracy have been dissolved into the American Student Union. The Unemployment Councils are preparing to liquidate into the socialist-controlled Workers Alliance of America, and have already done so in many localities. The Young Communist League, following the recent Congress of the Young Communist International and in line with its international orientation, has publicly proposed the actual fusion of the Young Communist League with the Young People's Socialist League, and the merging of both into a broad "anti-Fascist" youth movement. In the labor defense field, the Interna-

tional Labor Defense, after so many desert years, is entering into united fronts with the socialist defense committee (e.g., on the Herndon and Scottsboro cases), and is bringing forward slogans of fusion of the defense organizations. Official socialist party observers were present at the third Congress of the American League against War and Fascism; and the communist party has expressed its willingness to dissolve the League into a united front grouping which will include the socialist party. Communist party members are being sent wholesale into the branches of the socialist party and the Y.P.S.L. In the November elections the communist party supported socialist party candidates in many instances throughout the country.

Whoever imagines that "organic unity" is a problem for the future which we can merely sit back and contemplate for the time being simply does not understand what organic unity means. Organic unity, not as an abstraction, but as a *slogan* and a *process*, is *already* operating, is *already* a powerful force in the international labor movement.

IV.

How far, then, will this process of "organic unity" go? Will it be carried to formal completion in the actual merging of the two Internationals and their national sections?

There can be no doubt that, as a slogan and a process, organic unity will go much further than it has up to the present—though even this is a good distance. Of course, from the point of view of the Communist International, organic unity is only part of the total process, one important step on the present road. The Comintern aims not merely to swallow the parties of the Second International, but the "People's Front", and all that goes with it. In desperate fright, the Comintern strives to prepare, in time, a mass following in the democratic countries through which pressure can be put on the home governments to line up with the Soviet Union in the coming war, and to recruit soldiers to be sent into the imperialist armies against the states openly fighting against the Soviet Union—which the Soviet Union expects to be Japan and Germany. For this purpose, which is the key to the Comintern's present policy, the organic unity development is not enough, but is an essential prerequisite.

The forces impelling the drive toward organic unity are, at first sight, irresistible. Above all, it must be understood that the full political basis for organic unity has already been laid. The Seventh Congress records the fact that no essential difference of principle now divides the two Internationals. It is an axiom of Marxism that organizational conclusions tend imperiously to follow from political premises. Today principled political considerations no longer block, but on the contrary, push together the two Internationals.

Secondly, as already indicated, the development of the war crisis, at least in its present direction, dictates organic unity. Stalin needs organic unity, above all in France, Great Britain, Czechoslovakia and the United States, as a step toward the People's Front for defense of the Soviet Union through defense of the imperialist fatherland. Here, too, the perspective of Stalinism coincides with the perspective of social democracy and the major sections of the socialist parties in France, Czechoslovakia and Great Britain, and with the social-patriots within the divided Socialist party of the United States.

Thirdly, there is an unquestionable pressure of the masses of the workers both within and outside of the political parties toward unity in general and thus toward organic unity as a step apparently nearer the goal. The workers are wearied with the long years of division in the labor movement. They sense the imperative need for unity against the onslaught of reaction and war, but they do

so in a confused manner, without understanding clearly the issues involved in the problem of unity; and thus they provide both fertile ground for the treacherous slogans of Stalinism and a pressure from below supplementing these slogans.

These three considerations might seem to make organic unity close to inevitable. Nevertheless, the process, upon further examination, is seen to run up against a contradiction, and it is not yet clear which side of the contradiction will carry the day.

It is true that, at the present moment, the political basis for organic unity is laid. But, though organizational conclusions ordinarily follow from political premises, they do not always do so in a uniform or rapid manner. There are *bureaucratic* obstacles which hinder completion. Thus, the social democratic bureaucracy naturally hesitates to give up its entrenched positions within "its own" organization. And, in the present instance, there are further obstacles.

Though there is now a temporary political coincidence in essential matters between the social democracy and Stalinism, the crucial fact remains that social democracy and Stalinism reach this position from different directions. Social democracy and Stalinism have been and remain *the expression of different class forces and interests*. The social democratic bureaucracy, in a crisis (war, insurrection), functions as the agent of finance capital within the ranks of the working class. The Stalinist bureaucracy, on the other hand, functions as the agent of the corrupt, parasitic and reactionary ruling strata of the Soviet Union—that is, of the *workers' state*—within the ranks of the working class. For the moment, the interests of the two bureaucracies coincide, but because of the differing social roots, there can be no guarantee in advance that they will continue indefinitely in the future to coincide.

Stalinism must attempt to keep a free hand, to be in a position to make another sudden and sharp turn. For example, if the Franco-Soviet Pact should be repudiated, and a *rapprochement* between France and Germany take place, the entire Stalinist policy in France, and the war position of the C. I. as a whole would have to be profoundly altered. This would spike organic unity developments, since Blum and his companions of the S.F.I.O. leadership would in that event, though changing phrases, no doubt still remain basically devoted to the bourgeois fatherland.

For this reason, from the point of view of Stalinism, organic unity is immensely useful as a slogan and in most of its initial phases, but would have grave dangers if carried all the way through. Stalin may find himself in such a tight spot as to have to go through with it, or may find his hold on the rank and file becoming too overwhelming to oppose; but it would unquestionably serve the purposes of Stalinism better to allow organic unity to operate, extensively indeed, but short of consummation in the actual fusion of the two Internationals.

There is another obstacle, of a very different kind, to the completion of the Stalinist capitulatory conception of organic unity. This is the opposition which it meets and will meet *from the Left*. Such opposition is not yet articulate within the communist parties, and, because of their monolithic structure and the systematic mis-education of the membership, has a discouraging prospect in any attempt to come to the surface. Nevertheless it is hard to believe that it will not slowly take form among the proletarian sections still under Stalinist influence, and finally break out, perhaps in a major upheaval. But it is at present and in the immediate future within the Leftward moving sections of the socialist parties that we find and shall find opposition to the organic unity movement *from the Left*. It is already present, though still for the most part in a confused form.

Opposition from the Right wing of social democracy, of course, still continues, appealing largely to memories of the "Third Period"

and doubts as to the "sincerity" of the Stalinists. Such opposition, however, is a comparatively minor matter. The Stalinists are "sincere" enough, in all conscience, and the "Third Period" is already a hazy antique. The line of the C. I. on the key questions is the line of Right wing social democracy. No opposition from the Right, therefore, can stand up indefinitely against the inroads of Stalinism. Only opposition from the Left can be meaningful and effective.

There are, in the socialist parties, growing numbers of Leftward moving members who are coming to realize doubts about Stalinist organic unity which are not at all based on memories of the "Third Period" or worries over sincerity. Rather are they arising from the spectacle of Stalinist capitulation, above all from Stalinist social-patriotism. They begin to wonder whether "one inclusive united party" will be so beneficial to the working class, if it is to be an anti-revolutionary party, a party of social-patriotism to serve as recruiting agent in the coming war. It is in the development of such conceptions that the agitation and activities of the revolutionists become of crucial and decisive importance. Against the treachery of Stalinism only the revolutionary Marxian position can stand. And likewise, only the Marxian program and the conscious intervention of the Marxists can bring the Leftward moving socialists to a full understanding of the meaning of their partly formed opposition to Stalinism, and the revolutionary implications of their development.

V.

The imperative, the absolutely necessary requirement of the present epoch is the re-groupment of the revolutionists, the unity of the revolutionary forces on the basis of a revolutionary program in the re-creation of the party of Marx and of Lenin—that is, in the Fourth International. To this task, all other tasks are secondary. Success in this task *alone* can defeat Fascism, can alone utilize the coming imperialist war for the overthrow of finance-capital and the triumph of the workers. Unity? Yes! But revolutionary, Marxian unity. This alone will answer.

The Stalinist organic unity party, like the entire organic unity process, would be not the party of the proletarian vanguard, of revolutionary internationalism, but the party of capitulation, of social-patriotic betrayal. Of this there can be no doubt. The Stalinist drive for organic unity is, *in the present concrete circumstances* (and, once again, it is about these that we are talking), not in any sense a leading of the masses forward along the revolutionary path, but, precisely, a conspiracy to prevent, to shut off and turn aside the growingly conscious workers from development toward a revolutionary position; to disorient and confuse the workers; to swing their eyes toward a blind and hopeless alley; and, finally, to betray the masses to the war. Cynically, brutally, Stalinism exploits and manipulates the genuine, legitimate and altogether healthy desire of the masses for unity, for its own ends—the interests of the treacherous bureaucracy of the Soviet Union.

Unity, yes. But what kind of unity? With what kind of content? For the political party these two questions are all important. In the mass organizations they are less paramount—in their case, unity at any, or almost any, cost, though of course the best possible kind under the circumstances, and a chance for the revolutionists to work within them. But *politically*, nothing can be more deceptive than the conception of unity in the abstract. What is needed is not abstract unity, but concrete unity of the revolutionary forces. What, after all, is the great type of political unity in modern times? It is *national unity*, the "sacred union" of all classes in the bourgeois state. And the Stalinist version of "organic unity", especially carried through to the stage of "People's Front unity", is nothing else than a second-hand edition of national

unity. The same suppression of potential social conflicts, the same demagogic program, the same blurring of class lines.

We are asked, "Are the Marxists against unity? Will they stand in the way, to sabotage and disrupt?" Certainly not. The Marxists are *for* unity, for the only unity which can have any possibility of advancing the cause of the proletariat. But the Marxists are *against* reformism, against Centrism, against Stalinism, against these and every other form of betrayal of the workers. For unity, yes: for revolutionary unity.

But the road to revolutionary unity is neither simple nor direct. Its course cannot be wholly plotted in advance. Perhaps—and this is not yet clear—it may lie through such a party of organic unity as would be created through the merging of the Second and Third Internationals. This may not be true—for one obvious reason, because the merger may never take place. Again, it may be forestalled, and the basis for revolutionary unification may be

laid, with the help of a strong and Leninist application of the united front as a means both to weld together the masses, and to isolate the Stalinists and reformists alike. The latter possibility depends decisively upon the course of the development of the Left socialists. But even if the road lies through a party of organic unity, the basic and essential task remains the same. Union of the Second and Third Internationals and their programs—that is the *combination* of the errors and betrayals of social democracy and Stalinism—can in no degree solve the problem of *revolutionary* unity. Within such a party, as now when that party is still a slogan, a process and a perspective, the solution would be and could only be: the break with reformism, Stalinism and Centrism, the re-groupment of the revolutionists under the program of Leninism. Then, as now, the solution of the problem of revolutionary unity is nothing else than the building of the Fourth International.

John WEST

An Appraisal of Leo Tolstoy

LEO TOLSTOY is dead. His world significance as an artist as well as his world-wide fame as a thinker and preacher both reflect, in their own fashion, the world significance of the Russian revolution.

L. N. Tolstoy emerged as a great artist at a time when serfdom was still the prevailing system. In a whole number of gifted books, written by him during more than half a century of literary activity, he depicted primarily the old and pre-revolutionary Russia which remained semi-serf even after the year 1861. His was the Russia of the village, the Russia of the landlord and the peasant. In depicting this phase in the historical life of Russia, L. Tolstoy was able to pose in his works so many great questions, and he was able to attain such artistic force that his literary creations have occupied an outstanding place in the world literature. Thanks to Tolstoy's clarity of genius, the preparatory epoch of the revolution in one of the countries crushed by the feudalists has entered as a forward step in the artistic development of all mankind.

Tolstoy, the artist, is known to an insignificant minority even in Russia. A struggle is needed to make his great works truly available to all—a struggle against the social system that dooms millions to darkness, thralldom, galley-labor and poverty: a social revolution is needed.

Tolstoy not only produced works of art which will be valued always and read by the masses after the latter have created for themselves humane conditions of living, after they have overthrown the yoke of the feudal landlords and the capitalists; he was able to transmit with remarkable force the mood of the broad masses oppressed by the modern system, to depict their plight and give voice to their elemental urge of protest and indignation. Pertaining primarily to the epoch of 1861 to 1904, Tolstoy embodied with remarkable lucidity in his works—both as artist and as thinker and preacher—the traits of the historical peculiarity of the entire first Russian revolution, both in its weak as well as strong sides.

One of the principal distinguishing traits of our revolution lies in the fact that it was a *peasant* bourgeois revolution taking place during the epoch of a very high development of capitalism in the entire world, and of a comparatively high degree of development in Russia. It was a bourgeois revolution because it had as its immediate task the overthrow of the Czarist autocracy, the Czarist monarchy, and the destruction of feudal ownership of land and not the overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie. The peasantry, in particular, did not grasp this latter task, failing to understand wherein it differed from the more intimate and immediate tasks of the struggle. It was a peasant bourgeois revolution because the

objective conditions pushed to the very fore the question of changing the root conditions of peasant life, scrapping the ancient and mediæval system of land ownership, and "clearing the land" for capitalism; the objective conditions propelled the peasant masses into the arena of a greater or lesser independent historic activity.

Tolstoy's books reflect both the strength and the weakness, both the sweep and the limitation of precisely a peasant mass movement. Tolstoy's flaming, passionate and often ruthlessly sharp protest against the government and the police-Crown Church, transmits the mood of the primitive peasant democracy in which mountains of rage and hatred have been heaped up by centuries of serfdom, of despotism and looting by functionaries, of jesuitism, fraud and rascality on the part of the Church. His unwavering denunciation of private land ownership transmits the psychology of peasant masses during the historical moment when the ancient mediæval system of land ownership (both of the landlords and of the Crown "grands") had definitely become an intolerable fetter on the further development of the country; and at a time when this ancient land ownership was inevitably destined to be destroyed most abruptly and ruthlessly. His incessant indignation, full of profoundest and most impassioned feeling, his exposure of capitalism transmits in full the horror of the patriarchal peasant who senses a new, unseen and incomprehensible enemy advancing against him, looming somewhere from the cities or from abroad, destroying all the "props" of village life, bearing unheard of ruin, poverty, famine, bestiality, prostitution and syphilis—all the evils of the epoch of "primitive accumulation", aggravated one hundred fold by the transplantation to the Russian soil of the most modern methods of rapine devised by Sir Dividend.

But the flaming protestant, the passionate exposé, the great critic reveals together with his in his books a lack of understanding of the underlying causes of the crisis and of the means to emerge from the crisis that was advancing in Russia, a lack of understanding that is peculiar only to a patriarchal naive peasant and not to a writer with a European education. In him, the struggle against the feudal and police government and the monarchy, was transformed into a denial of politics, led to the doctrine of "non-resistance to evil", and led to his standing completely apart from the revolutionary struggle of the masses in 1905-1907. His struggle against the Crown-Church was superimposed upon his preachment of a new and purified religion, that is to say, of a new, purified, and subtler poison for the oppressed masses. His denial of private ownership of land led not to a concentration of the entire struggle against the real enemy, the feudal landowners and

their political instrument of power, i.e., the monarchy, but to visionary, nebulous and impotent sighing. The exposure of capitalism and the miseries inflicted by it upon the masses went side by side with an absolutely apathetic attitude to the world emancipatory struggle that the international socialist proletariat is waging.

The contradictions in Tolstoy's views are not the contradictions arising solely from his own mentality but are the reflections of those most complex and contradictory conditions, social influences and historical traditions which determined the psychology of the various classes and estates in Russian society during the reformist but *pre-revolutionary* epoch.

For this reason a correct estimation of Tolstoy can be given only from the standpoint of that class which by its political rôle and its struggle during the first climax of these contradictions, during the revolution, has given proof of its mission to be the leader in the struggle for the freedom of the people and for the emancipation of the masses from exploitation—a class that has given proof of its unwavering devotion to the cause of democracy and of its capacity to struggle against the limitations and inconsistency of bourgeois (as well as peasant) democracy—a correct appraisal can be given only from the standpoint of the social democratic proletariat.

Observe the appraisal of Tolstoy in the government newspapers. They shed crocodile tears, take oath upon oath of their respect to the "great writer", and, at the same time they defend the "Holiest" Synod. And the Holiest Fathers have just this moment perpetrated a sc... trick, sneaking priests to the bedside of the dying man in order to dupe the people and say that Tolstoy "repented". The Holiest Synod excommunicated Tolstoy from the Church. So much the better. This achievement will be put down to his favor in that hour when the people will settle accounts with the functionaries in cassocks, the gendarmes-in-Christ, the dark inquisitors who supported pogroms against the Jews and other similar feats of the Black Hundred Czarist gang.

Observe the appraisal of Tolstoy in the liberal papers. They seek to brazen it out with those hollow Crown-liberal, hackneyed professorial phrases about "the voice of civilized humanity", "the unanimous response of the world", "the ideas of Truth, Good, etc." for which Tolstoy lashed—and justly so—bourgeois science. They are unable to present directly and clearly their appraisal of Tolstoy's views toward the government, the Church, private land ownership, and capitalism—not because the censorship hinders them; on the contrary, the censorship assists them to extricate themselves from the difficulty!—but because every postulate in Tolstoy's criticism is a slap in the face of bourgeois liberalism; because Tolstoy's fearless, open and ruthless sharp posing of the most acute, the most "cursed" questions of our time alone is a slap in the face to banal phrases hackneyed terms and sneaking "civilized" lies of our liberal (and liberal-populist) journalism. The liberals are *en masse* for Tolstoy, like a mountain against the Synod—and at the same time they are for . . . the *Vekhovtsi**

with whom, if you please, one can have "differences of opinion" but with whom one "must" abide in the same party, "must" collaborate in literature and politics. And we find the *Vekhovtsi* in the embrace of Anthony Volynski*.

The liberals keep pushing to the fore that Tolstoy is a—"Great Conscience". Is this not the same hollow phrase that we find repeated in a thousand variations in the *Novoye Vremya* and the like? Isn't this an evasion of those concrete questions of democracy and socialism posed by Tolstoy? Doesn't this push to the fore that which is the product of Tolstoy's prejudices and not of his reasoning mind? that in him which pertains to the past and not to the future? that which pertains to his denial of politics and his preachments of moral self-perfection and not to his stormy protest against all class domination?

Tolstoy is dead: gone into the past is pre-revolutionary Russia together with the weakness and impotence that found their expression in philosophy, and that were depicted in the works of the artist-genius. But in his legacy there is that which has not receded into the past but belongs to the future. The Russian proletariat receives this legacy, and labors on it. The proletariat will make clear to the masses of toilers and the exploited the significance of the Tolstoyan critique of the state, the Church and of private land ownership not in order that the masses confine themselves to self-perfection and yearning for a saintly life but in order that they uplift themselves to deal a new blow to the Czarist monarchy and the feudal land ownership, which in 1905 were only slightly cracked and which must be destroyed. The proletariat will make clear to the masses the Tolstoyan critique of capitalism—not in order that the masses confine themselves to cursing capital and the power of money, but in order that they learn to base themselves, in every step of their life and struggle, upon the technical and social conquest of capitalism, in order that they learn to fuse together into a single many-millioned army of socialist fighters who will overthrow capitalism and create a new society without poverty for the people, without exploitation of man by man.

N. LENIN

November 29, 1910

**Vekhovtsi*—members of the *Vekhi* group. *Vekhi* was an anthology written by intellectuals, former Marxists, who "repented" after the "revolutionary frenzy" of 1905-1907. Outstanding among them: Bulgakov, Berdayev, P. Struve and others. These former Marxists first fell into "mysticism" and then directly into the arms of Czarist reaction. In an article written in 1909, Lenin characterized *Vekhi* as follows: "*Vekhi* is nothing but a flood of reac-

tionary slop slung at democracy. Naturally, the publicists of *Novoye Vremya* like Rozanov, Menshikov and A. Stolypin rushed to embrace *Vekhi*. It is only natural that Anthony Volynski fell into ecstasy over this creation of the leaders of liberalism." All of the above mentioned people were arch-reactionaries and obscurantists of the time, lackeys of the Czarist autocracy, one of whose organs was *Novoye Vremya*.—*Trans.*

American Intellectuals and the Crisis

THE CRISIS caught American intellectuals unawares. They had not the slightest presentiment of the storm which broke over their heads and swept with increasing fury through the nation. The illusion of permanent prosperity had dazzled the intellectuals along with everyone else during the boom era. Even though their reactions to this myth had been quite different from those of the banker, business man, farmer or worker, they rested at bottom upon the common premise that prosperity everlasting was to be the normal condition of American life. The tremendous

force of the world crisis smashed this illusion; tore one group of intellectuals after another loose from their accustomed moorings; and dispersed them in all directions. Since 1929 they have been driven far from their social and ideological starting points.

The Trend Toward Reaction

In their anxiety to shut themselves off from the chaos outside, the gilded youth in the great Eastern universities sought sanctuary in the ancient verities. The orthodox religions of their fathers

could no longer satisfy even the most conservative. T. S. Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism was regarded as a step to be admired, but not imitated. Infected by the poisonous individualism they believed themselves to be combating, these intellectuals proceeded to fabricate private philosophies out of the odds and ends of classical learning. They ransacked the cultures of antiquity and turned to Plato, Aristotle, St. Paul, Aquinas, and even the *Bhagavid-Gita* for authorities and revelations.

The spurious "Humanism" of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More, two Puritan Tories who had discarded the theological tie-wigs of their Calvinist forefathers but retained the body of their conservatism, provided a temporary rallying point for these embryonic reactionaries. In thunderous tones reminiscent of the Puritan divines, from their chairs at Harvard and Princeton these professors hurled anathemas against democracy, equality, freedom, progress, individualism, all the heretical spawn of the French and American Revolutions. Their own philosophies were curious amalgams of obsolete ideas collected during a long lifetime of reading books written before the French Revolution—or against it.

For a brief season conservative and liberal intellectuals polemized over this "Humanism"; then promptly abandoned and forgot it. So narrow and sterile a set of dogmas was obviously inadequate to interest active-minded people or to provide an answer to the social and cultural problems clamoring for solution. The more moderate Humanists remained in their academic cells haunted by the ghosts of dead ideas. Certain of the more consistent of Babbitt's disciples, however, began to develop his political position, notably Seward Collins, editor of *The Bookman*, now *The American Review*. Yesterday Collins advocated a monarchy for America without specifying how it was to be brought about or who was eligible for the throne. Today he is having a chaste flirtation with Fascism in the guise of a romantic reversion to mediæval economy—with modern improvements.

The little intellectual circles which undertake to rationalize the course of reaction are not yet so well organized here as in Europe, nor are their philosophies so clearly formulated. The Southern agrarians, who turn away from the horrors of wage slavery to embrace the corpse of chattel slavery; outright Fascists like Lawrence Dennis and Seward Collins; and the disciples of Pareto in the universities have almost no intellectual or political influence. This fact alone indicates that Fascism, which mobilizes its intellectuals along with other sections of the middle classes, is not an imminent danger in this country, despite the oracles of the Stalinist Leagues.

The prevalent state of mind among reactionary intellectuals is rather one of great confusion than of confidence in their beliefs. This can be observed, for example, in the intellectual gyrations of Archibald MacLeish, who has wrestled so boldly with social and political problems since they suddenly beset him a few years ago. During this period of storm and stress MacLeish has in turn called upon the Young Men of Wall Street to arise and save the nation; become a votary of Social Credit; and written several fierce polemical pamphlets in poetry and prose against the pseudo-Marxists. In his poetry, where he formerly limited himself to questioning nature and his mortal soul for the ultimate meaning of life and death, he has glorified the heroic violence of Cortez's Conquistadors and turned to the pioneer past for inspiration, a stagnant pool which he mistakes for a healing spring. His latest production, the poetic play *Panic*, deals with the crisis itself. Whatever its merits as drama and poetry (and it is doubtful whether MacLeish's poetry is yet the better for this widening of his interests), *Panic* is certainly a perfect mirror of ideological confusion.

Where MacLeish stands today politically or where he will stand tomorrow, none, including himself, probably knows. But lo

and behold! The Stalinist *littérateurs*, who yesterday branded him "an unconscious Fascist" (presumably in contrast to the unconscious Stalinists), have recently admitted him into the front rank of the literary section of the People's Front! The case of MacLeish should serve as a warning that in the present transitional period it is extremely hazardous to regard any intellectual's political position as fixed, or to predict the path of his development. Intellectuals have no firm social anchorage; their ideas can change direction with lightning speed.

It frequently happens that intellectuals must take one step backward before they take two steps forward. Many radical intellectuals can verify this observation from their own experience.

The Liberals Face Left

As the deepening crisis exposed the utter bankruptcy of the Hoover régime, the liberals turned their faces toward the left and looked hopefully in the direction of socialism for guidance and inspiration. The beginning of the Five-Year Plan, which coincided with the outbreak of the crisis, fired their imaginations. The belief in the supremacy of American capitalism, which had been a primary article of faith among the liberals and their principal argument against socialism, was shaken by the energetic advance of Soviet construction in the face of the equally rapid collapse of American economy.

The liberals were compelled to reconsider their attitudes toward capitalism, democracy and reformism. The differentiation that took place in the liberal camp as a result of this process can be clearly traced in the ideological evolution of the leading members of the editorial board of the *New Republic*, foremost liberal organ.

Early in 1931 the editors of the *New Republic* published a series of articles which gave an accurate picture of the prevalent states of mind among the liberals. After noting "the dreadful apathy, unsureness and discouragement that seems to have fallen upon our life", Edmund Wilson made "an appeal to progressives" to abandon their hopes in "salvation by the gradual and natural approximation to socialism", which had been the creed set for the *New Republic* by its founder, Herbert Croly, and urged them to become a militant minority, actively struggling to attain socialism here and now. While Wilson was extremely vague about the character of this socialism and the method of its realization, he did oppose himself to the program and tactics of the communist party in the name of Americanism and democracy and proclaimed the necessity of "taking communism away from the communists".

The political errors and limitations of Wilson's position were not so significant, however, as his attempt to cast off the inertia of reformism and to submit its dogmas to critical examination. Liberal intellectuals are not transformed into radicals in a day. They necessarily undergo a process of development which requires them to pass through several critical stages before they reach a revolutionary position. Wilson's advice "to stop betting on capitalism" indicated that a segment of left liberals was beginning to break with reformism and head towards socialism. The seriousness of Wilson's own efforts to arrive at political clarification is shown by his resignation from the *New Republic* when he could no longer agree with its policies; by his tour of the country in order to extend his knowledge of American life and deepen his political ideas; and, above all, by his candid self-criticism. Wilson performed an indispensable service to the advanced intellectuals by conducting his political education, so to speak, in public. The reports of his pilgrim's progress guided their own political development, even if they arrived at different conclusions and destinations. Wilson, himself, as one of a group of radical intellectuals, was later attracted into the orbit of the American Worker's Party, although he never took an active part in its political life.

George Soule represented the official views of the *New Republic* and the liberals of the center. Wilson was a literary critic in whom a flame of passion for social justice had been kept alive during the boom years; Soule was an economist of the institutional school. Under the influence of "the Russian experiment", he and his colleagues, Beard, Chase, Dewey, *et al.*, placed their hopes for a regeneration of American capitalism in the idea of national planning. What the Russians had achieved with their backward technology, their argument ran, we Americans can do a hundred times better with our advanced technology. The productive plant had already been built; the task was now to "create a brain for our economy".

John Dewey next came forward to express the periodical disillusion of the liberals with the two old parties of capitalism and to call for the formation of a third party on the LaFollette model. The programs, the philosophies and the leadership of the Socialist and Communist parties were equally alien to the peculiar progressive and democratic spirit of the American people. They direct their propaganda to the working class and against the middle class. "The first appeal of a new party must be to what is called the middle class" because this is a bourgeois country. The industrial workers cannot take the lead in such a movement, but they will follow it.

Such were the ideas animating the liberals during the 1932 Presidential campaign. They emphasized the need for social planning and a new progressive party while they voted for Roosevelt or Norman Thomas.

The cordial reception accorded John Chamberlain's lively history of the Progressive movement, entitled *Farewell to Reform*, was another straw in the wind, indicating the shift of the Left liberals away from reformism. But Chamberlain had bid "farewell to reform" much too soon for history and the majority of his fellow liberals. The incoming Democratic administration immediately embarked upon so colossal a reorganization of American capitalism that the trumpeters of the new régime termed it "the Roosevelt Revolution".

The advent of the New Deal deflected the Leftward movement of the liberals into governmental channels. Their unquenchable faith in the vitality of American capitalism revived when they heard the Squire of Hyde Park assert that the heart of the New Deal throbbed for "the forgotten man". Were not the intellectuals, too, among the forgotten men? Their hopes seemed confirmed when they were told that the head of the New Deal was to be the Brain Trust Roosevelt had collected about him. They began to reason: "Perhaps we have been overhasty in predicting the death of capitalism." While there was life in American capitalism, there was at least hope—for them.

The glad tidings that the departments set up for the New Deal required hundreds of executives spread throughout intellectual circles like wildfire. For the first time in American history the doors of the government bureaucracy were thrown open to the middle-class intelligentsia. Professors and their protégées, lawyers and architects without clients, literary men without political convictions and with political connections, liberal and "radical" intellectuals alike hurried to take advantage of this golden opportunity to work for God, for country, and for four thousand dollars a year. For the idealists there was the irresistible invitation to participate in the remoulding of American society, no less; for the careerists there were comfortable berths in the government. The pilgrimage to Washington became a veritable children's crusade. How soon the slaughter of the innocents began!

Even the hardest-headed liberals were seduced, at least for a time, by the siren-song of the New Deal. George Soule and the New Republicans saw in the professional kitchen cabinet the brain

which they had called for not long before, the one revolutionary force in the Roosevelt regime. In a book entitled *The Coming American Revolution*, published in June, 1934, Soule said: "The brain-trust theory is true to the extent that, in an effort to rescue our economic life, the President saw the necessity of enlisting expert advice. Professors of economics and political science and law, people who have studied social problems with some approach to scholarly care* must be called into positions of responsibility when any attempt is made to govern industry and finance instead of letting individual profit-seekers do exactly what they like. In a broad sense, therefore, the New Deal gives us a foretaste of the rise to power of a new class, and this foretaste does have a distinctly revolutionary tinge, just because it indicates a shift in class power. The forefront of the white-collar workers, the productive professions, are just beginning to assume some of the political prerogatives which their actual place in a highly organized industrial society warrants, and to which their superior competence in matters of social theory [!] entitles them." (P. 207. My ital. G.N.)

The entrance of the intellectuals into the administration, which Soule regarded as a revolutionary "shift in class power", was only the rush of the liberals to secure places in the apparatus when the Roosevelt administration required agents with a liberal coloration to carry out the operations necessary to restore a sick American capitalism to health. Soule's highly unrealistic estimate simply expressed the yearning of the liberal intelligentsia for places in the bureaucracy, which had long been accorded their English cousins but had hitherto been denied them. Events quickly proved the shallowness of Soule's analysis. "The Roosevelt Revolution" lasted just long enough to get American capitalism back on its feet. When Roosevelt pronounced the patient recovered, if not completely cured, the New Deal measures were allowed to collapse or were decapitated by the Supreme Court. The Brain Trusters, who had been summoned to do the dirty work during the emergency, were either dismissed or relegated to subordinate places in the administration, where they faced the alternatives of resigning in disillusion, or settling down in their jobs with the cheerful cynicism that distinguishes the careerist from the ordinary run of mortals.

As soon as Soule and his colleagues awakened to the fact that the main benefits of the New Deal had fallen to monopoly capital, they became severe critics of Roosevelt for his failure to perform the miracles he had promised. Today, as another election approaches, they are again advocating the formation of a third, Farmer-Labor party, "uniting all liberal, progressive, and radical elements", ready to carry out social reforms and build toward "a collective society with a planned economy".

The Radicals Turn to Stalinism

As the radical intellectuals travelled along the road to the left, they passed by the Socialist camp without stopping. It had nothing to give them. Since the 1921 split under the régime of the Old Guard, American socialism had been thoroughly drained of all political and intellectual vitality. Possessed of all the defects and none of the powers of European social democracy, it had grown senile before it reached maturity. This negative attitude of the radical intellectuals towards the socialist party has on the whole been maintained up to now. Only recently Norman Thomas publicly bemoaned the fact that the Stalinists had completely captured "the cultural front".

The communist movement constituted the main center of attraction for the radicals. The Stalinists waved the banner of the October revolution; they claimed Lenin and his International for

*The philosopher Hobbes once remarked: "If I had read as much as some people, I'd have been as great a fool."

their own; they were the official spokesmen for the Soviet Union. The more Utopian saw in the land of the Five-Year Plan the promised paradise; the more realistic saw in the parties of the Comintern the instrument of the world revolution. They had yet to plumb to its depths the meaning of the doctrine of "socialism in one country".

Few of these intellectuals had any previous acquaintance with Marxian thought or the history of the revolutionary movement. This did not deter them, however, from blossoming forth overnight as dyed-in-the-wool revolutionists and authorities on Marxism. They planned grandiose projects for Marxian critiques of American culture, which were never executed, and set up shop in the liberal magazines as political experts. Equipped with a meagre handful of commonplaces, skimmed from a superficial reading of the Marxian masters and supplemented by a few Stalinist perversions of communist policy, they proceeded to apply their newly acquired intellectual tools to everything that came within their ken, from the history of music to the fluctuations of the stock market.

This hasty mechanical experimentation with Marxian ideas was an unavoidable phase in the education of radical intellectuals in a country like the United States without deep-rooted socialist traditions. A genuine revolutionary party, striving to carry on the ideological inheritance of Marxism, would have helped to shorten and correct this phase. But the radical intellectuals encountered something altogether different in the communist party.

Throughout this period from 1929 to 1934 the Stalinists were in the throes of the ultra-Left policies of the so-called "third period". They were building red trade unions by the score—on paper; branding all other labor parties "social-Fascist"; united-fronting "only from below", that is, not at all; momentarily expecting the revolutionary insurrection in Germany; and gathering timber for the barricades soon to be set up here. While their noisy demonstrations frightened the bourgeoisie half to death, and even impressed themselves with their revolutionary ardor, they had no real connection with the organized labor movement. It was the pounding of an empty barrel. The communist party was only a bureaucratic shell, cracked by expulsions of its Right and Left wings, completely cut off from the working masses, and pursuing a policy that was a caricature of Leninism.

Nevertheless, most of the radicals mistook this activity—and the theory behind it—for the real thing. Who was there to disillusion them? All except the few who later became interested in the American Workers party felt the futility of Wilson's slogan: "Take communism away from the communists." Wilson, himself, at that time, was a Stalinist sympathizer. Meanwhile, the Stalinist slanders against the "counter-revolutionists" kept them away (if indeed they were aware of their existence or ideas) from the isolated group of Trotskyists, who were struggling to wrest the banner of communism from the usurpers.

The Stalinist leaders greeted the approach of the radical intellectuals with an equivocal attitude compounded of joy and suspicion. While the new recruits provided welcome forces and finances to the party, some of them were also inclined to be inquisitive and critical. They did not simply turn their backs upon the party, as did the workers, when they mistrusted its policies, but remained to ask questions and to air their complaints. As a safeguard, the Stalinists tried to keep these intellectuals at arms-length as second-class citizens in the network of paper organizations surrounding the party, preventing their penetration into the party circles.

The intellectuals plunged into political activity with great zeal. They assumed leading posts in labor defense, propaganda, and organizational fields; they went on trips to Kentucky for the

Harlan miners and sent delegations to Washington protesting the shooting of bonus marchers. They accompanied the bonus marchers and the unemployed in their treks to the capital and covered strike situations for the liberal and communist press.

The peak of their activity was reached in the 1932 presidential campaign. The meetings and manifestoes of the intellectuals were more prominent than any meetings of organized workers the Stalinists could muster. "The League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford", organized by half a hundred writers, artists, teachers and professionals, issued a pamphlet entitled *Culture and the Crisis*, calling upon "all men and women—especially workers in the professions and the arts—to join the revolutionary struggle against capitalism under the leadership of the communist party."

This manifesto reads today as though it had been written by a different set of people in another era—as, from a political point of view, it was. Every line burns with revolutionary fire, radiating confidence in the communist party and contempt for the moribund socialist party.

"The socialists do not believe that the overthrow of capitalism is the primary essential for successful economic planning. . . . The socialist party is a party of mere reformism which builds up state capitalism, and thus strengthens the capitalist state and potential Fascism. . . . It does not wage an aggressive campaign against war. . . . It indirectly helps Fascism by its insistence on democracy, evading the issues of militant organization and struggle. . . . To insist on democracy as the answer to Fascism is to oppose air to bullets, for Fascism repudiates democracy and develops out of bourgeois democracy. . . . The socialist party is the third party of capitalism . . ." and similar statements.

Opposed to the socialist party is the "frankly revolutionary communist party, the party of the workers", which "stands for a socialism of deeds, not of words. It appeals for the support of the American working classes [*sic!*] not, like the socialist party, on the basis of broken and unfulfilled promises, but with concrete evidence of revolutionary achievement both at home and abroad. . . . It proposes as the real solution of the present crisis the overthrow of the system which is responsible for all crises. This can only be accomplished by the conquest of political power and the establishment of a workers' and farmers' government which will usher in the Socialist commonwealth. The communist party does not stop short merely with a proclamation of its revolutionary goal. It links that goal up with the daily battles of the working class for jobs, bread and peace. Its actions and achievements are impressive evidence of its revolutionary sincerity."

Not one of the group who wrote this pamphlet today adheres to the communist party! The times change, and, not infrequently, our politics change with them. Every word then uttered against the socialist party can today be applied with deadly accuracy to the present policy of the communist party. In the preface of the pamphlet these "intellectual workers" boasted that "it is our business to think and we shall not permit business men to teach us our business". Nevertheless, some of those who signed (but did not write) it—Malcolm Cowley, Kyle Crichton, Granville Hicks, Isador Schneider and Ella Winter, to mention no others, have found it possible to accept with equal enthusiasm the two irreconcilably opposed programs of reform and revolution without, apparently, recognizing that there is any difference between them. Are these intellectuals "whose business it is to think"? Or are they people who let others do their political thinking for them? They have not maintained their intellectual independence in shifting from reformism to Stalinism; they have merely changed masters and remain as obedient as ever to their master's voice.

More critically-inclined intellectuals, such as Sidney Hook and James Rorty, continued to think and to act on their own, and,

even before the Stalinists reversed their policies, turned towards the American Workers party. For criticizing the policy of "social-Fascism", for advocating a genuine united front policy with other working class organizations, and, above all, for doubting the infallibility of Stalinism, they were themselves attacked as agents of Fascism by the Stalinist character assassins. Soon the older and more established literary figures, Anderson and Dreiser, who had been impelled toward the revolutionary movement by an upsurge of emotion rather than by any intellectual convictions, began to drift away as casually as they had come, when their first spurt of revolutionary vigor had spent itself. Dreiser was later to be revealed as an anti-Semite. And, lest we forget in these days when the Stalinist scribes are singing hymns of praise to Heywood Broun, back in 1932 he was called the most dangerous of social-Fascist demagogues—and a bar-fly to boot.

Throughout this period the majority of radical intellectuals preserved a reverent attitude towards the communist party. It is easy to understand why. The objective circumstances outlined above reinforced certain subjective weaknesses that tended to repress their critical faculties. They became the victims of their own ignorance, inexperience and superstition. Lacking political education, they were willing to extend almost unlimited credit to the recognized revolutionary leadership. Their deference to Stalinist authority was augmented by the awe with which they regarded the Soviet Union and the revolutionary proletarian movement as a whole.

Inspired by the great ideal of communism, many of them entered the revolutionary movement in the same unquestioning spirit of obedience as a Catholic convert enters a religious order. They feared that the slightest expression of doubt concerning the correctness of party policy, or the admission of any imperfections in the Soviet Union, would give aid and comfort to the enemy. This

excess of zeal led them to accept intellectual and political practises they might otherwise have rejected out of hand. In the sacred name of "the cause", they winked at the systematic misrepresentation of facts in the Stalinist press. As good soldiers of the revolution, they gave up the habit of forming independent opinions on political questions or of struggling for them and mutely accepted every order handed down from above.

They became half-ashamed of being "intellectuals" or of having middle class origins and, in order to rid themselves of their original sin, tried to pass themselves off as "intellectual workers", as in the pamphlet quoted above, and even invented fanciful proletarian genealogies for themselves. Intellectuals who stop being critical in any field of intellectual endeavor quickly decay. Those intellectuals who failed to stand upon their own feet and reach the solid ground of Marxism, but blindly followed the Stalinist leaders, completely failed to develop their intellectual capacities along Marxian lines. Instead of assimilating the heritage of Marxian thought, they were content to feed upon the dry husks of Stalinist theory. Not a single theoretician of any importance has been developed among them; none who has added anything of value to the treasury of Marxism. They have either mutilated and depreciated their intellectual talents by offering them as a sacrifice upon the altar of Stalinism, or they buried themselves in the routine of organizational activity.

These psychological phenomena were, in part, infantile diseases which a vigilant party can aid individual intellectuals to overcome. But instead of removing any of these congenital weaknesses of the intellectuals, the Stalinists accentuated them. For the communist party itself had degenerated into an organization less like a workers' party than a religious sect with an infallible Pope, unassailable dogmas, and lazy-minded believers.

(To be continued)

George NOVACK

Notes of a Journalist

Uruguay and the U.S.S.R.

URUGUAY has broken off diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. This step was indubitably taken under the pressure of Brazil and other Latin American countries, possibly the United States as well, as a species of "warning". In other words, the rupture of diplomatic relations is an act of imperialist provocation. It has no other meaning. So far as financial assistance of the Communist International to the Latin American revolutionists is concerned, diplomatic organs are not at all needed for this purpose: there are dozens of other ways and means. We are not speaking here of the fact that the intervention of the Comintern into revolutionary movements has invariably led and leads to their shipwreck, so that the bourgeois governments, in all conscience, should not complain of the leaders of that institution but on the contrary bestow upon them the highest decoration—of course not the "Badge of Lenin", but, say, the Badge of Stalin.

But this aspect of the case does not interest us now. The conduct of the Soviet press does. It would be difficult to imagine a more repulsive spectacle! Instead of directing the thunder of its completely justified indignation against the all-powerful inspirers of Uruguayan reaction, the Soviet press is absorbed in insipid and idiotic mockery of Uruguay's small territory, its numerically small population and its weak-

ness. In the brazen and through-and-through reactionary verses of Demyan Bedny we find retailed his inability to find Uruguay on the maps without the aid of glasses, and his recalling, in this connection, how the Uruguayan consul complained helplessly about the seizure of his automobile by the Bolsheviks during the October revolution. In so doing, this Poet Laureate retails the consul's speech with all sorts of "national" accents, entirely in the spirit of the Black-Hundred witticisms of the Czarist official organs, *Novoye Vremya* and *Kievlyanin* (it is rumored, incidentally, that Demyan Bedny began his literary career precisely in the *Kievlyanin*). It is true that during the days of the October revolution the workers and Red Guards seized the automobiles of Messrs. Diplomats; it was necessary to disarm the class enemy since all the diplomats sided with the counter-revolution. Suffice to recall that Kerensky fled from Petrograd under the cover of an American flag. But after the victory, when all sorts of complaints were investigated the diplomats of the small and weak countries met with considerably greater attention and kindness on the part of the Soviet Government than did those of the big brigands. And, in any case, had any one in those days attempted to indulge in mockery of a "national" accent, he would have been thrown into the nearest garbage can.

It is otherwise today. Stalin and Litvinov prance on their hind legs before Mussolini and Laval. How abject was the tone in which Moscow conversed with Hitler immediately after the latter's assumption to power! But, in return, they permit themselves to wreak their entire All-Supreme Splendor upon the head of "tiny", "insignificant", "not-to-be-noticed-on-the-map" Uruguay. As if involved here was a question of the size of the country, the numerical strength of the population and not the question of state policy! In "trifles" of this sort the reactionary spirit of the ruling bureaucracy expresses itself more obviously, perhaps, than it does in its general policies.

Let us recall another episode. On the day of the arrival of the English Minister, Eden, in Moscow, the party newspaper in Mogilev printed an article on the subject of the hypocrisy of British politics. *Pravda* flew into indignation: "Would any one require a greater proof of political obtuseness?" To write about the hypocrisy of British diplomacy is . . . to reveal obtuseness; but it is entirely permissible to engage in obscurantist and chauvinist pornography in relation to the people of Uruguay—yes, the people for—let it be known to the sycophants of *Pravda*—the language, the territory, and the numerical strength of the population of a country pertain to the people and not to the government.

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Torgler and Maria Reese

In December 1935, the press of the Comintern made public the expulsion of Torgler from the party for his "unworthy conduct at the Berlin trial". It is obvious that the Comintern like many other diseased organisms is distinguished by an extreme lag in reflexes. Two years have already elapsed since the Dimitroff-Torgler trial. During this time the Comintern has succeeded in expelling thousands of communists who questioned the correctness of the social-patriotic turn, or the Marxian quality of the "People's Front". In Torgler's case, they took their time: evidently, some hope was cherished that use might still be made of this cowardly petty bourgeois. Dimitroff was transformed into a semi-divinity, while Torgler was passed over in polite silence. A genuine revolutionary organization would have briefly taken note of Dimitroff's courageous conduct as something that is taken for granted, and would have immediately expelled Torgler. However, the Comintern has long lost the normal revolutionary reflexes. . . .

As a matter of fact, Torgler was expelled not for his already half-forgotten conduct at the trial, but for his completely going over to the camp of Nazism. According to the dispatch in *Pravda*, Torgler has not only been freed from the concentration camp but is at work together with Maria Reese "on some sort of book". If that is the case, then there can be no doubts whatever on the matter, because Maria Reese has long sold herself to the Ministry of Nazi Propaganda.

The Moscow *Pravda* (Dec. 27, 1935) underscores the fact that Reese went from "Trotsky to Hitler". For once in a blue moon, there is an iota of truth in this assertion, namely that Maria Reese, who played a big rôle in the Stalinist party, before selling herself to Göbbels did actually attempt to worm into the organization of the Bolshevik-Leninists. Very soon, however, it became apparent that this individual pertains to that type, now reigning in the apparatus of the Comintern, which looks upon the workers' movement as a source of influence and income. It was precisely because of this that she was unable to maintain herself in our midst—not for years as she did in the midst of the Stalinists, but for more than a few months, in reality a few weeks.

But what about Torgler? He was no accidental figure. He was the chairman of the Reichstag fraction of the C.P.! And he, in any case, went to Hitler directly from Stalin, without first feeling out the Bolshevik-Leninists. On this particular "adventure" *Pravda* keeps mum. Yet the ranks of the Stalinist bureaucracy in all countries are filled with similar Torglers and Reeses. They are ready for any and all turns—provided two conditions are guaranteed: first, that their own skins be in no wise endangered thereby; second, that they be paid for the turns in stable currency. Everything else is of no importance to them. It is not difficult to foresee that in the ominous events impending in Europe the apparatus of the Comintern will be the sower of renegacy.

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"Socialist Culture"?

At the Kremlin Conference of the Stakhanovists the director of the Gorky automobile plant, one Dyakonov, spoke cautiously and discreetly of the possibility of completing the Five Year Plan in four years. Ordjonikidze heckled him every time he made a statement not only with questions but urging him on with jeers, and inappropriate witticisms. It is not difficult to picture to oneself the position in which the modest reporter was placed by these majestic wise-cracks in the luxurious hall of the Kremlin palace. Dyakonov even permitted himself to remark, "Comrade Sergo, I would like to answer your questions, but you don't give me the time." However, Ordjonikidze was not to be deterred. According to the newspaper account he interrupted Dyakonov's very brief report no less than 14 times, in addition to which he spoke throughout to the director of the factory, i.e., one of his inferiors, using the familiar form of address. Is it that they are merely old chums? No. Dyakonov replies to his superior, always in a respectful tone, always addressing him not "thou" but "you". . . .

At the conference a great deal was said on the subject of a *cultural* attitude toward labor, and toward people. But Ordjonikidze—and he was not the only one—deported himself after the manner of the true-bred Russian industrial feudalists of the good old days, who jovially mocks his inferiors them in the familiar "Hey, you there!" style. It is not difficult to imagine how Lenin would have reacted to such grandee manners! He was organically incapable of tolerating brazenness and vulgarity, all the more so in relation to a subordinate, younger comrade who can be easily rattled on the platform.

Incidentally, Ordjonikidze deigned to mock Dyakonov quite benignly; but his tone clearly conveyed that he was very well able to deport himself otherwise. One cannot but recall in this connection an incident that occurred in 1923 when Ordjonikidze, in the rôle of the First Grandee of the Trans-Caucasian district, slapped a younger comrade in the face because the latter had dared to contradict him. Lenin on his sick-bed gathered all the facts relating to this abomination and proposed that the C.E.C. immediately remove Ordjonikidze from all responsible posts and expel him from the party for two years. It was precisely this proposal that sealed the alliance between Ordjonikidze and Stalin. But today, in the struggle for socialist "culture" Ordjonikidze does not have to restrain himself. . . .

It ought to be said that Kaganovitch does all he can not to be outstripped by Ordjonikidze. Not for nothing are they both—"beloved People's Commissars". Kaganovitch also addressed familiarly the railway machinists who spoke at the conference, entirely in the manner of a general addressing his orderly in the good old days. Kaganovitch does it, if anything, more repulsively than Ordjonikidze. . . .

And *Pravda*, the central organ of the communist (!?!) party, prints these exemplars of grandee vulgarity so that all may learn and emulate.

* * *

Byzantinism

On November 17, in the Kremlin, during the Stakhanovist conference, Voroshilov spoke of pilots "who master completely, in a real way, in a Stalinist way, the technique of aviation" (*Pravda*, Nov. 20, 1935). Thus we suddenly learn that Stalin, in his perfection, is a master of aviation technique.

The said Voroshilov stated during the self-same speech, "Stalin, who has studied the questions of the arming of the army its full scope . . . has said more than once that tanks, airplanes, cannons—all these are not soap, not matches, not pastry, these are means of defense, and therefore be so kind as to carry on the work as it should be carried on". We learn that it is permissible to carry on the work of making matches and soap not "as it should be", but in any way at all. Such talk is commonly known as "excessive zeal"!

It is quite comprehensible that Stalin should occupy himself with a close study of arming the army. But take Mikoyan, for example. Mikoyan, drawing profounder conclusions than Voroshilov, related at the self-same conference the following instructive anecdote. The Soviet plants produce for export "excellent candies, Cologne-water, bologna", etc., whereas the self-same stuffs of absolutely rotten quality are supplied for domestic consumption (we have just heard from Voroshilov that this is entirely permissible with reference to matches, soap and pastry). Stalin, it turns out, gave Mikoyan a piece of advise . . . fool the workers by telling them that the goods are allegedly manufactured for export, and then place them in circulation on the domestic market. One is at a loss what to marvel at in this grandee anecdote: the contempt toward the Soviet consumer, or Stalin's resourcefulness, or Mikoyan's excessive zeal.

But the said Mikoyan went much further. It turns out that when Mikoyan issued "an order to reestablish all the best grades of soap", Stalin was not satisfied with this and he in turn issued an order (to Mikoyan!) to bring samples of toilet soap to a session of the Political Bureau. As a result, tells the faithful Mikoyan, "we received a special decision of the C.E.C. . . . on the assortment and formulæ of soap". Thus Stalin turns out to be not only an aviator but a skilled soap-maker.

This is the spirit, with a greater or lesser admixture of Mikoyanism, in which all the speeches at the Conference were delivered. The entire atmosphere is permeated through and through with the spirit of intolerable Byzantinism. No, gentlemen, the country cannot and will not long breathe in such an atmosphere! . . .

A Chance Admission

Sarkisov, secretary of the Donetz Basin, in his report on the Stakhanovist movement, at a session of the C.E.C. provided two remarkable master strokes. According to him, the Stakhanovists themselves ought to write in the newspapers about Stakhanovism; "it comes out more clearly and simply, and another worker, reading this, learns that there actually exists such a man."

Molotov: "Correct".

BOOKS

Levy on Marxism

THE WEB OF THOUGHT AND ACTION. By HERMAN LEVY.

Prof. Levy's *The Web of Thought and Action* is intended for the ordinary man. It was written with the purpose of seeing whether modern science can provide him with an answer to his great problems: why should there be war? Why can't he and his children have more of the good things of life which society seems capable of providing? Why has he so little to say concerning the ordering of his social world? What can science do for him?

Prof. Levy turns to different scientific specialists and men of action for answers to Everyman's problems. The conclusions of each dialogue—achieved partly by means of dialogue and partly by exposition—are very familiar to Marxists. The dialogue on politics discreetly accuses the modern politician like Sir Herbert Samuel of being—to put Prof. Levy's opinion more frankly—only blundering, pragmatic, half-charlatans, only interested in improving as far as possible the awkward instruments of the existing state. He prefers not to experiment with new-fangled institutions, his main objective being to keep the old from crumbling. The dialogue on economics accuses the bourgeois economists of evading the essential task: that not only of explaining how society works, but also of showing how it can be made to work more adequately, perfectly, satisfactorily. (In this chapter is to be found the discussion on "bias" about which we shall have more to say later.) Another dialogue insists, against the position of Dr. Carpenter, a clergyman, that the ethics of society are not heaven-made, fixed in formula, unchanging. Instead they are constantly being re-made, newly invented or ultimately rejected in order to solve human conflicts and smooth the work of social coöperation. Prof. Levy even goes so far as to charge men of religion, experts, etc., of perpetuating ethical ideals whose social meaning and fruitfulness have long gone the way of their creators. Another dialogue finds an interlocutor—Mr. John Pilley—who, apparently in agreement with Prof. Levy's—by this time—more or less explicit credo, states that society changes and complicates, grows and decays, around the attempt of men to satisfy their wants: the Marxian theory. And Prof. Levy concludes this section with the statement that society is cut apart by a terrific, internal struggle of classes.

Still another dialogue with a representative of the physical sciences, not only stresses the fact that science is a product of society, integrally tied up with its fate, but also exhorts the modern scientist to work for the establishment of a classless society in which science will, for the first time become free.

Marxists, naturally, welcome the expression of these familiar views by so eminent a scientist. Nevertheless there are certain pertinent criticisms which must be made, not only as a caution to Prof. Levy but—and this is more important—in the name of

Marxism and its serious traditions of scrupulous scientific investigation.

Prof. Levy informs us that he nowhere wishes to intrude his own point of view, but rather to change his own beliefs in accordance with the facts provided by his various interlocutors. In reality, it is evident from the very beginning that he has a very decided point of view which he has no intention of putting aside. In fact, he attempts either to wheedle or force those recalcitrant scientists or men of action—if they happen to disagree with him—to accept his own position—for example, the dialogues with the economist, the religious man, and the politician. We deeply dislike such a pretense at "impartiality" or "non-bias", of letting the facts speak for themselves, for it hits at Marxism. Yet Prof. Levy reads us a lecture on the subject of impartiality whose meaning he identifies with "neutrality", the refusal to take sides.

There is no doubt that the meaning of "impartiality" has this established significance for many scientists. But it also has another meaning; and it might even be the duty of Marxists to restore the word to its original place of honor, if "partiality" should continue to be so abused. "Impartiality" also has the meaning we always give to the word "objectivity", i.e., of judgments based wholly upon the facts and tested by an objective, independent criterion or standard; of interpretations not distorted by private desires and concealed wishes. "Impartiality", in this sense does not mean a refusal to take a position or to act, but to take only that one which is in accord with the facts; it means bringing into the sunlight all our hidden desires, fears, hopes and biases so that they can be weighed and tested in the balance of action. The refusal to examine such aspects as might destroy our hopes would be just the opposite of "impartial". It would be to allow prejudice, false fears, false hopes and false loyalties to play havoc with our thinking. It would be to dethrone science and Marxism.

The Marxian attack against "impartiality" has been founded upon social considerations, because those who have used the word most frequently have used it to prevent "impartiality"; they have allowed prejudice and concealed interests to disguise themselves in its dignified vestments. We, therefore, have the more fiercely defended our naked espousal of a "cause", our own deep-rooted "partiality", the more glaringly to reveal the "partiality", the superstitious, unscientific, apologetic character of bourgeois social science, and the impartiality, the strictly scientific character of Marxism.

We repeat, when "partiality" is presented in such a form as to give the unfortunate impression of prejudice, of non-objectivity, then it does harm to Marxism as a science and as a goal; and it would have been much better for Prof. Levy to have shown less "partiality".

There is another and even more serious criticism to be brought against Prof. Levy. It is obvious, of course, that we certainly do not disagree with the basic pre-suppositions of his philosophy. Rather we desire

In these chance words there is revealed an annihilating truth: the readers one and all do not believe the official press; the workers do not doubt that the bureaucrats manufacture not only mythical statistics but also individuals. It is necessary to seek for special means in order to compel workers to believe that "there actually exists such a man". Such, we might remark, is one of the tasks of these solemn conferences of Stakhanovists in the Kremlin, these publications of photographs, etc.

The same Sarkisov adduced the following example of the rise in the productivity of labor in the coal mines: "A single driver is capable of taking care of two horses." In addition to raising the productivity of labor, said he, there is an added benefit in that the "horses can rest". The driver, in any case, does not have to take a rest: the heated horse rests for him.

And Who Are the Judges?

Dimitri Sverchkov participated, as a *Menshevik* in the Petrograd Soviet in the year 1905. As a Right wing *Menshevik* he was the courier for Avksentiev, Minister of the Interior under Kerensky. He took refuge from the October revolution in White Fuard Kuban, and thundered against the Bolsheviks in the local press there. After the Caucasus were cleaned up by the Red Army, Sverchkov safely joined the Bolsheviks. In 1922 he wrote a book, *At the Dawn of the Revolution* in which, from his personal recollections, he reconstructed the period of the 1905 Soviet. This snappily written volume went through several editions. But in view of the fact that this book retails facts and not the latest fictions it does not suit the furniture today. On December 12, 1935, *Pravda* carried a wild notice about this old book which allegedly "glorifies Trotsky". In the meantime the said Dimitri Sverchkov has made a career for himself: today he is a member of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. The hapless author immediately recognized the appraisal made of his book to be "correct", via a letter to the editors of *Pravda*. To be sure! In 1922 Sverchkov's memory temporarily was impaired due to terrific personal experiences, but in 1935 he was completely restored to balance. In a newspaper article written on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first Soviet Sverchkov supplies "recollections" of precisely the opposite nature to those he provided thirteen years ago in his book!

Such is the stuff Messrs. Judges are made of. Some of them, it may be, will in time have to take their seats on the witness chair as defendants . . . most probably to answer charges of *sycophancy*, *perjury* and other manifestations of human baseness. . .

ALFA

January 10, 1936

Our Pledge Fund

Your attention is called to the notice appearing on the back cover under this title. When you have read the notice please give the request it contains your most serious consideration and if you agree, act accordingly.

them to be presented as convincingly and illuminatingly as possible. But how can he expect in such extremely short dialogues to have proven anything which would appear plausible to anyone not already convinced? And how does he expect dialogues which in many instances digress from one point to another, without any agreement being reached, to make even the point of the author clear?

The Marxist takes his scientific function seriously. He does not attempt to prove anything in a short space, when he knows a laborious sifting and organization of considerable data are absolutely necessary. It seems unfortunate to read so well known a scientist like Prof. Levy, who ought to know better, such a sermon. Unfortunately he needs it. We do not mean to say thereby that the dialogues are not interesting, but what we do insist upon is that a defense of the fundamental theses of dialectical materialism requires a laborious accumulation of facts and a thorough analysis of contending theoretical positions. Such a book obviously would not be popular, but it *would be* a contribution to Marxism. It would compel bourgeois philosophers and scientists to take our philosophy seriously. Our social theories, of course, are taken seriously enough, since the Soviet Union exists as the crucial laboratory test of Marxian principles. But our philosophy, our basic world conception, is not, simply because it is the Rudases and Mitins who defend it. The Levys waste their professional knowledge and native talents writing a superficial book like *The Web of Thought and Action*.

Reuben GROTE

Prize Novel

MARCHING! MARCHING! By CLIRA WEATHERWAX. John Day Co. New York. \$1.90.

It is, certainly, a desperate scramble for the hangers-on of the communist party to keep up with the impulsive party line these days. The unfortunate faithful can't tell when they go to bed tonight what political principles they will believe tomorrow. They have to read the morning's *Daily Worker* before they know how to greet the socialist next door and the minister down the block.

Clara Weatherwax, whose novel won the *New Masses* "prize contest for a novel on an American proletarian theme", fortunately manages to get under the current wire. True enough, she must have been a little worried by the Seventh Congress—which took place, evidently, after her manuscript was finished. She has plenty of "united front" (though it is not at all clear just who is being united), but there is a sad lack of "People's Front". And she still clings to a deviation or two on the A. F. of L. You can almost gather from her book that there are several labor fakers left among the old-line bureaucrats. And she has, I am forced to report, some quite disrespectful things to say about churchmen which will doubtless keep *Marching! Marching!* off the American League's preferred list.

But these are after all minor matters. An introductory notice is proudly able to

announce: "Clara Weatherwax stems from pre-Mayflower New England stock, which has pioneered across the American continent. . . . One of her outstanding forebears was Roger Williams. Fourteen of her direct ancestors fought in the first American revolution. Others fought in the War of 1912 and the Civil War, and many of her family were in the World War." This should certainly be able to qualify her—even for Stalinism, 1936 variety. It is one of her own worker-heroes who comes through on page 208 with the triumphant discovery: "They talk about radical foreign stuff! Say, Communism is Americanism! That's what! Americanism!" As Earl Browder might put it: "That's just what we communists have been trying to tell you all along, and *in particular* since the question was so decisively analyzed by comrade Dimitroff." And, no doubt, the claim will be amply proved as U. S. imperialism moves forward into the new world war.

As for the novel itself, it is a travesty on literature and a libel against the working class. Its style is the dregs of the Joyce tradition, drained off through the worst of Wolfe and Faulkner, combined with school-essay "straightforward" writing. Its characters are wooden monstrosities, conceived with a kind of horrible masochistic delight in repulsive details and an infantile pleasure in trivial nobilities. The book is liberally interlarded with long speeches on war, strikes, trade unions, Fascism, apparently lifted from back copies of the *Daily Worker*.

What is tragic is to realize that even in a book so bad as this there are materials, lost in the morass, for genuine and even great literature. Not the least in the charges of the indictment against Stalinism must be the stultification of intelligence and sensibility to which it condemns its adherents. J.W.

Twilight of Capitalism

BOLSHEVISM, FASCISM AND THE LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC STATE. By MAURICE PARMALLEE. xii+430 pp. New York. John Wiley.

FAREWELL TO POVERTY. By MAURICE PARMALLEE. xvi+489 pp. New York. John Wiley.

Mr. Parmalee, former professor of economics, sociology and anthropology, has presented us with a summary indictment of capitalism and various efforts to save this doomed system.

Farewell to Poverty, though a sequel to *Bolshevism, Fascism and the Liberal-Democratic State*, furnishes the preliminary analysis of capitalism which forms the basis of the author's criticism of the "rival political systems".

In the first section, "A Critique of Capitalism", the author skillfully utilizes the latest statistics to depict the poverty of the workers, the contrast between the poor and the rich, the debt structure of American capitalism and the development of monopoly capitalism. With this as a background he traces the inevitability of the business cycle, unemployment, imperialism and war. The final chapter of this section summar-

izes the contradictions of capitalism which reveal its reactionary character.

The second section, "Evolution of the Social Commonwealth", commences with an exposé of the futility of the Roosevelt New Deal and other attempts at "planned economy" under capitalism. The experiences of the Soviet Union in planning economy are discussed and utilized for an examination of the workings of a socialized economy.

Gradualism as the means of attaining this society is rejected by the author. In his chapter on the "Technique of Revolution" he discusses the problem of a peaceful, legal revolution in the United States and concludes that the socialization of economy will have to be achieved by a political transformation which will assume the form of a violent conflict and result in a temporary dictatorship of the "Left".

He further states that while objective conditions in the United States are ripe for a socialized society the working class is not yet revolutionary. Economic conditions today are leading to the rapid proletarianization of the middle class "creating a new factor for a revolutionary situation. The professional class also is becoming in part proletarianized. The intellectual class in general is drifting towards the Left. But without a revolutionary proletariat the intellectuals cannot bring about a revolution." (P. 315.)

Will the intellectuals lead the revolutionary proletariat, or will they follow the proletariat? How is the class consciousness of the proletariat to be developed? The failure to answer these questions is a reflection of the author's lack of contact with the movement struggling for a "social commonwealth".

Fascism as the political means of monopoly capitalism to prevent its downfall is examined in *Bolshevism, Fascism and the Liberal-Democratic State*. The well known facts of the rise of the Italian Black Shirts and the German Brown Shirts are repeated. Nothing is added to our understanding of these phenomena. Sufficient attention is not paid to the complex features of Fascism as a mass movement of the middle class or the relation between its rise and the failure of the workers' parties.

Only a few paragraphs are devoted to the liberal-democratic state (though an entire section is entitled "Liberal-Democracy: Europe and America"). Liberal-Democracy is seen as corresponding to competitive capitalism and completely outlived and utopian for a period when monopoly capitalism dominates.

By far the most inadequate section of the book is the section on Bolshevism. Though obviously sympathetic, Mr. Parmalee fails to understand it either as theory or practise. He accepts the erroneous view that the Russian revolution of November 1917 "was not made by the people", that "the masses were not revolutionary. Lenin himself was under no illusion on this score" (P. 30).

Proof? A section of the workers, the railroad men, were against the Bolsheviks. The peasants supported the Left Social Revolutionists—which merely showed the *limited* revolutionary character of the peasantry at the moment. Compromise was necessary

with the Social Revolutionists and Mensheviks—as part of the further education of the peasants who had already undertaken revolutionary action against the landlords.

The reference to Lenin is based on a speech he made *six months before the insurrection, on May 10, 1917* in which he stated that “the proletariat is not yet sufficiently organized and enlightened; it has still to be instructed” (p. 31). A task which the Bolsheviks took seriously and therefore accomplished by November!

Mr. Parmalee, in another chapter, agrees with those who contend that the dialectic should be buried among the ancient fossils. Nor would anything be lost.

“Marx and Engels themselves and the two greatest Bolsheviks, Lenin and Trotsky, have made comparatively little use of the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic in their analysis and interpretation of historical and social phenomena.” (P. 47.)

This makes sense only if one has the most grotesque picture of what the Marxian dialectic method is. Which is precisely the picture that Mr. Parmalee has . . . and bolsters up by reference to the Russian Stalinist “philosophers” and “scientists” whose studies are dependant on the momentary needs of the Soviet bureaucracy.

What Mr. Parmalee and others have failed to understand is that the struggle between “Trotskyism” and Stalinism is the struggle between Bolshevism, (Marxism) and anti-Bolshevism in respect to fundamental theory as well as practise. Trotsky is recognized by the author as one of the two leading Bolshevik theoreticians. He quotes him on several occasions, including an attack on Stalinism.

Yet he does not appreciate the full import of the struggle against Stalinism. He writes that as a result of the acceptance of the theory of socialism in one country alone “Trotsky was exiled, and Russia withdrew temporarily from attempting to arouse a world revolution in order to develop itself internally” (P. 170). However, “it is expected that if and when the appropriate time comes, it [the Soviet Union] will resume the offensive in behalf of a world revolution” (P. 171).

Here the author abandons even the semblance of a critical approach and presents the aims and achievements of the Communist International as they are presented in the official publications. A rather naive treatment which results in a distorted picture of the Comintern.

Joseph CARTER

Rebel Students

REVOLT ON THE CAMPUS. By JAMES WECHSLER. Covici-Friede. N. Y. \$3.00.

Let us say right off that James Wechsler has written an interesting book, packed with information. Beyond that our praise ends, for we behold the glaring emptiness of misdirected effort. As a journalistic résumé of the last decade of student strife, it fills a certain need. As a significant contribution, which it no doubt was intended to be, it fails utterly to present anything more than a superficial analysis.

Nothing can be more discouraging than to find an opportunity for serious discus-

sion and contribution muffed in order to pursue the easier path of factual compilation. Undoubtedly a great many hours of research went into *Revolt on the Campus*. But because the outline of the writer was distorted, it succeeded in being little more than a 1935 edition of Sinclair's *Goose-Step*, without the latter's provocative disclosures and, consequently, striking novelty. By this time anyone who is not generally aware of academic tyranny, of trustee domination, of student insurgence, must certainly have been living in a vacuum these past few years.

In itself the work provided an excellent occasion for evaluating fundamentals. Instead of becoming the gist of the book, the information gathered should have served as a background before which the rôle of the student in society, political influences and the like, might have been presented. Can you imagine a work of some 450 pages which, except by occasional reference and inference, makes no attempt to estimate the nature, the rôle, the influences playing upon the student? (Is there a “student”? Would it not be better to say *students*?) Mr. Wechsler, unless we are mistaken, claims to be something more than a campus editor; he considers himself a radical—a communist, no less. Are we wrong, then, in demanding from him that he put a little juice, some meat into his survey? Or did Mr. Wechsler expect to overwhelm his audience with an array of proof that capitalism dominates the colleges, and that students here and there have bucked up against it? We fear very much that many readers will simply reply: “So what?”

Even within its own limits, however, the work is far from thorough. It is circumscribed by the limitations of a journalist, where the competency of a political analyst, a Marxist, was required. Nowhere is the history of the student movement described—and by movement we mean all that the word implies. Isolated, summary bits gleaned from spectacular incidents, hardly fill the bill. Suppose we forget all else, one thing we are certain every reader expects to find—a history of the National Student League and the Student League for Industrial Democracy. And not just a chronological table. What were their origins, how did they develop? Each of these went through a process of evolution. Originally a socialist student organization, the S.L.I.D. is, for example, today part of a “student union”—the American Student Union. Similarly, in the case of the N.S.L. From *Revolt on the Campus* we are led to believe that two student organizations exist (they are now one); these have participated in numerous actions; and that's that. Surely Mr. Wechsler knows that the nature of the movement has been debated, that the N.S.L. evolved through *opposite* programs, that political questions have agitated it, just as the A.S.U. is today rocked on the reef of a war program.

Further, anyone who has been acquainted, however slightly, with the student movement knows that the history of the movement lies not so much in visits to the Kentucky coal fields (important, but generally exaggerated), as in the school discussion clubs and the activity on the campus of the off-campus political youth organizations (Young Communist League, Young

People's Socialist League, Spartacus Youth League, whose student program is a vital and original contribution to the revolutionary youth movement, etc.). Nowhere in the book, with the possible exception of isolated mentions, is there anything that approximates a discussion of the campus “social problems”, “liberal”, and “history” clubs. This is fully in key with the outline of the volume which overlooks the existence of high-school students, who far outnumber the college students, that they too are “rebelling”, and that their principal means of expression, as also of the college students, has been the discussion club. The particular reason lies in Mr. Wechsler's preoccupation with the newspaper headline. Unfortunately the headline does not always cite the news.

There are other omissions, too many to detail: the failure to explain the anti-war strike other than as a big news event, to discuss its program and its essential features; the relation of the student movement here to that in Europe, why the American movement has taken the direction of a “union” while that in Europe is more generally political.

Perhaps the sharpness of our criticism tends to obscure those merits the book does have. In it the reader will find considerable source material on the conflict between students and the administration. One service Mr. Wechsler has definitely performed, an unintentional one we think; he has proved that, so far, the national student organizations have played a relatively minor rôle in the student struggle, that many of the outstanding instances of student activity (e.g., the New York City College anti-R.O.T.C. fight in 1926) were prosecuted by progressive campus forces operating through campus clubs and political youth organizations, thus proving they can continue to do so in the future.

Mr. Wechsler can write. But he did not write the right book.

M. GARRETT

The Tottering Order

THE DOG BENEATH THE SKIN. By W. H. AUDEN and CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD. Random House. 161 pp. \$1.50.

The Dog Beneath the Skin, called a fantastic play, is in reality a very lucid, discerning and condemning panorama of a decaying capitalistic world. In fact the whole composition is more of a panorama than a play. W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood have had the knowledge and perspicacity to assemble the best theatrics of the modern theatre in the manner long before pointed out by Ernst Toller in plays like *Massemensch* and the *Broken Brow*. The play begins with the middle class and the best worthies among them: the clergy and the military in search of a point of gravity to cling to (which they want and yet do not want), because having it or not having it it still means their ultimate liquidation.

By means of a lottery the best youth in a village is sent out into the wide world to find a missing heir and bring him back to his regal splendor. Our confused hero, stumbling and untutored, arrives at the Kingdom of Ostria (democracy) where he

The Press

SEVEN HOUR DAY IN THE U.S.S.R.

The *Russian International Bulletin* of the I.C.L. (Paris, Jan. 1936) publishes the following comment:

In 1927 with the aim of combatting the Opposition Stalin launched the slogan of the 7-hour day, in order to show that the interests of the working class were as close to his heart as to the Left Opposition's.

The 7-hour day was subsequently introduced legislatively. But nobody took it seriously, neither the workers nor Stalin himself. Every factory manager now has at his disposal hundreds of thousands of "supplementary" hours which he distributes among the worker of his factory and thus, under cover of supplementary hours, the working day is everywhere prolonged.

The Stakhanovist movement, based upon piece-work, will naturally drive the worker to a further prolongation of the working day (parallel to physical and nervous over-tension). The defects in the organization of production themselves simply "oblige" those workers who want to increase their production to prolong their working day; it is necessary to get in advance all that is needed, to prepare the tools, to lubricate and clean the machines, etc.

In *Pravda* of December 15, 1935, Bousygin relates how he was allowed to work two hours overtime (by the way, this occurred during Bousyguin's vacation, which he couldn't make use of). The Soviet papers try to remain silent about these facts, but they pierce through nevertheless, especially in various *feuilletons*. "It is night . . . There are still two hours before the whistle. The metal workers of the Petrovsky factory has already risen. In the shop he meets his comrade, the worker Lagutkin. They prepare carefully for their shift . . .", etc. (*Pravda*, Oct. 31, 1935.) And these—according to *Pravda*—are only Stakhanovists of "the future"! In the Donetz Basin railroads, the machinists work from 250 to 290 hours a month, which makes a working day of from 10 to 11½ hours (*Pravda*, Nov. 18, 1935). The Mosolpoligraph printing plant: during the first half of 1935, the workers had virtually no days of rest; in the second half, the same situation. The increase in the hours of work takes place in the form of "supplementary" working hours (*Trud*, Sept. 29, 1935). In the same number: "Certain workers work in two successive crews, without leaving the printing plant." This means that they work 14 and perhaps more hours per day. In the 7th construction sector of the Kurx railroad the 10-hour working day was introduced by order of the chief." Upon the feeble protests of the labor inspector, the prosecutor made an indifferent gesture. It isn't worth protesting about: "Nothing to be done about it." (*Trud*, Sept. 18, 1935.) In *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Aug. 23, 1935), an apprentice complains that he is forced to work from 12 to 14 hours a day instead of from 6 to 7. "Arrived forty minutes ahead of the crew and Marussia still earlier," reports the Stakhanovist Slavnikova (*Pravda*, Nov. 15, 1935). During the conference of the combine-drivers, it appeared that

their working day lasts about 16 hours.

The lower the technical level of a given production, the less the rise in labor productivity is obtained by the machine, by rationalization, and by the division of labor—the more it is accomplished by means of an over-tension of labor power and by the increase of the working day.

Thus, in a primitive work—the hand threshing of flax—the Stakhanovist Vorobiova produced 32 kilograms instead of the usual norm of from 6 to 8 kilograms. In reply to the question as to how she did it: "What can I tell you?—I came out before dawn, I worked hard—and there are the 32 kilograms." (*Pravda*, Nov. 4, 1935.) This holds true above all for the *piatisotnitsi*, that is, those noted collective farmers who have obtained 500 quintals of beets per acre (the average yield in the U.S.S.R. was 82 quintals in 1934 and 135 in 1935. In France, for example, it is 300). In dozens of *feuilletons*, their hard labor work is described: "I'm not telling a lie," relates one of them, "I spilled thousands of buckets of water on our beets, and we destroyed the butterflies", "every day, every night, the girls watched the plantations for butterflies. They were caught by hand and crushed—Marin, blackened by sunburn and thin from sleepless nights, didn't leave the plantations for whole nights and days." (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Nov. 5, 1935.)

We have brought forward these facts, although there is no claim that they constitute any statistics on the working day in Soviet Russia. But these examples show that everywhere the 7 and 8-hour day is being infringed upon. The Stakhanovist movement threatens to liquidate it for good.

N. M.

COMMUNIST DENOUNCES HIS PARTY'S POLICY

(Reprinted from the I.L.P. *New Leader*)

The North London I.L.P. Federation held a meeting on the war issue in the Shoreditch Town Hall. This is a frequent meeting place of the Communist party, and probably a fourth of the audience were Communist supporters.

At the end of the meeting a young man rose in the body of the hall.

"I am a member of the Communist party," he said. The Communists applauded. "I read the *Daily Worker* (applause). I don't make a practice of reading the *New Leader* (applause).

"But I saw in the *Daily Worker* that the I.L.P. was taking a different line. I bought the *New Leader* to see what it was."

There was anxious silence. The young man flung out his next sentence vigorously and rapidly.

"I became convinced that the I.L.P. line is the correct revolutionary line."

That was enough. Up jumped a local Communist leader and began to shout. This must not be heard. Others tried to drown the voice of the young man, but he went on calmly.

"There are many others in the Communist party like me. I appeal to them to get to work in their cells to save the party from the disastrous policy of its leadership. We condemn the Labor party bureaucracy. We have a bureaucracy as great."

The Communists could stand no more. They left the hall.

is invited to the palace to see an execution of workers, for, as the king puts it, "having our little differences that can only be settled in this, er . . . somewhat drastic fashion". After an elaborate ceremony in Latin which had required a dress rehearsal, the king shoots the workers with a gold pistol, presented to him on a cushion. From here our hero continues his search to the Red Light district of Ostnia. This becomes a picture of not only woman's degradation, but of a whole humanity's sexual perversion. But the heir is still not found and the hero continues his journey to Westland. This is a hilarious and biting picture of Nazi Germany where "our leader" has a loud-speaker for a face.

So that solipsist poets and subjective lovers are not passed by, our hero comes to Paradise Park. Here modern science and medicine are dispatched. From there he wanders to the city, the center of culture. The horror of a city night life, chorus girls, gaudy restaurants and paying diners clamoring for amusement, are deftly and psychologically presented.

The chorus of this act ends with:

"You have wonderful hospitals and a few good schools:

"Repent.

"The precision of your instruments and the skill of your designers are unparalleled:

"Unite.

"Your knowledge and your power are capable of infinite extension:

"Act."

In the last scene our hero and the found heir, who all this while had accompanied him under the skin of a dog, return to the village to confront the vicar and his aides. Francis—the heir—asks for volunteers to join him in the army for activity on the other side and five villagers come forth, who march off stage and through the audience. The last chorus ends with a poetic arrangement of this line from the *Communist Manifesto*:

"To each his need: from each his power."

But the authors are not content merely to condemn a tottering order, they also include those writers who by their ideas help to preserve its remnants, by practising indifference. Thus Virginia Woolf is lampooned, who wanted a room of one's own and five hundred pounds a year.

"Do not speak of a change of heart, meaning five hundred a year

"and a room of one's own

"as if that were all that is necessary."

And this for Gilbert and Sullivan:

"Here come I, the Vicar good

"Of Pressan Ambo, it's understood

"Within this parish border

"I labour to expound the truth

"To train the tender plant of Youth

"And guard the moral order.

(Chorus:)

"With troops of scouts for village louts

"And preaching zest he does his best

"To guard the moral order."

It will likely be produced in New York by a little theatre group.

Friede F. ROTHE

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Issued under the general editorship of MAX SHACHTMAN

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