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TWOPENCE

DEFEND THE SOVIET UNION!

MANIFESTO OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL IN BRITAIN

The last stronghold of the world working class is now being stormed by the armies of the blackest reaction history has known. The workers' state is in mortal danger. The achievements of the immortal October revolution—the social ownership and planned economy are in danger of destruction. Every conscious socialist worker must rally unconditionally to the defence of the Soviet Union. But this is not enough! We have to understand who is responsible for the present situation. The Stalinist bureaucracy and the Communist International! Stalin sought, with the reactionary theory of Socialism in one country, to detach the Soviet Union from the fate of the world working class. When Trotsky warned of the inevitable clash of world imperialism with the isolated Socialist State if revolution in the West did not intervene, he and his partisans were branded as enemies of the working class. But today our warnings have become the ghastly reality.

But all is not yet lost! The crisis of World imperialism, the terrible oppression of the totalitarian vice of the Nazis, the crushing national and social oppression of Europe, raises the possibility of waging a victorious war for a socialist Europe.

The die is cast. There can be no turning back. The fate of the Soviet Union, the fate of Europe, the fate of culture and civilisation itself, is in the balance. Either victory of world imperialism or the extension of the socialist revolution. Those are the two alternatives. In the words of Lenin "There is no middle way."

In 1927 Trotsky predicted that the Kremlin clique was incapable of waging a revolutionary war and saving the Soviet Union from destruction. Stalin is enacting that prophesy in ominous reality. With the unsurpassed tradition of victory by the young, ill-equipped, ragged, famine-stricken, Red Army of Lenin and Trotsky, which based itself on the appeal of international socialism, victory was achieved over twenty one armies of intervention! But today, instead of appealing to the tradition of the glorious feats of the Red Army and international socialism; instead of issuing an appeal to the German and European workers and to the toilers of all lands to fight for a United Socialist Europe . . . Molotov appeals to the reactionary Czarist tradition of the defeat of Napoleon by reactionary feudalism! This is the blackest of all the crimes of Stalin.

In this hour of direct peril the Stalinist bureaucracy looks to Churchill and Roosevelt to save the workers' state from destruction. This is utter suicide. Long before any aid from capitalist Britain and America can reach Russia, the decisive test case will have come. The mightiest blitzkrieg murder machine is launched against the Russian workers. Churchill and Roosevelt platonically make gestures of assistance but in the decisive period the Russian army will stand alone. The Red Army is no longer ragged and hungry, and has formidable weapons of defence, but the greatest weapon of all—the weapon of Lenin and Trotsky has been struck from its hands—that is the socialist appeal to the workers and soldiers of the invading armies. Stalin may say that this would drive Britain and America onto the side of Germany. This is possible. But in place of these treacherous allies the Soviet Union would gain the support of the workers and soldiers of Europe and the world. This, and this alone, would guarantee the victory and save the Soviet Union from destruction. By relying on Churchill and Roosevelt, Stalin drives the German people behind Hitler. It is only because of this that they have guaranteed Stalin aid. But at the first sign of a decisive Soviet victory they would change sides. Victory in company with Churchill, the interventionist of 1920, would lead to the crushing of the Soviet State.

In Russia the struggle for a Soviet victory is the struggle for the overthrow of the Kremlin usurpers! In Britain the Communist Party leadership will once again execute a somersault and come out in support of British imperialism, using the excuse that it is in the interests of the defence of the Soviet Union. For British Imperialism the character of the war has not changed. Their friendship with the Soviet Union is a mere episode. Churchill and Roosevelt cannot defend the workers' state.

We stand for the defence of the Soviet Union and for the destruction of Hitlerism but this cannot be achieved under the control and leadership of the capitalist class. For us in Britain this can only be achieved by the seizure of power by the British working class. The struggle against capitalism at home is the only road to the defence of the Soviet Union and the destruction of fascism.

Only under the banner of the Fourth International can the workers conduct a struggle for power which would lead to the downfall of Hitler and save the Soviet Union from destruction. Comrades! Rally to the programme of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, to the programme of world socialism!

ONLY A WORKERS GOVERNMENT CAN DEFEND THE SOVIET UNION AND SMASH FASCISM!

Tasks of the Left in the Labour Party

The official policy of the Labour Party and Trade Union movement has always been one of acceptance of the capitalist system whilst attempting by reforms to improve the material conditions within it. In all its fundamental characteristics it has played a traditionally Liberal role which in many respects has coincided with the policy of the bourgeoisie. The British ruling class has always adopted a liberal policy towards the working class at home, whilst in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the Empire a ruthless campaign of violence and intense exploitation has been carried out. For over a century the motto of British capitalism, insofar as the Labour and Trade Union leaders were concerned, was "you train 'em—we'll buy 'em." In sharp contrast to their poorer imperialist rivals on the continent, they have always prided themselves on the shrewd and cunning manner in which they could inoculate the workers' movement against the "troublemaker" and "extremist" bacilli.

But now, the evolving of the capitalist system has changed all this. The days when Britain could exploit the world have gone forever. New, hungrier and more powerful rivals have come to the forefront in a titanic struggle to dominate the earth. The "old Lion with her lion cubs", to use a phrase of Mr. Churchill, has been forced to give way to her more powerful adversaries; and the result has been a sharpening of the growing class-conflict at home, the realities of which have completely altered the old forms of social and political life. Every advanced worker to-day, realises that parliament and so-called democracy are hypocritical smokescreens to hide the naked rule of a concentrated financial oligarchy which is mobilising the whole forces of the State against the growing revolutionary opposition. It is true of course that periodically parliament appears to function, but then again even the yellow press is forced to admit that the *real* decisions are taken behind the scenes. Only petty bourgeois snobs such as Gollancz, Strachey, Laski and Co. indulge in idle chatter about the wonders of "democracy" and the glories of this "holy" war. Every parliamentary session revealed the true situation to ever wider strata of the working-class. Above all it finds its sharpest reflection in their old political parties. The dictatorship of finance capital, through the Coalition Government, is rooted inside the ranks of Labour through the agency of a ruling bureaucratic caste, which like its capitalist masters, demands complete submission to its rule. This was the outstanding feature of the Fortieth Conference of the Labour

Party.

The Conference, itself, did not provide any new surprises for the revolutionary left. Working-class militants were forewarned by the decision of the National Executive to exclude all resolutions which were to have been submitted by local and divisional labour parties and affiliated organisations. Gone were the pious phrases of Attlee who introduced his *Labour Party in Perspective* by remarking that "*I should not like to see Labour a Party on the pattern of those which exists in Corporate States, where exact obedience and loyalty to a leader stifle free thought and individual initiative. In a party of the Left there should always be room for differences of opinion and emphasis*". The scene had changed. The Right Honourable Attlee of 1937 has become the Lord Privy Seal of 1941. Holiday story telling and speechmaking had been replaced by open despotism. Capitalism is in danger. The Imperialist plunder by a microscopic collection of rich idlers is being menaced by rival gangsters, and the Labour and Trade Union bosses have rallied to a man to bolster up a tottering social order against the progressive strivings of the millions of toilers.

The bulk of the delegates at the Conference were hand-picked right wingers; old and ageing men, settled in life; well satisfied with the status quo. They had made "Socialism" their business and it had profited them. The prospects of disrupting this idyllic situation aroused in them sentiments of indignation. This broke out with ferocity when a motion was put, for the reference back of the paragraph dealing with the Kings Norton bye-election, pending the hearing of the delegates. The "rebel" Laski thundered forth with the vehemence and demagogy of a Churchill about the sacredness of "constitutionalism" and all the rest of it. The political flirt of Popular Front days has now become the political charwoman of the National Executive; a fitting role for such a renegade. Here and there throughout the Hall were a sprinkling of militants, whilst occasional mild protests were recorded by the "Victory and Socialism" Tribuneites, who needless to say made little impression upon their patriotic brethren.

This extreme bureaucratic transformation and bludgeoning of rank and file opinions is the direct outcome of reformism in the epoch of imperialist decline. It is part of a process which has been developing ever since the Labour Party took shape in 1900. The entry of the British Trade Unions into the political arena was accompanied by all the old prejudices

of Fabian Liberalism. Whilst on the one hand it represented a decisive step forward in the political unification of the proletariat, on the other hand it was unable to overcome the historic weakness of the British working-class, that is its contempt for a theoretical approach—the Marxian approach—to the problems of society. This deficiency—in itself a reflection of the reactionary otent influence of Liberal concessionisms, the policy of the bourgeoisie in its heyday—was a severe handicap to its development. Engels in his preface to the “Peasant War in Germany” pointed out that “Without a sense for theory, scientific Socialism would have never become blood and tissue of the workers. What an enormous advantage this is, may be seen, on the one hand, from the indifference of the English labour movement towards all theory, which is one of the reasons why it moves so slowly, in spite of the splendid organisation of the individual unions.”

The majority of the Labour Party leadership, from the beginning, were steeped in Fabian philosophy. Despite the fact that a large number of them came from the working-class they were completely incapable of grasping the socialist theory and outlook. When the real imperialist rot set in and ate its way into the heart of the Labour movement, they preferred to capitulate in preference to the socialist revolution. At the famous Stuttgart Conference of 1907, the Copenhagen Conference of 1910, and the Basle Conference of 1912, delegates from the various sections of the Second International, including the British Labour Party pledged themselves to international working-class action against war. But when war broke out on August 4th, 1914, the resolutions remained on paper which were crumpled up in the first burst of cannon. The Second International representing twelve million workers had collapsed ignominiously under the pressure of imperialist influence. Its leaders became partners of their respective bourgeoisie and incited the workers (the same as they do to-day) to kill one another in the name of “national defence”. From then onwards the Labour Party represented a retarding and reactionary influence upon the growth and development of the revolutionary forces.

The post war crisis resulting in the defeats of the revolutionary left, meant not only the stabilisation of capitalism, but also the stabilisation of the old parties of the Second International. The patriotic jingoes of 1914-18 became the left phrasemongers of 1918-24. Plans and reconstruction programmes galore were brought forward only to remain on paper. Such people as Herbert Morrison became renowned for their “leftism”. At the 1919 conference of the Labour Party the present Home Secretary stated “*They had got to realise that the present war against Russia on the part of this country, France and the other Imperialist Powers, was not war against Bolshevism or against Lenin, but against the international organisation of Socialism. It was a war against the organisation of the trade union movement itself, and*

as such should be resisted with the full political and industrial power of the whole trade union movement”. To listen to Morrison to-day, one would think it was a different man, but his outlook was the same then as it is now. All that has changed is the situation and the mood of the working class. When it is necessary to pacify the workers by demagogic phrasemongering, Morrison becomes a “left”. When in the name of “democracy” and “defence of our island fortress”, the working class apathetically support the war, Morrison becomes a jingo, and in his position of Home Secretary persecutes revolutionaries. It is essential that this aspect of the role of the Labour Leaders is grasped because, as we shall see they are always ready to change their utterings.

Regardless of the efforts of the spurious Disarmament conferences, the League of Nations, New Deals and Ottawa conferences, the contradictions of Imperialism grew steadily worse. The conditions and pre-requisites for the present war were glaringly apparent as early as 1928. Monopoly capital had greatly strengthened its control and in doing so had dragged the Labour leaders ever closer to the State. The Mond-Turner agreement of January 1928 which attempted to tie the trade unions to the state was followed by the complete abandonment of the Labour Party by MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas; the former to lead the Tory National Government as Prime Minister and rank amongst the first gentlemen in capitalist society, whilst Thomas as we have seen went a little further. To-day there are strong rumours amongst prominent Labour Party officials that grave doubts exist concerning the attitude of some of the present “big men” towards the Party. There are suggestions that another MacDonald fiasco is on the way in the none too distant future, and doubtless there is some truth in the rumours.

The real changes in the evolution of capitalism and reformism become clearly visible upon an examination of the respective situations prior to the present war and the last one. Whereas before the 1914-18 war the Labour leaders outwardly opposed it until it had been declared, this time they actively and openly prepared for the war. At the Hastings Conference in 1933, section (C) of the text of a resolution on war read as follows: “*To pledge itself to take no part in war and to resist it with the whole forces of the Labour movement and to seek consultation forthwith with the trade union and co-operative movements with a view to deciding and announcing to the country what steps, including a General Strike, are to be taken to organise the opposition of the organised working class movement in the event of war and threat of war, and urges the National Joint Bodies to make immediate approaches to endeavour to secure international action by the workers on the same lines”*. By 1934 the special committee set up to discuss “ways and means” to implement this resolution, reported that they were not quite sure about its validity in relation to wars of “national defence”. At

the TUC the same year the "high priests" made it clear that a General Strike would be illegal, whilst Citrine proudly announced at the Edinburgh TUC conference in 1936 that "the employers dared not go to war without the backing of the Labour movement". The General Strike idea was discarded and the Labour and Trade Union leaders got busy mobilising the workers for war.

This development in class collaboration politics was even more pronounced in Germany. During the rise of Hitler to power the trade union bureaucracy made tentative approaches to the Nazis in an attempt to obtain agreement upon adapting the unions to the fascist state. On April 1st, two months after Hitler came to power the "*Metallarbeiter-Zeitung*" before it was yet liquidated, wrote: "*If now at last active measures are going to be taken against economic suffering no one will welcome that more heartily than the trade unions. Their own collaboration will certainly not be lacking. If the government now sets to work with a will, it will be possible for it to make moral conquests also among the 45% of the people who did not vote for it on March 5th.*" On May 1st, the Social Democratic trade union bureaucracy actually called upon the workers to demonstrate under the Nazi Flag. At the Brighton TUC in 1933, Sir Walter Citrine, when defending the policy of the German trade union leaders remarked that, "*They could be legitimately criticised because they thought they could adapt the German Trade Union movement in the same way to the new regime*".

When Mr. James Walker, as chairman at the 1941 Conference, stated, "*I cannot separate the German people from the German government. They are just as responsible for the acts of the government as the government itself*", he neglected to tell us that his counterparts in Germany were at one time cadging for jobs under the self same government. This hypocrite who has the impudence to peddle Vansittart rubbish at a Conference supposed to be representing working people, kept his mouth shut regarding the role of the Labour and trade union leaders in Germany, because he and his ilk would be job-hunting under similar conditions if ever they arose in Britain.

Apart from this degrading spectacle of right-wing chauvinism, the most disgusting features of this conference were the antics of the pacifists and the intellectual left social-chauvinists. Mr. Rhys Davies' talk about "something better than a fight to a finish" is a clear insight into the sterile mind of the pacifist. They "deplore" the suffering of the masses; but fight shy of the real alternative which is the revolutionary overthrow of the ruling class. At all times they evade this fundamental conclusion with vague terminology, because the essence of pacifism is an attempt to combine a profession of peace with passive support for the capitalist system which is based upon exploitation and war.

Laski, the Tribune gang, and the miscalled

Socialist Clarity Group are gentlemen of a much different calibre. They recognise quite clearly the bankruptcy of capitalism. At one time or another the bulk of them have written books correctly diagnosing the present system. Today, of course, "it is different". It was all very fine to draw a nice blueprint about "the new society" yesterday; but . . . "we're at war now" and "it's not nice" to disrupt the "national" unity, so they support the greatest mass murder for profit in history in order to avoid the revolutionary road.

The dishonour of these valets of the ruling class is easily understood by an examination of their speeches and writings. Laski, in "*Reynolds News*" May the 25th, wrote: "The movement will have no truck with any peace which seeks accommodation with our enemies. But it says frankly that the time has come to deal with the causes of war, and they can be only dealt with on a socialist basis."

And today: "In the degree that Mr. Churchill grasps this central truth, he will find Labour responsive" . . . Here is the hub of their position. Fearing and hating revolutionary tactics and the class struggle they *always* address their appeals to the ruling class and not the workers. They lack confidence and have nothing but contempt for the tremendous progressive potentialities of the proletariat. The bourgeois professor understands well the only solution to the war; but he does not tell it to the workers; he offers his wares instead to strike-breaker, Churchill, who no doubt must be highly amused. This is truly exemplary of left social-chauvinist trickery.

With an attitude of papal infallibility that surpasses even the disciples of the Church of Rome, the Communist Party ignored the development of a left wing opposition at the conference. The old Popular Front days have receded, and the "brand new" movement, the Peoples Convention has temporarily i.e. until Stalin's next move comes to the foreground. It is here we see the utter sectarianism of Stalinism in the present period. For years they had carried out the donkey work of the Labour Party and the Leagues of Youth, and at a time when the workers stand in the threshold of their greatest struggles, they deserted to a tiny island of Left-wing opinion and in so doing, completely abandoned the millions of labour voters and trade unionists whose political consciousness has not yet led them to see the realities of the situation.

The central lesson for revolutionary militants in the Labour Party and the trade unions, is that the sole way out is through the development of a left wing around the transitional programme and policy of the Fourth International. The growth and strengthening of such a left wing will only take place around a programme which caters for the consciousness and needs of the working class as a whole, and it is vitally necessary that we acquire a thorough understanding of the present status of the Labour

Party if we are to overcome all future obstacles.

During the past twelve months the Labour Party has lost one fourth of its individual membership, roughly 104,720. Its trade-union paying political membership increased by 20,000. The decrease in individual membership can be related to a number of factors amongst them, the almost complete collapse of the League of Youth; the call-ups to the forces, together with the open exit of Communist Party fraction workers to the Peoples Convention. No doubt also, a large number have dropped away in disgust at the political truce and the actions of the Labour leaders in the Churchill government.

The real strength of the Labour Party, however, lies in the trade union movement. Historically it has developed as the political expression of the trade unions and in spite of the drop in individual membership it still preserves its status amongst the unions. The following table shows its membership during the years of the last war corresponding to the present.

YEARS	TOTAL MEMBERSHIP		
1914	1,572,391
1917	2,415,383
1939	2,663,067
1940	2,571,163

Despite the whole series of betrayals its membership is now higher than in 1917. Moreover the number of trade union affiliations are increasing which indicate a growing radicalisation amongst fresh sections of the organised workers. The Labour Party still retains a considerable support amongst the workers and this was shown when a "Stop the War" resolution was submitted by Arthur Horner, the president of the South Wales Miners' Federation and Communist Party Leader on 3rd March. The Labour Party leaders submitted a counter resolution which called for support for the official Labour policy. The text of the resolution stated that "we cannot permit a German victory" and added that the first task of Labour was "to bring about the establishment of a government in keeping with the interests of the people of Britain and the high ideals with which they entered the war". The "Stop the War" resolution was overwhelmingly defeated by 67,000 votes, the numbers voting for the resolution being 30,000 and for the Labour Party resolution 97,000. It must be borne in mind that the South Wales Miners' Federation is the biggest Communist Party stronghold amongst the industrial workers, and yet the Labour leaders maintain their support with comparative ease. It is also worth noting that they polled the most votes in the Rhondda, an area at one time noted for its unemployment.

The workers' attitude towards the Labour Party is not primarily determined by the fact that the Labour Party leaders support the war, because the coming movement will not be consciously anti-war or pacifist. It will develop

against the whole capitalist regime, particularly the war and the way in which it is being persecuted. Already there are striking symptoms of this. The annual conference of the A.E.U. and N.U.G.M.W. witnessed speech after speech denouncing the chaos and mismanagement of boss-class organisation in the war industry, not against the war as such. The workers are becoming increasingly conscious of the fact that the capitalists are not interested in "fighting Hitlerism" but only in protecting their profits.

Besides demonstrating the hold which the Labour Party still maintains over wide sections of the working class, the figures are also an indication of the magnitude of the approaching crisis. The Labour Party is essentially a child of the bourgeois democratic regime. Its growth and development have been conditioned by the rise of capitalism as a world system, and the consequent liberal policy of the bourgeoisie at home. Now when bourgeois democracy is crumbling in one country after another, the era of social democracy and the Labour Party is drawing to a close. Imperialism moves closer and closer to fascism and ruthless dictatorships. Even the Labour and Trade Union leaders who have so faithfully served their capitalist masters are not escaping, (witness the fate of Blum, Joeheux and Co.). The whole flimsy texture of the bourgeois-democratic order, whilst imposing as a state force, the parliament, the franchise and so on, is based upon feet of clay, is being busily scooped away by the ruling class to-day, to lay the foundations of fascism tomorrow. And concurrently the Labour Party too, rests upon feet of clay and within its ranks there are various sections at work also scooping it away into different channels. All this represents the growing revolutionary tide and reflects different layers of opinion amongst the workers and middle classes.

The table of figures shows that, whereas the labour party has held its own in relation to its membership of the last war, nevertheless whilst on the one hand it gained nearly a million new members during the period between 1914-17 on the other hand it has *lost* a quarter of its individual membership during a corresponding period in the present war. This is an indication that the movement of large sections of workers towards the Labour Party that took place in the last war, will not be as protracted and stabilised in this. The conditions of European and British capitalism regardless of who will win, will be such that after the war they will no longer be able to stabilise their rule except by naked tyranny and violence. The Dean of Saint Paul's has quite openly stated this. The tempo of the developing struggle is already so sharp and the mass political consciousness of large sections of the advanced workers so high, that their past experiences of the betrayals of the labour leaders is driving them along the road to a more left-wing alternative.

Simultaneously in the Labour Party itself, signs of a growing division in the parliamentary body are gradually becoming apparent. The disagreement on the "Means Test Bill" is but the first of many which, as the crisis grows, will undoubtedly crystallise into sharp divisions and may even culminate into splits. The "Tribune" supporters who are typical representatives of petty-bourgeois instability can also be expected to move away from the existing Labour Party apparatus.

The hostile attitude of large sections of trade unionists to Morrison's fire-watching order shows that he is rapidly losing his status as a Labour Leader, and he, together with a number of others will find himself in MacDonald's shoes. A large percentage of the present leadership, however, will attempt to enact their age-old tricks of "left" phrasemongering in order to confuse and betray the leftward moving masses. The South Wales Miners' Federation move was only one of many to come. When at the beginning of the war a number of "Stop the WAR" and pacifist candidates were competing at the various bye-elections, Attlee saw fit to formulate "Labours Peace Aims".

The movement away from the Labour Party, whilst it is but a trickle at the moment is nevertheless an expression on the part of proletarian militants, to seek another alternative. It is here the Communist Party with its "Peoples Convention" will carry out its most treacherous work. Illicitly masquerading under the banner of the October revolution they are attempting to dangle the prospects of more "Left" alternative in front of those workers while in reality leading too the path of another Popular Front. The voting at the A.E.U. National Conference shows that they are having a certain amount of success. To block this dangerous passage to disaster and lead these workers to the road of the revolution must be the foremost task of the revolutionary left.

It is impossible for revolutionary socialists to boycott the Labour Party and the Labour Leaders. That way will lead only to political suicide. The masses of working people in this country will understand the need for a revolutionary policy and party not from abstract interpretations of political problems, but from the mighty struggle between classes, which capitalism and war have placed upon the order of the day in Britain. The working class will pass through the whole gamut of political experience which the Russian working-class went through. When the millions of toilers in this country, who to-day, passively accept the war, are reluctantly thrust into political struggle by capitalism itself, they will not immediately turn towards the conscious revolutionary minority. They will try at first to seek a way out of their impasse through the traditional organisations of the working-class and above all the reformist Labour and trade union leaderships. The whole history of the working-class move-

ment all over the world bears out this prognosis. The revolutionary epoch which opened at the end of the last imperialist war found millions of workers all over Europe supporting the same set of leaders who had for four years betrayed each and every one of their interests. In Germany and in Russia, in the first stages of the struggle the workers awakening to political life did not turn to the Bolsheviks or the Spartacists, but the Mensheviks and Social Democrats.

The fact that the reformist leaders in Russia, Germany and France who were the counterparts of the Hendersons and the Clynes supported the predatory war of capitalism did not prevent the masses from turning to them, and neither will the fact that the Labour leaders who are supporting the present imperialist war be sufficient argument to keep the masses away from them when the class struggle develops in this country.

The Fourth International alone presents the programme for the fundamental solution of the problems of the working class. But it must be stated that its development has not kept abreast of the radicalisation of the broad mass of the workers. It has not yet sufficient tradition in this country to attract a mass following. This is not unnatural. Trotskyism represents the most advanced political thought. Many advanced trade union militants have found their way into our ranks. But the great mass of workers are learning by actual experience. These workers will pass through the traditional channel of the Labour Party. Our demand of "Labour to Power" is not the fundamental solution of the problems of the working class. If its realisation is delayed too long it might be an unnecessary, even a backward demand. However, at the present stage it is the duty of the advanced workers to keep the pulse on the trend of events, to be where their more backward fellow workers are in order to lead them, by going through their experiences with them, to the ultimate realisation for the complete overthrow of the capitalist system.

The task of building a revolutionary party in Britain depends primarily as Trotsky carefully pointed out, on the correct marxian approach to the character and role of the reformist labour and trade union bureaucracy. The sectarian character of the ILP and the cynicism and irresponsibility of the CP towards the working-class movement is demonstrated more sharply on this question than on anything else. Only the Fourth International has proved its ability to develop a revolutionary alternative to the Labour bureaucracy. Our slogan "Labour to Power" on a programme of class-demands corresponding to the present political consciousness of the working-class, is the only way to conduct a revolutionary struggle against the bureaucracy and to prepare the masses for the final overthrow of capitalism.

GERRY HEALY.

The Crisis in Soviet Industry

By VLADIMIR IVLEV

Since 1938 Soviet economy has entered into a profound crisis. One of the clearest symptoms of this crisis is the complete absence of statistics of production since that date. The Soviet government abruptly ceased to make public the production of the various branches of industry. Since this situation could become disagreeable to the "friends" of the USSR, the 18th Party Conference, held February 15-21, gave out statistics which the Stalinist agencies reprint in millions of copies, but of course without so much as the most superficial analysis. A large part of the figures are given in rubles and do not permit, as we shall see, any serious year by year comparison because of the increasing inflation. The other figures are deceitfully combined in order to hide the reality in place of revealing it. Thus the reporters announce dozens of percentages without giving a single absolute figure; the forecasts of the plan are mixed with the figures of actual production; the statistics apply according to the various years to quite different groups of the population etc., etc. It was the task of the reporters to provide enough figures so that the "friends" would have "serious" arguments and to provide a selection of figures in such a way as to render impossible any exact picture of Soviet economy and of its development.

On the basis of the *official* figures, and without discussing their accuracy for the moment, we have undertaken to reconstitute the dynamics of the development of Soviet production for the last years. We have been able to obtain positive results for four important branches of production (steel, pig iron, coal, oil); some inconclusive indications for a fifth branch (rolled steel). But before explaining our method and its results it is necessary to review briefly the recent past.

FROM THE SECOND TO THE THIRD FIVE-YEAR PLAN

The second Five-Year plan was completed at the end of 1937. If one attempts to measure its success by the growth of the fundamental branches of industry, without entering into the question of the quality of the goods produced, we can say that the projected figures of the plan were realized from 70 to 80 per cent. The Stalinist leadership claimed a success of almost 100 per cent, but they can do this only because they replaced the original figures of the plan with much more modest ones during the course of the realization of the plan.

The third Five-Year plan was adopted at the 18th Congress of the Stalinist party in March 1939 (not to be confused with the 18th Conference of February); this means that during more than 15 months there was no plan whatsoever.

Stalin announced at this Congress that the third Five-Year plan would take the country from socialism into communism and the third plan was baptized as the "Stalin plan." However, the delay in announcing the plan was in itself a sign of the serious difficulties. Another symptom was the extremely low coefficient of growth in comparison with that of the second plan. Taken as a whole, the third plan forecast an average yearly increase only half of that of the period from 1932 to 1937. For certain branches the reduction from 1932 to 1937 by 193 per cent. For the third Five-Year period the plan envisaged an increase of 58 per cent; that is, one-third to one-fourth less. We shall see how these percentages have been realized!

THE CARRYING OUT OF THE THIRD FIVE-YEAR PLAN

Because of the lack of general statistics, it is impossible to obtain a rounded out picture. Nevertheless, it is possible to obtain a sketch of the development in a few, but very important, branches of industry from 1937 to the present time solely on the basis of the official figures announced at the 18th Conference.

STEEL.

Last February the 18th Conference adopted as its goal for the production of steel in 1941, 22,400,000 metric tons. Voznesensky declared in his report that this figure represented an increase of 22 per cent over the production of 1940, which permits us to calculate the latter as 18,360,000 tons (100/122 of the official figure for 1941). But the official figures of production for 1937 were 17,330,000 tons and for 1938, 18,000,000. The plan for 1939 envisaged 18,800,000 tons and no figure of actual production was published for that year. The official report of the 18th Conference thus demonstrates that production for 1940 was well behind the plan for 1939. It is sufficient to open one's eyes to the figures, something the servile "friends" of the bureaucracy are careful to avoid doing. As for the figure set as the goal of production for the end of the Five-Year plan in 1942, 27,500,000 tons, it is clearly at an inaccessible height. No one at the Conference, moreover, so much as breathed the figure adopted two years ago at the 18th Congress of the party when the goal was set under the genius-like leadership of Stalin.

The rates of growth speak a very dramatic language. The increase in the production of steel from 1937 to 1940 was 3.55 per cent (if we utilize the *official* figure as the basis of calculation), or an average yearly increase of 1.18 per cent during these three years. The Conference, however, decided to set 22 per cent as the annual increase for 1941. The delegates

voted unanimously for such a fantastic decision solely because of the revolver at their temples.

The plan for the period from 1937 to 1942 set as the goal an average annual increase of 11 per cent, very modest in comparison with the preceding five-year period. However from 1937 to 1940 the average yearly increase in the volume of production was 1.18 per cent; that is, the plan of growth was carried out by only 10 per cent according to the official figures themselves!

Let those who find our figures too sombre show us others! Our calculations are confirmed, moreover, by the Soviet newspaper *Industriya* which declared on November 17, 1938, that the production of steel was far behind schedule and that it had fallen even below the 1938 level.

The steel industry was not singled out for special criticism at the last Conference of the party. Some branches of economy may be in better condition. Many others are worse. Steel, however, is an essential raw material in the economy. The production of steel at the present time thus represents an average barometer of the whole industry. The conclusion is inescapable: since 1938-39 the Soviet economy has entered a profound crisis. The reality is completely out of accord with the figures unanimously adopted at the inauguration of the "Stalin plan" of 1939.

PIG IRON

For 1941 the 18th Conference set 18,000,000 tons as the goal for pig iron production, asserting that this would constitute an increase of 21 per cent over the preceding year; that is, that the production of 1940 computed on the basis of the official figures amounted to 14,876,000 tons. The production of 1937 was 14,487,000 tons, that of 1938, 14,600,000; the 1939 goal was set at 15,600,000 tons. As in the case of steel, the production of pig iron in 1940 was well behind the plan set for 1939. The Five-Year plan envisaged an average annual increase of 10.23 per cent. From 1937 to 1940 the increase was 2.70 per cent, or an average increase of 0.90 per cent per year, that is, an increase of scarcely one-twelfth the one set by the plan. Here also no correlation exists any longer between the plan and the reality.

In March, 1939, Stalin declared: "We may consider quite feasible an average annual increase in the output of pig iron of two or two and a half million tons, bearing in mind the present state of the technique of iron smelting." (*From Socialism to Communism*, Joseph Stalin. International Publishers, 1939.) The average yearly increase between 1937 and 1940 as derived from the official figure was in reality 130,000 tons, that is, one-fifteenth to one-eighteenth of the figure proclaimed by Stalin. Woe to the delegate who at the last Conference might have dared to recall the figure given out by the "master-planner" two years previously!

COAL.

The 18th Party Conference set the production of coal at 191,000,000 tons for 1941, and the reporter declared that this was an increase of 16 per cent over 1940. The production in 1940, if we again compute from the official figure, was consequently 164,655,000 tons. In 1937 it had been 127,900,000 tons. During the first three years of the plan (from the end of 1937 to the end of 1940) the production thus increased yearly by an average of 9.58 per cent. The plan forecast 18 per cent. The actual gain according to the official figure was thus half the goal set in the plan. This figure, somewhat greater than for the production of steel and pig iron, is explained by the tremendous capital investments in the coal industry. From 1937 to 1940 new mines were opened with a capacity output of 40 per cent of the total production in 1937, whereas the capital investments in the other fundamental branches of industry were considerably smaller. But if tremendous expenditures in new mines have been able to increase the official production up to half of the planned increase, the conditions in the coal industry have not changed very much. On April 4, 1940, the People's Commissariat for the Coal Industry declared that one of the principal coal fields, the Don Basin, had swallowed up great sums of money for technical improvements, but that its production during the last three years increased scarcely 3 per cent!

OIL

The 18th Conference fixed 38,000,000 tons for the production of oil and derivative products in 1941. The planned increase for the year 1940-41 was set at 11 per cent. That means that the 1940 output if we again accept the official figure was 34,234,000 tons. The production in 1937 was 30,500,000 tons. No figures are available between 1937 and 1940. So the actual average yearly increase between 1937 and 1940 was 4.08 per cent, while the plan forecast a yearly increase of 15.41 per cent, or almost quadruple. As for the planned production for 1942 adopted in 1939, 54,000,000 tons, that has been left hanging in the clouds. And there was complete silence about it at the last Conference.

ROLLED STEEL

The production of rolled steel in 1937 was 13,000,000 tons. The 18th Conference fixed 15,800,000 tons as the goal for 1941. But here we run up against one of the stratagems used by the bureaucracy to hide the reality. The rate of growth for the year 1941 was announced at the Conference as 23 per cent for "high-grade" rolled steel, while the output announced was for rolled steel *in general*. Hence it is impossible to make any conclusions about the actual production! Nevertheless, if we apply this rate of 23 per cent to the general output of 1941, we obtain an actual official production of 12,846,000 tons for 1940. In 1937 the output was 13,000,000 tons. So the output would

have decreased yearly from 1937 to 1941 by 0.39 per cent instead of increasing 12.31 per cent a year according to the plan. We must admit that the ruse of the bureaucracy leave this assumption inconclusive. However, the very fact that the leadership laid down a smoke screen over this branch of industry is an infallible indication that the situation is far from brilliant.

Steel, pig iron, coal, oil, and rolled steel, these are all the branches of industry in which we can draw conclusion. The other figures given at the last 18th Conference have so little relationship one with another; the bureaucracy knows so well how to cover up the reality, that it is impossible to follow the development from year to year.

In his report at the 18th Conference, Voznesensky compared a few figures of the daily output at the end of 1940 with those at the end of 1937. He concluded from these figures the "possibility not only of fulfilling but of over-fulfilling the 1941 plan."

An examination of the figures shows that the rate of growth thus calculated is far behind those forecast in the Five-Year plan. In fact they are not much more than a third. Thus according to Voznesensky the daily output of oil at the end of 1937, between 84 and 86 thousand tons, reached 97 to 98 thousand tons at the end of 1940 which gives an average yearly rate of growth of 5.1 per cent, while the plan forecast 15.41 per cent. The rates thus calculated are however somewhat greater (except for coal) than those we have obtained by the comparison of the total yearly outputs. How explain this? The key to the enigma is given us by the bureaucracy itself through the pen of Walter Duranty, who last February mentioned the "spurt" in the final quarter of 1940. The figures of daily output presented by Voznesensky are in reality those of a very short period, prepared for the use of the Conference.

THE INFLATION

We shall not discuss here the question of the quality of production (which has become worse since 1937). Nor shall we discuss the deterioration of the machines which occurs in the "spurts" that take place at each change of director (and they are frequent) and at the end of each year (to attain the figures of the plan). On the basis of the official figures, prepared for the party Conference, we have tried to show the purely quantitative development of some fundamental branches of industry.

The 18th Conference was told that the output of industry had increased from 95.5 billion rubles in 1937 to 162 billion rubles in 1940; that is an increase of 44 per cent or almost 15 per cent a year. Not a single one of the fundamental branches of industry have made, by far, such an advance. The sole explanation is that during the last three years the ruble has melted

away, prices have increased, the printing press has been working overtime. An analysis of the official budget will lead to the same conclusion. (See the article by John C Wright in *The Militant*, March 8, 1941.)

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True to the teachings of "socialism in one country," Voznesensky opened his report on the economic tasks by declaring that the Soviet economic development is not affected by the "blows of crisis and wars." However, his speech, those of the other reporters, and the very holding of the conference itself were nothing but denials of such an affirmation. Stalin's silence, more eloquent than his speeches, only underlined the gravity of the crisis that the Soviet union is now undergoing.

The conference did not concern itself over the causes of the crisis. Its task was to cover it up by denouncing the "individual insufficiencies." The present crisis is the crisis of the whole system of bureaucratic leadership. The nationalized economy is more and more strangled in the bureaucratic noose. Thus to resolve the fundamental problem of the economy, that of the productivity of labour, Stalin has found nothing in his arsenal but ever more brutal violence against the workers. The present war intensifies this fundamental policy, and in two ways: by extremely increasing the needs of Soviet defense and by making much more difficult the buying of tools abroad.

To the catastrophic consequences of his system, so aggravated in the face of war, Stalin has only one answer: ever-increasing terror. Seven People's Commissars have been "warned" by the Conference, that is, they work now under the direct muzzle of the revolver. To complete the picture, it is necessary to add that they direct such commissars as aviation, munitions, electric power, chemicals. The three last representatives of some importance remaining of the old Stalinist crew are on the way out: Litvinov has been "purged", Molotov and Kaganovitch received "family" warnings. Besides all this, there is a tremendous circulation of completely new faces who appear and disappear. The most extraordinary exemplar of that type is one Merkulov who shone for three weeks like a meteor at the head of the GPU, but was expelled from the Central Committee by the Conference and disappeared. Without doubt his fate has been sealed in the cellars of the Lubyanka.

With its expulsions and warnings, the Conference represents Stalin's lash to pull the economy out of the mud-hole where it has bogged down. The method is not new, the results likewise will not be new. They will be those noted above, but extremely exacerbated. To save the USSR, today economically, tomorrow militarily, the Soviet masses have only one road: to seize the power from the bureaucracy and to restore the democracy of the soviets.

THE ENIGMA OF SOVIET PRODUCTION

"Foreign Affairs" for January 1941 contains an informative article by Freda Utley entitled "The Enigma of Soviet Production." This article is crammed with material on the impasse reached by the bureaucracy in Soviet economy.

Up to 1937 production in the U.S.S.R. increased in spite of all the blunders but "since 1937 production in the basic industries has either been stagnant or has declined." 1940 was the worst year since the famine of 1931-32. The Finnish War threw the transport system into utter chaos and set back the material conditions in Russia correspondingly.

The First Five-Year Plan completely failed to stick to the planned estimates in regard to labour and wages. The plan had called for a total investment of 86 billion rubles. Instead, it became 130 billions, inflation making up for mistakes and disproportions. The plan had called for an increase of 1.25 billions of rubles in note issues. But already in 1928 it was increased by 1.77 billions and in October 1932 it was greater by 4.6 billions. The plan had called for an increase of 100 per cent in labour productivity (output per worker). The number of workers should have increased from 11.3 to 15.8 millions. But it actually went up to 22.8 millions. This means that 44 per cent more workers than called for, produced less than the plan called for!

By the end of the First Five-Year Plan prices had reduced the value of the ruble to about 1/10th its old value in real wages. Rationing and the "closed distributors" tended to correct this somewhat. But these were abolished in 1935.

Despite the 10 billion rubles of investment in agricultural machinery, the grain crop in 1932 was still 26 per cent below the pre-war level (69.6 million tons as against 94.1 in 1913). Industrial crops were worse off, being down 50 per cent.

Livestock had been reduced by forced collectivization from 276 million head to 160 million. Only by 1937 did agriculture attain the pre-war level. At that time textiles lagged far behind the plan, production being little more than in 1913, despite the increase in population.

The best conditions existed in 1934-36. But then appeared the full effects of the wasteful bureaucratic "driving" to achieve records. The huge investments from 1929 to 1937 were largely wasted through neglect and overworking of the machinery. Since then we have witnessed the so-called "tightening of labour discipline;" in reality, blaming the workers for the condition of the machines caused by bureaucratic direction. Quantitatively the basic in-

dustries remained about the same in 1939 as in 1938. Steel and coke production even slumped. Oil was down. There was such a terrible drop in the production of iron, coal and steel in the last quarter of 1938 that it is very likely the workers had gone on a sitdown strike. Production was actually cut in half. The cry against so-called "shirkers" may very well represent a cry against strikers!

To show the conditions of the masses, Freda Utley (who came out of Russia in 1938—she was a textile specialist) mentions that the output of shoes even by the plan will be only 1½ pair per person per year in 1942. And these don't last more than one month. There is a tremendous shortage of clothing; people are in rags. The cost of staple foods is 15 times higher in 1937 than in 1914 whereas wages are only five times higher. When prices were increased for all foods except bread from 35 to 100 per cent in 1940, bread-lines formed once again.

Collective farms receive from 1.1 to 1.5 rubles per pood of rye or about 9 kopecks per kilogram. Now the "official" price of bread (it is actually higher) is 1 ruble or 100 kopecks a kilogram in the state stores. This enormous bread tax and the 100 per cent turnover tax on all manufactured goods creates peasant discontent and a chronic food shortage, which in turn causes a reduced productivity of labour. In 1935 Stalin made concessions to the peasants: they were permitted to own a little land, a garden, livestock, etc. This caused a rapid increase in cows, sheep, pigs, poultry and an intensive cultivation of vegetables. The food situation in the towns was considerably alleviated, but the collective farmers "virtually withdrew from the kolkhozes and were spending all their time working on their own land." Hence in 1939, Stalin again withdrew these concessions and purged many kolkhoz managers who had allowed the peasants to take over a big part of the collective farm lands for private cultivation in return for a fixed rent in kind.

The peasants are unwilling to work on the collective farms because of the terrible mismanagement and the small return for their labour. At every opportunity they relapse into private cultivation. Thus by 1939 the private lot had lost its subsidiary character and in many cases had become the main source of income for the collective farmer. Stalin declared the private lots "illegal" once more in that year and compelled the peasants to sell their renewed livestock back to the collectives at one-tenth their market value. Since then there has again appeared an acute shortage of meat, butter, poultry, etc.

Now the bureaucracy has to turn either to Germany or the U.S. for the machinery needed to replace the tools of production so rapidly worn out. "It is doubtful," concludes the

author, "whether at this stage the Soviet Government could materially improve the conditions of the Russian workers and peasants except by such radical economic and political changes as would deprive Stalin and his bureaucracy of their power and material privileges. The rot in the social system has already gone too far . . . Above all the liquidation of the trained personnel over the past ten years is a loss which cannot be replaced . . . This method of (repressive) government can be successful only where there is no threat from abroad. A dictator who lacks popular support dare not risk a war in which weapons would be placed in the hands of the subjects who might be more anxious to use them against him than against the foreign enemy."

J. W.

THE SOVIET "WAR POTENTIAL"

"Free Europe," a fortnightly review of (so-called) international opinion, contains three articles on "Soviet War Potential" by Anatole Baikaloff. (Issues of Dec. 13th, 1940 and following). He takes up the three factors in war potential: the military, the industrial and the morale.

The peacetime strength of the Red Army is 2.5 million with 7 million trained reserves and 25 million total available manpower. But numbers alone mean little. Huge armies inadequately equipped, badly trained and led, are mere cannon-fodder. The Finnish War showed an insufficient soldier training. But the weakest point was the shortage of officers and their technical efficiency. At the beginning of 1937 (official Soviet data) there were 46,500 officers of all ranks. 4,500 of these had served in the old imperial army; 26,000 were trained in Soviet military schools; 16,000 were promoted from the ranks after a short perfunctory training. Only 15 per cent of the colonels and generals had passed through military academies. These figures show an insufficiency of officers even for a peace-time army.

According to information of the French General Staff, the purge begun in May 1937 affected no less than 30,000 officers who were either shot, imprisoned or otherwise removed from the army. The higher ranks suffered the most. Here are those liquidated: 3 marshals out of 5; 13 army commanders out of 19; 65 corps commanders out of 85; 110 divisional commanders out of 180; 202 brigade commanders out of 406. Time has been too short to repair the damage of this massacre in the last two years. A major war would require 300 divisions and there are too few officers available. Very few are now able to work out strategic plans or tactics or to conduct operations. In the Finnish War the High Command directed operations most incompetently. Only the good fighting qualities of the ranks and their dogged tenacity averted a major disaster. Tactical successes

were achieved only after securing the services of German experts. The Red Army could undertake large-scale operations against a first-class military power if the plan of operations were drawn up by foreign experts, but would the Allies spare the time and would the Kremlin deem it advisable?

The number of military machines at the disposal of the army are sufficient. On June 1, 1940 there were 30,000 airplanes including 18,000 first line bombers and fighters; 20,000 tanks of all sizes; several thousand armoured cars; a sufficient number of field and heavy guns; a large fleet of trucks and lorries. But the troops are not familiar with the working of their equipment and not trained to handle them efficiently. They show rough and careless handling. Clothing and footwear are of very poor quality. Discipline suffered greatly from dual command. The political commissars interfered with purely military matters and undermined the authority of the commanding officers. The GPU is feared and hated by officers and men. Many were murdered by their own subordinates during the campaign. At the beginning of August 1940 these commissars were abolished. But the higher ranks were not affected by this reform. Stalin does not trust his officers and they are spied on now as before. Thus the action and initiative of the commanding officers is very limited. The Red Army is by no means a first class army.

Transport is the big Russian problem. The coefficient of traffic density was 1.13 in 1913. In 1938 it was 3.90 as against 1.08 in the U.S.; .83 in England; 1.17 in Germany. Even during peacetime the railroads are considerably overloaded. They could not stand a war-strain and their breakdown would bring an industrial halt. There is a shortage of engines, trucks, carriages, rails. There are no good motor roads and road transport is insignificant. There are only 17.5 million horses in 1938 as against 35.8 in 1916. Russia lacks copper, zinc, tin, aluminium, lead and rubber. The weakest link is agriculture which hardly meets the low level of peace needs.

The factor of morale is worst of all. The workers and peasants are no better than serfs. The cost of living is going up and wages down. Youth are now deprived of education. According to the Soviet press itself, the new decrees cut short the studies of some 600,000 students. Pupils in secondary schools have to pay 200 rubles per year, in universities and technical schools 400 rubles. This rule was applied even to pupils and students in their last year. In some provincial universities and technical colleges 80 per cent were obliged to quit and seek employment. Boys of 14 to 17 were conscripted for labour. After one year's training they are obliged to work for four years anywhere they are sent. In short, Russia is a volcano ready for revolt.

J. W.