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STALIN'S DIPLOMACY LEADS TO DEFEATS

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THE SOVIET UNION

The Soviet Union faces the most gigantic catastrophe in all its history. Whoever will not see this is historically blind either by nature or in the manner of Nelson, that is, deliberately. In the latter category can be placed Churchill and the entire British ruling class. They are fully aware of the disastrous position of the U.S.S.R., but for their own class reasons they stubbornly keep the telescope glued to their blind eye.

Blind by nature are those leaders of the working class who fail to see that the first workers' state faces annihilation, and who conceive of the Anglo-American capitalists uniting forces to save it.

The masses of the workers themselves are being deliberately blind-folded by both groups so that they will not see the real class issues involved in the genuine defence of the Soviet Union: in other words, so that they will not see that this problem, together with all the others raised by the war, can only be solved by independent working class action.

The most urgent task of the day is to bring home to the workers the catastrophic nature of the situation in which the Soviet Union finds itself, and to lead them into the only action that can avert the imminent disaster. If the Soviet Union falls, humanity will have been driven to retrace the greatest step it has ever taken towards true civilisation. World reaction will have made a sinister advance. If it stands and continues to fight and ultimately defeats its enemies, we can say with assurance that mankind will advance with **Seven League Boots** along the road of progress. **The Soviet Union must not fall!**

WORKERS ARE RUSSIA'S REAL ALLIES

Nobody will seriously deny nowadays that the Soviet Union cannot prevail in isolation. Help, and the greatest possible measure of help, must come from somewhere. To the question where this help shall come from, two principal answers are being given at the present time. Stalin and the Soviet Bureaucracy, together with the national Communist Parties, rely for succour on Churchill and Roosevelt. On the other hand, the revolutionary socialists send out the clarion call for the workers of Britain and Europe to take the only action which can avert the threatening catastrophe—struggle to take the state and military power into their own hands and wage a genuine revolutionary war against Nazism and for the defence of the Soviet Union. At the same time they call on the Soviet masses to re-establish the Soviet democracy they enjoyed in the few years after 1917 and make a revolutionary appeal to the German soldiers and workers to join them in smashing Hitler and building the Socialist United States of Europe.

Unless the British, American and European workers, together with those of Germany come to the rescue of the Soviet Union in this way, then it can be stated with absolute certainty that the U.S.S.R. will inevitably fall. It may fall to Hitler or it may fall to Churchill and Roosevelt, but with the present methods and the present resources it cannot prevail without gaining the active and independent support of the workers of other countries.

MYTH OF STALIN'S "SMARTNESS"

In Britain this fundamental Marxian truth is denied

not only by the ruling class and the Labour leaders but above all by the leaders of the Communist Party. These latter brand as "pro-Nazi" those who assert that Churchill cannot save the Soviet Union and that even if he prevents Hitler taking it, this will only be in order to secure it himself. They also pour out a whole spate of nonsense disguised as "theories" designed to cover up Stalin's past policies which have led to the present situation and to prove that there is no danger from the direction of Churchill or Roosevelt—because Stalin, together with Dutt, Pollitt, Browder and Foster, are "using" the capitalists. When a militant worker attached to the Communist Party expresses doubts about the way in which the workers' state will be defended by the same Churchill who led the intervention in 1919, he is assured by the leaders with a sly wink—"That's all right, comrade; Stalin is smart. He is using Churchill. We know Churchill is helping Russia for his own ends. But it suits us to support him for the moment. We are using the contradictions of capitalism."

The myth of Stalin's "smartness", his ability to "use" the imperialists, is spread far and wide throughout the ranks of the Communist Party and its sympathisers. It is necessary to review this myth in the light of recent events and shatter it once and for all, for it is being used to blind many fine young militants to the true opportunist nature of Stalin's policies. It is proposed in this article not so much to recapitulate the arguments already advanced in Workers' International News for the genuine defence of the Soviet Union, as to deal with the various myths that have been built up around Stalin's recent policies whereby each defeat has been dressed up to look like a victory and retreat has been painted up to look like advance.

BALANCE SHEET SHOWS CHURCHILL'S GAINS

The claim that Stalin is "using" Churchill at the present time is seen to be deliberate deceit when we draw up a balance sheet of Churchill's gains and losses in regard to the war in Russia. Stalin's "smartness" is then seen to be merely a cover for a bargain in which the British imperialists have all the gains and the Soviet Union all the losses. On the credit side of the balance sheet Churchill can at once note down the destruction of vast quantities of German war machines, and the death of hundreds of thousands of German soldiers. In the same column can be set down the time which the war in Russia has granted the British ruling class for making military preparations in Britain, North Africa and Malaya. Is it possible that on the debit side go the great losses of Soviet territory, soldiers, resources, etc.? On the contrary, the British ruling class is only too glad to see the first achievements of the workers being ground into the dust. Perhaps the pace at which it is taking place is a little too fast for them, but at least it is much slower than they estimated on June 22nd. That, however, is a secondary factor. What is important for Churchill is that two of his enemies are obliging him by trying to exterminate each other while he stands aside watching the battle and giving a judicious amount of "help" and "encouragement" to the Red Army so as to assure the ultimate exhaustion of both sides.

What, then, does go on Churchill's debit side? Perhaps the fact that by signing a pact with Russia and sending tanks to help Soviet resistance he is assisting the spread of Communism and thus cutting his own throat? This argument is put forward by many of those who justify class collaboration on grounds of expediency. But the British ruling class has made a more careful estimate of the Soviet bureaucracy than those so-called sympathisers with the Soviet Union who imagine they are using Churchill. The British capitalists have a very keen awareness that Stalin, by abandoning internationalism has made it safe for them to

"co-operate" with Soviet Russia, safe even to send it military equipment. No longer do they fear that by doing so they are adding coals to the fire of world revolution. The Royal Institute of International Affairs put the matter clearly enough when it stated:

"The internal development of Russia is tending to throw up a 'bourgeoisie' of managers and officials who possess sufficient privileges to make them highly content with the status quo . . . It is possible to regard the various purges as part of a process by which all who desire to change the present state of affairs are being rooted out. Such an interpretation lends colour to the belief that the revolutionary period in Russia is over, and that henceforward her rulers will only seek to conserve the gains which the revolution has brought them."—(Political and Strategic Interests of the United Kingdom. p. 95.)

These people are not taken in by the official legend that the bloody purges of 1937-39 were a rooting out of the "Fifth Column" in advance. Phillips Price, writing in the "Manchester Guardian" makes this doubly clear when he says:

"It is now clear that the former treason trials, much as they shocked us, were part of a campaign to remove the old doctrinaire revolutionaries. Among them was Trotsky, whose theory of the 'permanent revolution' made it impossible for him to co-operate in any real understanding with the West."

IMPERIALISTS APPRECIATE LACK OF INTERNATIONALISM

It is clear that the British rulers have weighed up everything carefully and concluded that they can safely send "aid" to Russia without running any risk of helping international socialism—so long as Stalin rules. The theory of the "old doctrinaire revolutionaries" was that although Soviet Russia might manoeuvre and take advantage of capitalist antagonisms, the only genuine defence of the U.S.S.R. rested in the independent revolutionary activity of the workers of other countries.

The "realist" Stalin had them shot for holding such views, but now the workers throughout the world see the results of his "realism" in the gradual destruction of Soviet Power. So also does the bourgeoisie, and it enjoys the spectacle. Even castrated as it is by Stalin, the continued existence of the Soviet Union represents a real potential danger to them. The "Economist" smacks its chops as it considers how this process is taking place without any international revolutionary appeal being made by the Soviet Union.

"Russian propaganda has been almost exclusively non-ideological . . . Russian propaganda in this war is not Communist . . . Those who can with most effect preach Revolution are, in their supreme hour, scrupulously avoiding it . . . Communism is considered by its own adherents to be unsuitable for export in this hour of greatest need."—("Economist", November 8, 1941.)

It is this above all that makes it safe for Churchill to "aid" the Soviet Union, to prolong a little the struggle against Hitler's intervention. In 1926 the same Churchill said: "Personally, I hope I shall live to see the day when either there will be a civilised Government in Russia, or that we shall have ended the present pretence of friendly relations." Today he extends the "friendly relations"—but it is still a pretence. Certainly Stalin's Government is more "civilised" in Churchill's eyes than it was in 1926, for in the meantime all suggestion of internationalism has been abolished. But still the foundations of the workers' state continue to exist, and the world will be a safer place for British imperialism if it is destroyed.

The final result, therefore, is that Churchill gains

everything and loses nothing. It is he who does the "using" and it is Stalin and the British Communist Party who are being "used".

STALIN'S POWER POLITICS

Ever since the introduction of the policy of "Socialism in One Country" the Comintern has had of necessity to picture Stalin as playing the imperialists off against each other. Once reliance on the world revolution has been abandoned it was necessary to find an alternative way of "defending" the Soviet Union. Power politics was the only other choice. From that time on, the 'Leader of the Peoples' was pictured as sitting in the middle of a world-wide web smiling indulgently at the struggles of the capitalist flies who had been ensnared in its tangle. The effect of power was obtained easily. All that was necessary was to call weakness strength.

This policy was supposed to have reached its highest point of perfection with the signing of the Soviet-German pact and the start of the war in the West. Now, the official myth ran, Stalin's brilliant policy had assured peace to the Soviet Union, while the capitalist mad dogs were tearing each other to pieces. When both sides were sufficiently weak the Soviet Union would step in and impose a socialist peace.

ILLUSION OF "SOCIALIST NEUTRALITY"

In the official propaganda the line was put forward that the "Socialist Peace Policy", the "Socialist Neutrality" so wisely pursued by Stalin, assured that the Soviet Union could not be dragged into the war. To the tortured and blood-drenched masses of Europe the Kremlin presented the haughty and sententious explanation—we are a Socialist country, the war cannot touch us. As the British Communist Party put it:

"In contrast to the war inferno in the capitalist world, the world of Socialism, where the workers hold power, stands mighty and peaceful . . ."

Or, as Dimitrov put it in an article in "World News and Views" on January 20, 1940:

" . . . The Soviet Union, led by Stalin is not only preventing its population of one hundred and eighty three million from being drawn into the imperialist war, but is erecting a powerful barrier against the conversion of the war into a universal holocaust."

It was in this fashion that Stalin addressed the workers of Europe. Not preparing them for the inevitable sucking of the Soviet Union into the vortex. Not warning that the only way of preventing this was for the workers to take power. But only holding his nose to avoid the stench of "other people's" wars, and dangling the crazy illusion before the masses that the Soviet Union was kept immune by the brilliance of his leadership and the fear of the capitalists of Soviet power.

SOVIET-GERMAN PACT

When the Soviet-German Pact was signed in August 1939 one illusion was swapped for another. The previous idea, that the U.S.S.R. would be saved the horrors of intervention by a front with the "democracies" gave way to the equally fantastic theory that the same result could be obtained by an agreement with Hitler. Nor was there any admission that the Stalin-Hitler pact was merely a device to gain time. No, the main illusion had to be buttressed up with a whole series of minor ones. It was not Hitler, apparently, who gained most from the pact, but Stalin. He was the one who was "using" Hitler, not Hitler who was "using" Stalin. The pact, it seemed, was dictated by Germany's weakness. As "World News and Views" wrote:

"Hitler was forced to conclude the pact, to abandon his whole anti-Soviet policy *malgré lui*. He suffered a defeat, the biggest defeat he has ever suffered . . . he was forced to abandon his dream of 'Greater Ukraine' under the control of Berlin."

The terrible events in Russia show these words to be the hollow sham that every Marxist knew them to be at the time. Hitler concluded the pact for one reason and one only—to avoid a war on two fronts, to guarantee that he could continue along the road toward world domination one step at a time. Stalin tried to counter this with the illusion that he could in the same way avoid war one step at a time.

As a further buttress to this policy "Izvestia" announced that the relations between the U.S.S.R. and Germany "are based not on passing motives of a temporary character but on the fundamental state interests of the U.S.S.R. and Germany." And "World News and Views" capped the matter with the assertion that:

"The Soviet German Pact was, and continues to be, an important factor for peace. The two largest states in Europe have eliminated from their mutual relations all military methods of solving common claims and disputes."

To re-read the words written at the time of the pact now in the light of events since June 22nd, is to receive an education in all the arts of pen-prostitution, deception and betrayal of the masses. There is no need to argue now whether it was Stalin or Hitler who was the commanding power in August 1939. Events have fully borne out the analysis made by Trotsky at the time—that the initiative was with Hitler, that it was a temporary, cynical pact intended only to last until the time was ripe for the attack on the Soviet Union. In his article "The U.S.S.R. in War" Trotsky wrote:

"Right now Hitler is the ally and friend of Stalin; but should Hitler, with the aid of Stalin, come out victorious on the Western Front, he would on the morrow turn his guns against the U.S.S.R."

"PEACE" ILLUSIONS

Hitler preserved a more or less embarrassed silence once the pact was signed, knowing well that it would not be long before he was smashing it with tanks and planes. He thus made every effort to weaken as little as possible his ideological position in regard to the Soviet Union. Did Stalin similarly prepare for the time when the Nazi legions would be hurled against the Soviet Union? Did he maintain a position of hostility in relation to German Fascism and Imperialism so that the masses would be ready at any instant to meet the assault? On the contrary! The unanimous cry of the Soviet propaganda machine after the war had begun was that Germany wanted peace, but the arch-war-mongering rulers of Britain would not agree to negotiate with Hitler. For many months the attempt was made to deceive both the Russian and European masses into believing that one set of imperialist bandits was worse than the other. Said the C.P. Manifesto of October 7, 1939: "Today Hitler sues for peace. It is the rulers of Britain and France who demand the continuation of the war."

This was only the opposite side of the coin of "Fascist aggression" being responsible for all the ills of the world. Now, apparently, it was "democratic aggression" that disturbed the peace. Neither theory was the truth; neither theory prepared the masses for the real defence of the Soviet Union; neither theory educated the masses as to the real nature of the war nor offered them a way out of it. Both theories prepared the way for the present catastrophic position of the Soviet Union by failing to call up the real reserves—the independent action of the workers of all Europe.

These illusions regarding the Soviet Union and the

war were continued both inside and outside the U.S.S.R. up till the very hour of the attack. The world was assured time and time again that Stalin would pull no chestnuts out of the fire for British imperialism, and that there was no risk of war with Germany. William Rust was delivered of the following profundity:

"The war in Europe has now become a world war. There are no limits to its expansion except those imposed by the Socialist frontiers of the Soviet Union."

It was left to Hitler to demonstrate on June 22nd that even "Socialist frontiers" do not guarantee immunity from imperialist war. Right up to zero hour, however, Stalin continued the grim farce of pretending that there was no danger. Two days before the attack, "World News and Views" carried a Tass Agency message stating:

"Germany abides by the provisions of the Soviet-German pact of Non-Aggression as unswervingly as the Soviet Union, in view of which, in the opinion of Soviet quarters, rumours of Germany's intention to disrupt the pact and undertake an attack on the U.S.S.R. are devoid of any ground."

"SURPRISE" WAS COVER FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND RETREATS

Was Stalin being "smart" then too? It would take a very powerful microscope indeed to discover the slightest trace of "smartness" here. Rather, the assurances of Germany's peaceful intentions can be seen as a cover for desperate negotiations which were being conducted for the purpose of buying Hitler off. When the attack did take place, Stalin and the bureaucracy voiced their complete surprise. But that was principally in order to cover up the initial defeats of the Red Army.

These admissions of "surprise" deceived nobody, however. Who, nowadays, is surprised when Hitler—or for that matter Churchill or Roosevelt—tears up a pact or invades a fresh country. There is more surprise expressed when they fail to do this. The preparations were open; the whole world waited for the attack; but Stalin was—surprised!

This "surprise" is all the more "surprising" when one considers the previous bombast about preparedness. Said "World News and Views" on June 15, 1940, a full year before the attack:

"All the plans of the Soviet State were drawn up with account taken of all the unpleasant 'surprises' to be expected at any moment from without."

And again on October 19, 1940, the same paper assured the British workers that:

"The Soviet Union had always planned its defence organisation in such a way as not to be taken by surprise."

And Stalin himself said in a letter to Ivanov, quoted in "World News and Views" on March 30, 1940:

"This does not mean, of course, that we must sit with folded hands and wait for assistance from outside . . . The whole of our people must be kept in a state of mobilisation and preparedness in the face of the danger of a military attack, so that no 'accident' and no tricks on the part of our external enemies may take us by surprise."

If it were taken seriously, all the greater would be the reflection on a Supreme Commander who, in an epoch like the present, and dealing with enemies (or allies) of Hitler's calibre, allowed himself to be taken by surprise. And how, in any case, would this new manifestation fit in with the old myth of Stalin's military genius?

WHY THE DEFEATS?

This latter—the tale that Stalin, and not Trotsky, built up the Red Army and led the victorious struggles

of 1917-22—has been tested not only by the initial impact but by the whole course of the struggle. Taking up the claims of the Stalinists themselves and measuring them against actualities, we may well ask: IF Stalin is the military genius they have claimed; IF he has developed the resources of Russia so much as to make the country "independent of the capitalist world", as they have claimed; IF the various purges disposed of the "Fifth Column" in advance; IF Soviet Russia now has the best Generals in the world, as has been claimed; then WHY, adding to all these advantages the genuine superiority of Russia in man-power, WHY the constant defeats?

WAR TESTS "SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY"

Truly, war has tested not only bourgeois democracy but also "Socialism in a Single Country." The latter has led inevitably to the struggle of the Comintern against "Socialism in Any Other Country", and if matters continue on their present course will lead to "Socialism Not Even in a Single Country." Stalin's "realistic", "defensive" policy, far from assuring, as the former bombastic claims put it, that "no foreign invader shall ever take an inch of Soviet territory," has led to one gigantic defeat after another.

The feeble complaint that Churchill has failed to open a front in the West explains nothing. Did the Bolsheviks in 1917-22 rely for their survival on the kind offices of any gang of imperialists—in the West or anywhere else? No! As Lenin put it: "The German proletariat is the most trustworthy and the most reliable ally of the Russian and the world proletariat revolution." And again: "We know another enemy of German imperialism which blind people have not noticed—the German workers." (Deception of the People p. 17)

The "realistic" Stalin, however, is not so foolish as to rely on the workers of Germany, Britain and Europe. No. Churchill and Roosevelt are the allies to whom this "blind person" looks to save the Soviet Union from destruction.

No amount of claims about "smartness" or "realism" can explain away the fearful defeats which have been achieved with Churchill's help, nor explain how the "naive" policy of Lenin and Trotsky of relying on working class aid and a revolutionary appeal to the soldiers sent to destroy the Soviet Union, met with such spectacular success.

The "realist" cannot simply claim that there were no Panzer divisions ranged against the U.S.S.R. in the previous wars of intervention, for that applies to both sides. The resources of the Red Army today are beyond all computation greater than 24 years ago. Indeed, the discrepancy in equipment was many times greater then than now. But with revolutionary internationalism on their side the Bolsheviks led the way to victory then. Today, with nationalism plus Churchill and Roosevelt, the Soviet Union faces disaster. Today, without the "Old Guard whom Stalin has shot, without Trotsky, whom Stalin has had assassinated, without the military commanders whom Stalin has had "purged", there are only defeats. The various theories about "smartness" and "using Churchill and Roosevelt" turn out to be merely defensive and evasive answers to the questions that instinctively come into the minds of the workers of both the Soviet Union and Europe—are not we the force that can best defend the gains of the workers in Russia. The former wild boastings that Stalin was the best defender of the Soviet Union and the foul snarlings that Trotsky's policies could only lead to the victory of Hitler have been shown by history to be the very reverse of the truth. We will not be so mechanical as to denounce Stalin as a deliberate agent of Hitler. To do that would be merely to reverse the dishonest and corrupt charge of the Comintern that Trotsky was in Hitler's pay. But without reservation we can state clearly in the light of events—it is Stalin's policies and

Stalin's policies only which have led to the disastrous defeats of the Red Army and the Soviet workers and peasants.

PRESENT DEFEATS CONTINUATION OF PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL DEFEATS

The defeats in Russia itself are only a continuation, and perhaps the culmination, of the gigantic defeats of Soviet diplomacy in the world arena. The "diplomacy" of 'Socialism in One Country' has resolved itself into a particularly repulsive caricature of the diplomacy of power politics. All the cynical deceptions of the masses by the exponents of bourgeois power politics have found an even more cynical and brutal expression in Stalin's power politics. This was necessarily so, since the masses, tired of being duped by the bourgeoisie with phrases about universal peace, the rights of small nations, etc., looked with a new hope to the workers' state. Their response to the honest and open proletarian politics of Lenin and Trotsky sent a wave of panic through the ranks of the world bourgeoisie. When the negotiations were going on at Brest Litovsk they frightened the German just as much as the British ruling class. As the Correspondent of the "Daily Chronicle" wrote at the time:

"Lenin and Trotsky remain a mystery. The game they are playing is wild beyond belief. If it is difficult for us Allies, it is at least as difficult for the Germans."

All the more treacherous, therefore, was Stalin's departure into the realms of power politics and its eternal hand-maiden secret diplomacy. For this diplomacy had to be made to fit into the mould of the proletarian revolution.

The result was that for the justification of every betrayal a new "Marxist" theory had to be created; for the excusing of every defeat a falsification of history had to be invented; for every desertion of the class struggle a fresh deception of the masses had to be plotted out. And on each occasion those who opposed to the line of the Kremlin the genuine struggle for power were denounced as "agents of imperialism" and "agents of fascism".

In this way was the Chinese Revolution betrayed by class collaboration. The German Revolution was betrayed, and Hitler came to power with Stalin assuring the German workers that Social Democracy and Fascism were "not antipodes but twins." The French and the Spanish Revolutions were victims of stabs in the back from the Kremlin which, you see, was too "realistic" to risk offending good solid bourgeois allies like France and Britain for the sake of some nebulous aid which Russia might receive from the Spanish or the French workers once they had taken power.

The Kremlin, of course, did not present the matter in this light to the workers of the world. The real fault was with the workers, Stalin delicately conveyed to them, because they had not exerted enough "pressure" on their governments. The Soviet Union had played its part, but the British and French workers had let it down. The period of "Popular Fronts" and "pressure" was truly one in which the world masses were doubly deceived, and in which the ground was prepared for the present disastrous advance of Hitler's Panzer Divisions into the very heart of the Soviet Union. The Soviet birthright was exchanged for the mess of pottage of a nebulous pact with bourgeois France, and then for a trickster's pact with Hitler, and now finally for a cynical and treacherous pact with Churchill. The nature of Stalin's "realism" was exposed when Hitler first smashed what William Rust referred to as "the Socialist frontiers of the Soviet Union" which were supposed to be the only force that could set "limits to the expansion" of the war!

THE "MILITARY GENIUS"

If we leave out class issues for a moment and take up matters from the purely military point of view, we find that even here Stalin's policies have been disastrous. With much pomposity and ceremony we are now assured that Russia faces the whole might of the German armies alone, there is no second front against Hitler. But—still from the purely military angle—did not Stalin sign the famous pact and stand idly by while Hitler wiped out the Western Front? Surely if a Military Genius wanted to assure that Hitler would not enjoy the luxury of a one-front war he would have assured that France and Britain retained a powerful force on the Continent. Many Stalinists will answer that France and Britain were intent on setting Germany against Russia. But this, which is perfectly true, only proves that one bourgeois ally is just as little to be trusted as another, and that the only reliable ally of a workers' state is the proletariat. If it should be said that the attitude of the Churchill Government is different from that of the Chamberlain crew we must point out that the results are the same—Hitler has attacked and is destroying the U.S.S.R., and the pact with Churchill is not affecting this process in the smallest degree. The sort of "aid" he is giving may be measured by the fact that the British air squadron in Russia has in 5 months succeeded in shooting down 15 German planes!

Again—and still confining ourselves to strictly military matters—what of Finland? The campaign there in 1939 and 1940 was supposed to have removed the possibility of any imperialist power ever using it as a base of operations against Leningrad. The British C.P. Manifesto of March 15, 1940, announced:

"The warmongers of Britain have received another resounding defeat. Never again can Finland be used as a war base in the hands of the White Guard puppets of Western imperialism."

This did not prevent the German imperialists, however, from using Finland as a war base and actually re-taking the Mannerheim Line and threatening Leningrad. The "wise precautions" of the Military Genius turned out to have no more defensive power against the Reichswehr than a pop-gun.

In the military sphere as well as the political, Stalin's "genius" and "smartness" are seen to be merely names for Stupidity, Treachery and Defeat. The Military Genius who has found it so easy to win all the battles of the previous wars of intervention—in the re-written histories churned out by his hacks, can only plan defeats in the mighty battles of today.

On January 6th, 1940, Yaroslavsky wrote in "World News and Views":

"On more than one occasion already the Red Army has, with cries of: 'For our country, for Stalin!' shown the whole world the strength of Soviet patriotism."

The events since June 22nd, however, have shown the inadequacy of this cry when it is a matter of meeting the attacks of German imperialism, and not just of writing adulatory articles about Stalin.

It was not with cries of 'For our country, for Lenin!' that the Soviet armies caused the armies of intervention to melt away in 1917-22. It was rather with cries of 'For the world revolution! For Socialism!'

The German workers are today, as they were 24 years ago, the best allies of the Soviet Union. If the U.S.S.R. offered them a clear Socialist alternative to their present terrible choice of Hitler or Churchill they would respond immediately. But seeing in Stalin only an ally of Churchill, they are accepting the war in the East as part of the war against Churchill and the threat of another Versailles.

It is only through the revival of the policies of Lenin and Trotsky that the workers' state can be saved from disaster. Internationalism instead of nationalism.

Reliance on the German, European and world workers instead of the capitalists. The propaganda of the world revolution instead of that of the status quo.

Trotsky laid the basis for the policy of the Soviet Union in war in the thesis, "War and the Fourth International" written in 1934. The following paragraph sums up the Bolshevik solution to the life and death problems facing the U.S.S.R. today:

"After the conquest of power the proletariat itself goes over to the position of the 'defence of the fatherland'. But this formula thenceforward acquires an entirely new historic content. The isolated workers' state is not a self-sufficing entity but only a drill ground for the world revolution. Defending the

U.S.S.R., the proletariat defends not national boundaries but a socialist dictatorship temporarily hemmed in by national borders. Only a deep understanding of the fact that the proletarian revolution cannot find completion within the national framework; that without the victory of the proletariat in the leading countries all the successes of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. are doomed to failure; that no other than through the international revolution there is no salvation for any country in the world; that the socialist society can be built only on the basis of international co-operation—only this firm conviction, penetrating into the very blood and marrow, can create a safe basis for revolutionary proletarian policy in time of war."

THE I.L.P. AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

In the Middle of the Road

by Leon Trotsky

If we were to leave aside the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Holland which stands under the banner of the Fourth International, we could assuredly say that the I.L.P. of Britain stands on the left wing of the parties that adhere to the London-Amsterdam Bureau. In contrast to the S.A.P. which has shifted recently to the right, to the side of crassest petty-bourgeois pacifism, the I.L.P. has indubitably undergone a serious evolution to the left. This became definitely revealed by Mussolini's predatory assault upon Ethiopia. On the question of the League of Nations, on the role played in it by British imperialism, and on the "peaceful" policy of the Labour Party, the "New Leader" has perhaps carried the best articles in the entire labour press. But a single swallow does not make a spring, nor do a few excellent articles determine as yet the policy of a party. It is comparatively easy to take a "revolutionary" position on the question of war; but it is extremely difficult to draw from this position **all the necessary theoretical and practical conclusions**. Yet, this is precisely the task.

Compromised by the experience of 1914-18, social-patriotism has found today a new source to feed from, namely Stalinism. Thanks to this, bourgeois chauvinism obtains the opportunity to unleash a rabid attack against the revolutionary internationalists. The vacillating elements, the so-called Centrists, will capitulate inevitably to the onset of chauvinism on the eve of the war, or the moment it breaks out. To be sure, they will take cover behind the argument from "unity", the need not to break away from mass organisations, and so on. The formulas of hypocrisy are quite diversified, which supply the Centrists with a screen for their cowardice in the face of bourgeois public opinion, but they all serve the self-same purpose: to cover up the capitulation. "Unity" with the social-patriots—not a temporary co-existence with them in a common organisation with a view to waging a struggle against them, but unity as a principle—is unity with one's own imperialism, and consequently, an open split with the proletariat of other nations. The Centrist principle of **unity at any price** prepares for the most malignant split

possible, along the lines of imperialist contradictions. Even today, we can observe in France the **Spartacus** group, which translates into the French language the ideas of the S.A.P., advocating, in the name of "unity" with the masses, the political capitulation to Blum who was and who remains the chief agent of French imperialism within the working class.

After its split with the Labour Party, the I.L.P. came into close contact with the British Communist party, and through it, with the Communist International. The acute financial difficulties under which the "New Leader" labours right now indicate that the I.L.P. was able to preserve complete financial independence from the Soviet bureaucracy, and its methods of corruption. This can only be a source of gratification. Nevertheless, the connection with the Communist party did not pass without leaving a trace: despite its name, the I.L.P. did not become really **independent** but turned into a sort of appendage to the Communist International. It did not pay the necessary attention to mass work, which cannot be carried on outside of the trade unions and the Labour Party; instead it became seduced by the Amsterdam-Pleyel masquerade, the Anti-Imperialist League, and other surrogates for revolutionary activity. As a result, it appeared to the workers to be a **second grade Communist party**. So disadvantageous a position for the I.L.P. did not arise accidentally: it was conditioned by its lack of a firm principled basis. It is a secret to nobody that Stalinism long over-awed the leaders of the I.L.P. with those rubber-stamp formulas which comprise the miserable bureaucratic falsification of Leninism.

More than two years ago the writer of this article sought to arrive at an understanding with the leaders of the I.L.P. by means of several articles, and in letters; the attempt was barren of results: during that period, our criticism of the Communist International seemed to the leaders of the I.L.P. to be "preconceived", and "factionally", perhaps even "personally" motivated. Nothing remained except to yield the floor to time. For the I.L.P., the last two years have been scanty in

successes, but bountiful in experience. The social-patriotic degeneration of the Communist International, the direct consequence of the theory and practice of "socialism in one country", was turned from a **forecast** into a living, incontestable **fact**. Have the leaders of the I.L.P. fully plumbed the meaning of this fact? Are they ready and able to draw all the necessary conclusions from it? The future of the I.L.P. depends upon the answer to these questions.

From pacifism towards proletarian revolution—such has indubitably been the general tendency of the evolution of the I.L.P. But this development has far from reached a rounded-out programme as yet. Worse yet: not uninfluenced by the hoary and expert opportunistic combinations of the German S.A.P., the leaders of the I.L.P. have apparently halted in the midway, and keep marking time.

In the following critical lines, we intend to dwell primarily upon two questions: the attitude of the I.L.P. toward the **general strike** in connection with the struggle against War, and the position of the I.L.P. on the question of the **International**. In the latter as well as the former question there are to be found elements of a half-way attitude: on the question of the general strike this hesitancy assumes the guise of irresponsible **radical phraseology**; on the question of the International hesitancy pulls up short of the **radical decision**. And yet Marxism, and Leninism as the direct continuation of its doctrine, is absolutely irreconcilable both with an inclination to radical phraseology, and with the dread of radical decisions.

THE VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF THE GENERAL STRIKE

The question of the general strike has a long and rich history, in theory as well as practice. Yet the leaders of the I.L.P. behave as if they were the first to run across the idea of general strike, as a method to stop war. In this is their greatest error. Improvisation is impermissible precisely on the question of the general strike. The world experience of the struggle during the last forty years has been **fundamentally** a confirmation of what Engels had to say about the general strike towards the close of the last century, primarily on the basis of the experience of the Chartists, and in part of the Belgians. Cautioning the Austrian social democrats against much too flighty an attitude towards the general strike, Engels wrote to Kautsky, on November 3, 1893, as follows: "You yourself remark that the barricades have become antiquated (they may, however, prove useful again should the army turn 1/3 or 2/5 socialist and the question arise of providing it with the opportunity to turn its bayonets), but the political strike must either prove victorious immediately by the threat alone (as in Belgium, where the army was very shaky), or it must end in a colossal fiasco, or, finally, **lead directly to the barricades.**" These terse lines provide, incidentally, a remarkable exposition of Engels' views on a number of questions. Innumerable controversies raged over Engels' famous introduction which was in its time modified and cut in Germany with a view to censorship. Philistines of every stripe have asserted hundreds and thousands of times during the last forty years that "Engels himself" had apparently rejected once and for all the ancient "romantic" methods of street fighting. But there is no need of referring to the past: one need only read the contemporary and inordinately ignorant and mawkish discourses of Paul Faure, Lebas and others on this subject, who are of the opinion that the very question of armed insurrection is "Blanquism". Concurrently, if Engels rejected anything, it was first of all, **putsches**, i.e. un-timely flurries of a **small minority**; and secondly, antiquated methods, that is to say, forms and methods of street fighting which did not correspond to the new technological conditions. In the above quoted letter, Engels corrects Kautsky, in passing, as if he were

referring to something self-evident: barricades have become "antiquated" only in the sense that the bourgeois revolution has receded into the past, and the time for the socialist barricades has not come as yet. It is necessary for the army, one third, or better still, two fifths of it (these ratios, of course, are given only for the sake of illustration), to become imbued with sympathy for socialism; then the insurrection would not be a "putsch", then the barricades would once again come into their own—not the barricades of the year 1848, to be sure, but the new "barricades", serving, however, the self-same goal: to check the offensive of the army against the workers, give the soldiers the opportunity and the time to sense the power of the uprising, and by this to create the most advantageous conditions for the army's passing over to the side of the insurrectionists. How far removed are these lines of Engels—not the youth, but the man 73 years of age!—from the asinine and reactionary attitude to the barricade, as a piece of "romanticism"! Kautsky has found the leisure to publish this remarkable letter just recently, in 1935! Without engaging in a direct polemic with Engels, who he never understood **fully**, Kautsky tells us smugly, in a special note, that toward the end of 1893, he had himself published an article in which he "developed the advantages of the democratic-proletarian method of struggle in democratic countries as against the policy of violence". These remarks about "advantages" (as if the proletariat has the freedom of choice!) have a particular choice ring in our day, after the policies of the Weimar democracy, not without Kautsky's co-operation, have fully revealed all their . . . disadvantages. To leave no room for doubt as to his own attitude on Engels' views, Kautsky goes on to add, "I defended then the self-same policy I defend today." In order to defend "the self-same policy" Kautsky needed only to become a citizen of Czecho-slovakia: outside of the passport, nothing has changed.

But let us return to Engels. He differentiates, as we have seen, between three cases in relation to the political strike:

(1) The government **takes fright** at the general strike, and at the very outset, without carrying matters to an open clash, takes to concessions. Engels points to the "shaky" condition of the army in Belgium as the basic condition for the success of the Belgian general strike (1893). A somewhat similar situation, but on a much more colossal scale, occurred in Russia, October, 1905. After the miserable outcome of the Russo-Japanese War, the Czarist army was, or, at any rate, seemed extremely unreliable. The Petersburg government, thrown into a mortal panic by the strike, made the first constitutional concessions (Manifesto, October 17, 1905).

It is all too evident, however, that without resorting to decisive battles, the ruling class will make only such concessions as will not touch the basis of its rule. That is precisely how matters stood in Belgium and Russia. Are such cases possible in the future? They are inevitable in the countries of the Orient. They are, generally speaking, less probable in the countries of the West, although, here too, they are quite possible as partial episodes of the unfolding revolution.

(2) If the army is sufficiently reliable, and the government feels sure of itself; if a political strike is promulgated from above, and if, at the same time, it is calculated not for decisive battles, but to "frighten" the enemy, then it can easily turn out a mere adventure, and reveal its utter impotence. To this we ought to add that after the initial experiences of the general strike, the novelty of which reacted upon the imagination of the popular masses as well as governments, several decades have elapsed—discounting the half-forgotten Chartists—in the course of which the strategists of capital have accumulated an enormous experience. That is why a general strike, particularly in the old capitalist countries, requires a painstaking Marxist accounting

of all the concrete circumstances.

(3) Finally, there remains a general strike which, as Engels put it, "leads directly to the barricades". A strike of this sort can result either in complete victory or defeat. But to shy away from battle, when the battle is forced by the objective situation, is to lead inevitably to the most fatal and demoralizing of all possible defeats. The outcome of a revolutionary, insurrectionary general strike depends, of course, upon the relationship of forces, covering a great number of factors: the class differentiation of society, the specific weight of the proletariat, the mood of the lower layers of the petty-bourgeoisie, the social composition and the political mood of the army, etc. However, among the conditions for victory, far from the last place is occupied by the **correct revolutionary leadership, a clear understanding of conditions and methods of the general strike and its transition to open revolutionary struggle.**

Engels' classification must not, of course, be taken dogmatically. In present day France not partial concessions but power is indubitably in question: the revolutionary proletariat or Fascism—which? The working class masses want to struggle. But the leadership applies the brakes, hoodwinks and demoralises the worker. A general strike can flare up just as the movements flared in Toulon and Brest. Under these conditions, independently of its immediate results, a general strike will not of course be a "putsch" but a necessary stage in the mass struggle, the necessary means for casting off the treachery of the leadership and for creating within the working class itself the preliminary conditions for a victorious uprising. In this sense the policy of the French Bolshevik-Leninists is entirely correct, who have advanced the slogan of general strike, and who explain the conditions for its victory. The French cousins of the S.A.P. come out against this slogan, the Spartacists who at the beginning of the struggle are already assuming the role of strikebreakers.

We should also add that Engels did not point out another "category" of general strike, exemplars of which have been provided in England, Belgium, France and some other countries: we refer here to cases in which the leadership of the strike previously, i.e. without a struggle, arrives at an agreement with the class enemy as to the course and outcome of the strike. The parliamentarians and the trade unionists perceive at a given moment the need to provide an outlet for the accumulated ire of the masses, or they are simply compelled to jump in step with a movement that has flared over their heads. In such cases they come scurrying through the backstairs to the Government and obtain the permission to head the general strike, this with the obligation to conclude it as soon as possible, without any damage being done to the state crockery. Sometimes, far from always, they manage to haggle beforehand some petty concessions, to serve them as figleaves. Thus did the General Council of British Trade Unions (T.U.C.) in 1926. Thus did Jouhaux in 1934. Thus will they act in the future also. The exposure of these contemptible machinations behind the backs of the struggling proletariat enters as a necessary part into the preparation of a general strike.

THE GENERAL STRIKE AS A MEANS "TO STOP WAR"

To which type does a general strike belong which is specially intended by the I.L.P. in the event of mobilisation, as a means to stop war at the very outset? We want to say beforehand: it pertains to the **most incon sidered and unfortunate of all types possible.** This does not mean to say that the revolution can never coincide with mobilisation or with the outbreak of war. If a wide-scale revolutionary movement is developing in a country, if at its head is a revolutionary party possessing the confidence of the masses and capable of going

through to the end; if the government, losing its head, despite the revolutionary crisis, or just because of such a crisis, plunges headlong into a war adventure—then the mobilisation can act as a mighty impetus for the masses, lead to a general strike of railwaymen, fraternisation between the mobilised and the workers, seizure of important key centres, clashes between insurrectionists and the police and the reactionary sections of the army, the establishment of local, workers' and soldiers' councils, and, finally, to the complete overthrow of the government, and consequently, to stopping the war. Such a case is theoretically possible. If, in the words of Clausewitz, "war is the continuation of politics by other means", then the struggle against war is also the continuation of the entire preceding policy of a revolutionary class and its party. Hence follows that a general strike can be put on the order of the day as a method of struggle against mobilisation and war only in the event that the entire preceding developments in the country have placed revolution and armed insurrection on the order of the day. Taken, however, as a "special" method of struggle against mobilisation, a general strike would be a sheer adventure. Excluding a possible but nevertheless an exceptional case of a government plunging into war in order to escape from a revolution that directly threatens it, it must remain, as a general rule, that precisely prior to, during, and after mobilisation the government feels itself strongest, and, consequently, least inclined to allow itself to be scared by a general strike. The patriotic moods that accompany mobilisation, together with the war terror make hopeless the very execution of a general strike, as a rule. The most intrepid elements who, without taking the circumstances into account, plunge into the struggle, would be crushed. The defeat, and the partial annihilation of the vanguard would make difficult for a long time revolutionary work in the atmosphere of dissatisfaction that war breeds. A strike called artificially must turn inevitably into a putsch, and into an obstacle in the path of the revolution.

In its theses accepted in April, 1935, the I.L.P. writes as follows: "The policy of the party aims at the use of a **general strike** to stop war and at **social revolution** should war occur." An astonishingly precise, but—sad to say, absolutely fictitious obligation! The general strike is not only separated here from the social revolution but also counterposed to it as a specific method to "stop war". This is an ancient conception of the anarchists which life itself smashed long ago. A general strike without a victorious insurrection cannot "stop war". If, under the conditions of mobilisation, the insurrection is impossible, then so is a general strike impossible.

In an ensuing paragraph we read: "The I.L.P. will urge a General Strike against the British Government, if this country is in any way involved in an attack on the Soviet Union . . ." If it is possible to forestall **any** war by a general strike, then of course it is all the more necessary to stop war **against the U.S.S.R.** But here we enter into the realm of illusions: to inscribe in the theses a general strike as **punishment** for a given **capital crime** of the Government is to commit the sin of revolutionary phrasemongering. If it were possible to call a general strike at will, then it would be best called today to prevent the British Government from strangling India and from collaborating with Japan to strangle China. The leaders of the I.L.P. will of course tell us that they have not the power to do so. But nothing gives them the right to promise that they will apparently have the power to call a general strike on the day of mobilisation. And if they be able, why confine it to a strike? As a matter of fact, the conduct of a party during mobilisation will flow from its preceding successes and from the situation in the country as a whole. But the aim of revolutionary policy should not be isolated general strike, as a special means to "stop war", but

*Cf. "What the I.L.P. Stands For," a Compendium of the Basic Party Documents.

the proletarian revolution into which a general strike will enter as an inevitable or a very probable integral part.

THE I.L.P. AND THE INTERNATIONAL

The I.L.P. split from the Labour Party chiefly for the sake of keeping the independence of its parliamentary fraction. We do not intend here to discuss whether the split was correct at the given moment, and whether the I.L.P. gleaned from it the expected advantages. We don't think so. But it remains a fact that for every revolutionary organisation in England its attitude to the masses and to the class is almost coincident with its attitude toward the Labour Party, which bases itself upon the trade unions. At this time the question whether to function inside the Labour Party or outside it is not a principled question, but a question of actual possibilities. In any case, without a strong faction in the trade unions, and, consequently, in the Labour Party itself, the I.L.P. is doomed to impotence even today. Yet, for a long period, the I.L.P. attached much greater importance to the "united front" with the insignificant Communist party than to work in mass organisations. The leaders of the I.L.P. consider the policy of the Opposition wing in the Labour Party incorrect out of considerations which are absolutely unexpected: although "they (the Opposition) criticise the leadership and policy of the Party but, owing to the block vote and the form of organisation of the Party, they cannot change the personnel and policy of the Executive and Parliamentary Party within the period necessary to resist Capitalist Reaction, Fascism and War" (p. 8). The policy of the Opposition in the Labour Party is unspeakably bad. But this only means that it is necessary to counterpose to it inside the Labour Party another, a correct Marxist policy. That isn't so easy? Of course not! But one must know how to hide one's activities from the police vigilance of Sir Walter Citrine and his agents, until the proper time. But isn't it a fact that a Marxist faction would not succeed in changing the structure and policy of the Labour Party? With this we are entirely in accord: the bureaucracy will not surrender. But the revolutionists, functioning outside and inside, can and must succeed in winning over tens and hundreds of thousands of workers. The criticism directed by the I.L.P. against the left wing faction in the Labour Party is of an obviously artificial character. One would have much more reason for saying that the tiny I.L.P., by involving itself with the compromised Communist party and thus drawing away from the mass organisations, hasn't a chance to become a mass party "within the period necessary to resist Capitalist Reaction, Fascism and War."

Thus, the I.L.P. considers it necessary for a revolutionary organisation to exist independently within the national framework even at the present time. Marxist logic, it would seem, demands that this consideration be applied to the international arena as well. A struggle against war and for the revolution is unthinkable without the International. The I.L.P. deems it necessary for it to exist side by side with the Communist party, and consequently, against the Communist party, and by this very fact it recognises the need of creating against the Communist International—a New International. Yet the I.L.P. dares not draw this conclusion. Why?

If in the opinion of the I.L.P. the Comintern could be reformed, it would be its duty to join its ranks, and work for this reform. If, however, the I.L.P. has become convinced that the Comintern is incorrigible, it is its duty to join with us in the struggle for the Fourth International. The I.L.P. does neither. It halts midway. It is bent on maintaining a "friendly collaboration" with the Communist International. If it is invited to the next Congress of the Communist International—such is the literal wording of its April theses of this year!—it will there fight for its position and in

the interests of the "unity of revolutionary socialism". Evidently, the I.L.P. expected to be "invited" to the International. This means that its psychology in relation to the International, is that of guest, and not of a host. But the Comintern did not invite the I.L.P. What to do, now?

It is necessary to understand first of all that really independent workers' parties—independent not only of the bourgeoisie, but also of both bankrupt Internationals—cannot be built unless there is a close international bond between them, on the basis of self-same principles, and provided there is a living interchange of experience, and vigilant mutual control. The notion that national parties (which ones? on what basis?) must be established first, and coalesced only later into a new International (how will a common principled basis then be guaranteed?) is a caricature echo of the history of the Second International: the First and Third Internationals were both built differently. But, today, under the conditions of the imperialist epoch, after the proletarian vanguard of all countries in the world has passed through many decades of a colossal and common experience, including the experience of the collapse of the two Internationals, it is absolutely unthinkable to build new Marxist, revolutionary parties, without direct contact with the self-same work in other countries. And this means the building of the Fourth International.

THE "INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST UNITY" (I.A.G.)

To be sure, the I.L.P. has in reserve a certain international association, namely, the London Bureau (I.A.G.). Is this the beginning of a new International? Emphatically, no! The I.L.P. comes out against "split" more decisively than any other participant: not for nothing has the bureau of those organizations who themselves split away inscribed on its banner . . . "unity". Unity with whom? The I.L.P. itself yearns exceedingly to see all revolutionary-socialist organisations and all sections of the Communist International united in a single International, and that this International have a good programme. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. The position of the I.L.P. is all the more hopeless since nobody else shares it inside of the London association itself. On the other hand, the Communist International, having drawn social-patriotic conclusions from the theory of socialism in one country, seeks today an alliance with powerful reformist organisations, and not at all with weak revolutionary groups. The April theses of the I.L.P. console us: ". . . but they (i.e. the other organisations in the London association) agree that the question of a new International is now theoretical (!), and that the form (!) which the reconstructed International will take will depend upon historical events (!) and the development of the actual working class struggle." (p 20). Remarkable reasoning! The I.L.P. urges the unity of the "revolutionary-socialist organisations" with the sections of the Communist International; but there is not and there cannot be any desire on the part of either for this unification. "But", the I.L.P. consoles itself, the revolutionary-socialist organisations are agreed upon . . . what? Upon the fact that it is still impossible to foresee today what "form" the reconstructed International will take. For this reason, the very question of the International ("Workers of the World Unite!") is declared to be "theoretical". With equal justification one might proclaim the question of socialism to be theoretical, since it is unknown what form it will take; besides, it is impossible to achieve the socialist revolution by means of a "theoretical" International.

For the I.L.P., the question of a national party and the question of the International rest on two different planes. The danger of war and Fascism demands, as we were told, immediate work for the building of a national party. As regards the International, this

question is . . . "theoretical". Opportunism reveals itself so clearly and uncontestedly in nothing else as in this principled counterposing of a national party to the International. The banner of "revolutionary-socialist unity" serves only as a cover for the yawning gap in the policy of the I.L.P. Are we not justified in saying that the London association is a temporary haven for vacillators, waifs, and those who hope to be "invited" to one of the existing Internationals?

THE I.L.P. AND THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

While acknowledging that the Communist Party has a "revolutionary and theoretical basis", the I.L.P. discerns "sectarianism" in its conduct. This characterisation is superficial, one-sided, and fundamentally false. Which "theoretical basis" has the I.L.P. in mind? Is it Marx's "Das Kapital", Lenin's Works, the resolutions of the first Congresses of the C.I.—or the eclectic programme of the Communist International accepted in 1923, the wretched theory of the "Third Period", "social-fascism", and, finally, the latest social patriotic avowals?

The leaders of the I.L.P. make believe (at any rate, such was the case up to yesterday) that the Communist International has preserved the theoretical basis that was lodged by Lenin. In other words, they identify Leninism with Stalinism. To be sure, they are unable to make up their minds to say it in so many words. But, in their passing silently over the enormous critical struggle that took place first inside the Communist International, and then outside it; in their refusal to study the struggle waged by the "Left Opposition" (the Bolshevik-Leninists) and to determine upon their attitude towards it, **the leaders of the I.L.P. turn out to be backward provincials in the sphere of the questions of the world movement.** In this they pay tribute to the worst traditions of the insular working class movement. As a matter of fact the Communist International has no theoretical basis. Indeed, what sort of theoretical basis can there be, when yesterday's leaders, like Bukharin, are pronounced to be "bourgeois liberals", when the leaders of the day before yesterday, like Zinoviev, are incarcerated in jail as counter-revolutionists", while the Manuilskys, Lozovskys, Dimitroffs together with Stalin himself never generally bothered much with questions of theory.

The remark in relation to "sectarianism" is no less erroneous. **Bureaucratic Centristism** which seeks to dominate the working class is not sectarianism but a specific refraction of the autocratic rule of the Soviet bureaucracy. Having burnt their fingers, these gentlemen are abjectly crawling today before reformism and patriotism. The leaders of the S.A.P. (poor counsellors!) believe that the Comintern would rest on the pinnacle, if not for its "ultra-left sectarianism". In the meantime, the Seventh Congress has spurned the last remnants of "ultra-leftism"; but, as a result, the Communist International did not rise higher but fell still lower, losing all right to an independent political existence. Because the parties of the Second International are, in any case, more suitable for the policy of blocs with the bourgeoisie and for the patriotic corruption of workers: they have behind them an imposing opportunist record, and they arouse less suspicion on the part of the bourgeois allies.

Aren't the leaders of the I.L.P. of the opinion that after the Seventh Congress they ought to reconsider radically their attitude toward the Communist International? If it is impossible to reform the Labour Party, then there are immeasurably less chances for reforming the Communist International. Nothing remains except to build the New International. True, in the ranks of the Communist parties quite a few honest revolutionary workers are still to be found. But they must be led out from the quagmire of the Comintern onto the revolutionary road.

THE "COUNCILS OF WORKERS' DEPUTIES" AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

Both the revolutionary conquest of power and the dictatorship of the proletariat are included in the programme of the I.L.P. After the events in Germany, Austria and Spain, these slogans have become compulsory. But this does not at all mean that in every case they are invested with a genuine revolutionary content. The Zyromskis of all countries find no embarrassment in combining the "dictatorship of the proletariat" with the most debased patriotism, and besides, such fakery is becoming more and more fashionable. The leaders of the I.L.P. are not social-patriots. But until they blow up their bridges to Stalinism, their internationalism will remain semi-platonic in character.

The April theses of the I.L.P. enable us to approach the same question from a new standpoint. In the theses two special paragraphs (27 and 28) are devoted to the future British Councils of Workers' Deputies. They contain nothing wrong. But it is necessary to point out that the Councils (Soviets) as such are only an **organisational form** and not at all a sort of immutable principle. Marx and Engels provided us with the theory of the proletarian revolution, partly in their analysis of the Paris Commune, but they did not have a single word to say about the Councils. In Russia there were Social-Revolutionary and Menshevik Soviets (Councils), i.e. anti-revolutionary Soviets. In Germany and Austria the Councils in 1918 were under the leadership of reformists and patriots and they played a counter-revolutionary role. In autumn 1923, in Germany, the role of the Councils was fulfilled actually by the shop committees that could have guaranteed fully the victory of the revolution were it not for the craven policy of the Communist party under the leadership of Brandler and Co. Thus, the slogan of Councils, as an organisational form, is not in itself of a principled character. We have no objection, of course, to the inclusion of Councils as "all-inclusive organisations" (p. 11) in the programme of the I.L.P. Only, the slogan must not be turned into a fetish, or worse yet—into a hollow phrase, as in the hands of the French Stalinists ("Power to Daladier!"—"Soviets Everywhere!").

But we are interested in another aspect of the question. Paragraph 28 of the theses reads, "The Workers' Councils will arise in their final form in the actual revolutionary crisis, but the Party must **consistently prepare for their organisation**". Keeping this in mind, let us compare the attitude of the I.L.P. toward the future Councils with its own attitude toward the future International: the erroneousness of the I.L.P.'s position will then stand before us in sharpest clarity. In relation to the International we are given generalities after the spirit of the S.A.P.: "the form which the reconstructed International will take will depend upon historic events and the actual development of the working class struggle." On this ground the I.L.P. draws the conclusion that the question of the International is purely "theoretical", i.e., in the language of empiricists, **unreal**. At the same time we are told that: "the Workers Councils will arise in their final form in the actual revolutionary crisis, but the Party must **consistently prepare for their organisation**." It is hard to become more hopelessly muddled. On the question of the Councils and on the question of the International, the I.L.P. resorts to methods of reasoning that are directly contradictory. In which case is it mistaken? In both. The theses turn topsy-turvy the actual tasks of the party. The Councils represent an **organisational form**, and only a **form**. There is no way of "preparing for" Councils except by means of a correct revolutionary policy applied in all spheres of the working class movement: there is no special, specific "preparation for" Councils. It is entirely otherwise with the International. While the Councils can arise only under the condition that there is a revolutionary ferment among the many-

millioned masses, the International is always necessary: both on holidays and weekdays, during periods of offensive as well as in retreat, in peace as well as in war. The International is not at all a "form" as flows from the utterly false formulation of the I.L.P. The International is first of all a **programme**, and a system of **strategic, tactical and organisational** methods that flow from it. By dint of historic circumstances the question of the British Councils is deferred for an indeterminate period of time. But the question of the International, as well as the question of national parties, cannot be deferred for a single hour: we have here in essence two sides of one and the same question. Without a Marxist International, national organisations even the most advanced, are doomed to narrowness, vacillation and helplessness; the advanced workers are forced to feed upon surrogates for internationalism. To proclaim as "purely theoretical", i.e. needless, the building of the Fourth International, is cravenly to renounce the basic task of our epoch. In such a case, slogans of revolution, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Councils, etc., lose nine-tenths of their meaning.

THE SUPERIORITY OF FORESIGHT OVER "ASTONISHMENT"

The August 30 issue of the "New Leader" carries an excellent article: "Don't Trust the Government!" The article points out that the danger of "national unity" draws closer with the approaching danger of war. At the time when the ill-fated leaders of the S.A.P. call for the **emulation**—literally so!—of British pacifists, the "New Leader" writes: "It (the Government) is actually using the enthusiasm for peace to prepare the British people for imperialist war." These lines, which are printed in italics, express with utmost precision the political function of petty-bourgeois pacifism: by providing a platonic outlet for the horror of the masses to war, pacifism enables imperialism all the easier to transform these masses into cannon fodder. The "New Leader" lashes the patriotic position of Citrine and other social-imperialists who (with quotations from Stalin) mount upon the backs of Lansbury and other pacifists. But this same article goes on to express its "astonishment" at the fact that the British Communists are supporting Citrine's policy on the question of the League of Nations and the "sanctions" against Italy ("astonishing support of Labour line"). The "astonishment" in the article is the Achilles heel of the entire policy of the I.L.P. When an individual "astonishes" us by his unexpected behaviour, it only means that we are poorly acquainted with this individual's real character. It is immeasurably worse when a politician is compelled to confess his "astonishment" at the acts of a political party, and what is more, of an entire International. For the British Communists are only carrying out the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International. The leaders of the I.L.P. are "astonished" only because they have failed up to now to grasp the real character of the Communist International, and its sections. Yet, there is a twelve years' history behind the Marxist criticism of the Communist International. From the time the Soviet bureaucracy made as its symbol of faith the theory of "social-

ism in one country" (1924), the **Bolshevik-Leninists forecasted the inevitability of the nationalist and patriotic degeneration of the sections of the Communist International**, and from then on they followed this process critically through all its stages. The leaders of the I.L.P. were caught off guard by events only because they had ignored the criticism of our tendency. The privilege of becoming "astonished" by major events is the prerogative of a pacifist and reformist petty-bourgeois. The Marxist, especially those claiming the right to leadership, must be capable not of astonishment but of foresight. And, we may remark in passing, it is not the first time in history that Marxist misdoubt turned out more penetrating than Centrist credulity.

The I.L.P. broke with the mighty Labour Party because of the latter's reformism and patriotism. And today, retorting to Wilkinson, the "New Leader" writes that the independence of the I.L.P. is justified fully by the patriotic position of the Labour Party. Then what are we to say about the I.L.P.'s interminable flirtation with the British Communist Party that now tails behind the Labour Party? What are we to say about the I.L.P.'s urge of us with the Third International, that is now the first violinist in the social-patriotic orchestra? Are you "astonished", comrades Maxton, Fenner Brockway, and others? That does not suffice for a party leadership. In order to put an end to becoming astonished, one must evaluate critically the road that has been travelled, and draw the conclusion for the future.

Back in August 1933, the Bolshevik-Leninist delegation issued a special declaration officially proposing to all the participants in the London Bureau, among them the I.L.P., that they review jointly with us the basic strategic problems of our epoch, and in particular, that they determine their attitude to our programmatic documents. But the leaders of the I.L.P. deemed it below their dignity to occupy themselves with such matters. Besides, they were afraid they might compromise themselves by consorting with an organisation which is the target of a particularly rabid and vile persecution at the hands of the Moscow bureaucracy: we should not overlook the fact that the leaders of the I.L.P. awaited all the while an "invitation" from the Communist International. They waited, but the awaited did not materialise . . .

Is it conceivable that even after the Seventh Congress the leaders of the I.L.P. will be so hardy as to present the matter as if the British Stalinists turned out to be the squires of the little honoured Sir Walter Citrine only through a misunderstanding, and only for a split-second? Such a dodge would be unworthy of a revolutionary party. We should like to entertain the hope that the leaders of the I.L.P. will come at last to an understanding of how lawful is the complete and irremediable collapse of the Communist International, as a revolutionary organisation, and that they will draw from this all the necessary conclusions. These are quite simple:

Work out a Marxist programme.

Turn away from the leaders of the Communist party and face towards . . . the mass organisations.

Stand under the banner of the Fourth International.

On this road we are ready to march shoulder to shoulder with the I.L.P.

Read . . .

"SOCIALIST APPEAL"

1d. Monthly

Soviet Masses Are Kept In The Dark Regarding Defeats

Main Tasks of Soviet Press are Whipping Up Spy Hysteria and Glorification of Stalin

The most striking thing about the wartime issues of "Pravda" is the dearth of information concerning the progress of the fighting at the front. There are many stories of individual exploits of officers. Occasionally a rank and file soldier or a guerrilla fighter is singled out for an act of daring and heroism. Whatever information the "Pravda" does supply is of such a character as makes it impossible for the average Soviet citizen to discover what is actually occurring on the battlefield.

If these wartime issues are any criterion, the bulk of the Soviet people first learn of the reverses of the Red Army only after great delay, through rumours and not through official communications. The American public is unquestionably far better acquainted with the course of events than anybody in the Soviet Union with the sole exception of the ruling clique in the Kremlin. Judging by the official treatment of the news in July, after three weeks of hostilities, the Kremlin's policy is one of keeping the Soviet masses completely in the dark.

It requires little imagination to realize what a shock to the Soviet population will be the news of such defeats as the loss of the Krivoy Rog industrial and mining region, the destruction of the Dnieper dam and the Dnieper industrial district, the rout of Budenny's armies on the Ukraine front, the loss of Kiev, the siege of Odessa, the direct threat to Leningrad, the Nazi drive against the Donetz Basin and Crimea.

It is hardly necessary to explain the terrible danger latent in Stalin's all-out censorship.

From the reports in the big metropolitan press here concerning the upsurge of Soviet patriotism, one would expect to find this reflected in the "Pravda". Those references to mass militancy and patriotism which do appear in its pages consist of ritualistic boasts which, in some instances, were later exploded by the bureaucracy itself. Thus, on July 15, "Pravda" featured a "Tass" dispatch from the city of Engels in the Autonomous Republic of the Volga-Germans. The text begins as follows:

"In these days of the war for the fatherland the toilers of the Volga-German Republic throb with the same feelings that inspire the entire Soviet people. Workers, collective farmers and intellectuals are mobilising their forces for victory over the Hitlerite gangs. . . . Thousands of toilers of the (Volga-German) Republic have gone to the front arms in hand to fight against the mad German Fascism."

A few weeks later, toward the end of August, the Kremlin issued its ukase "to resettle the entire German population of the Volga regions to other districts" (N.Y. Times, Sept. 8). A few days later the Kremlin announced the dissolution of the Autonomous Volga-German Republic.

This persecution of the Volga-Germans is closely bound up with one of Stalin's major current campaigns, namely, his drive against "spies and diversionists." Since the outbreak of the war one of "Pravda's" central tasks has been to whip up a spy mania. "ALL SPIES

AND DIVERSIONISTS MUST BE DESTROYED" is the heading of "Pravda's" editorial for July 13. To give a semblance and verisimilitude to this witch-hunt against "suspicious elements," "panic mongers," etc., the columns of the Moscow press are filled with stories of mysterious men and women suddenly exposed as Hitler's agents. According to the July 13 issue of "Pravda", the Nazis send thousands of their agents, by parachute and otherwise, far behind the front lines; and their disguise is so fiendishly clever that it is hard to tell them apart from the rest of the population! The Kremlin requires this spy hunt above all to suppress all dissident elements among the Soviet masses. Under the familiar cover of extirpating "spies and diversionists," the GPU is conducting a wartime blood-purge.

Let us recall that while Stalin was busy in Moscow trying to revive the hue and cry against "Fifth Columnists," his flunkys in this country boasted that the "Fifth Column" had long been destroyed in the Soviet Union. In this way they tried to justify the infamous Moscow frameups and the monstrous blood purges which beheaded the Red Army. The liar in the Kremlin is refuting the lies of his own hirelings abroad.

In July the Moscow press conducted another vast campaign. This one revolved around the "appointment" of Stalin to the post of Commissar for Defence. To believe "Pravda", the demotion of Timoshenko from his post and the latter's replacement by Stalin constituted an event of "world historic importance", a major victory for the Soviet Union.

The official press was filled with accounts of mass meetings, factory meetings, gatherings of troops at the front, etc., etc.—all of them "spontaneous outbursts" of enthusiasm in celebration of this event. In a leading editorial, "Pravda" struck the keynote as follows:

"The appointment of Comrade Stalin to the post of People's Commissar for Defence of the USSR has instilled fresh vigour and courage into the hearts of the warriors of the Red Army and the Red Navy, into the hearts of the fighters of the mobilised peoples, into the hearts of many thousands of guerrillas now fighting heroically in the enemy's rear, into the hearts of workers, collective farmers and intellectuals who are forging victory behind the lines and who are ready at the first summons of the party and the Government to defend our fatherland arms in hand." ("Pravda", July 21.)

The gist of all the resolutions (unanimously adopted) is: "Stalin—That is Victory!"—"Where Stalin Is, There is Victory!" etc. ("Pravda" July 21.)

This is the only kind of "victory" that Stalin has been able to score and "Pravda" has been able to report. The gravest defeats of the Red Army have been incurred since Stalin assumed the post of Commissar of War and appointed himself Commander-in-Chief

(Note: This is the first of a series of articles on current conditions in the Soviet Union by John G. Wright.)