

Workers

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International



News

*Theoretical
Organ of the
Revolutionary
Communist
Party*

Contents

1946 AND THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

IMPERIALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST—II
OUR TASKS IN EUROPE

January 1946

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

256 HARROW ROAD, LONDON, W.2.

Telephone: CUNningham 2526.

EDITOR - - - HAROLD ATKINSON.

BUSINESS MANAGER - - - ANN KEEN.

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Manager's Column

The importance of a theoretical magazine for each section of our movement increases with each passing day. W.I.N. performs a vital function in this respect. By producing historical and topical articles, Marxian analyses of current developments and theoretical discussion material, we make our contribution to the moulding of working class thought.

To help our readers to understand the historical process and thereby to participate fruitfully in the organisation of human affairs for the purpose of achieving the socialist revolution is the duty we endeavour to perform.

But it is a hard struggle to keep the magazine running. And with the beginning of a New Year we appeal

once again to our readers to recognise their side of the reciprocal obligation, to recognise their duty to W.I.N.

Everyone can help by seeing that W.I.N. reaches an ever-widening circle of readers. During the coming months it can be expected that the paper restrictions will be eased and even perhaps entirely removed. We must be in a position to take full advantage of this and to stabilise the circulation of W.I.N. on a high level.

Again we remind our readers that we cannot maintain the regular appearance of our magazine on the revenue from the present circulation. We must have additional donations.

Comrade reader the fate of W.I.N. is in your hands. What are you doing about it?

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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Editorial Notes

1946 AND THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

AT the beginning of this new year it is possible and necessary to attempt an interim accounting and prognostication of the Labour Party's rule. The Labour Government has now been in office some five months, long enough for the broad outline of the policies that it intends to pursue to become apparent to at least the most advanced section of the working class. In this period it would have been possible for the Labour Government, had it so wished, to have already commenced an assault upon the whole basis of capitalism in Britain. Bills could have already been before Parliament for the nationalisation of the "Big Five" Banks, the mines, heavy industry and transport, without compensation and for their operation under workers' control. Needless to say we do not believe that such a programme of direct attack upon British capitalism could be carried through by Parliamentary means and without the mobilisation of the whole working-class for extra-parliamentary action to defeat the active resistance of the capitalist class and sabotage on the part of the capitalist state machine. But the temper of the masses to-day is such, that given the correct leadership from the party that they still regard as their own, the Labour Party, precisely such extra-parliamentary action on their part against capitalism would be readily forthcoming. It is, in fact, only because the masses in their great majority still believe that the Labour Government is going to abolish capitalism by "peaceful", parliamentary means, that they, in general, refrain from such action at the present time.

But the Labour leaders have not the least intention of conducting an attack upon British capitalism either now or at any other time. On the contrary, as their actions have already clearly shown, they stand for a policy, not of overthrowing but of **bolstering up** capitalism in Britain.

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DECLINE OF BRITAIN British capitalism as has been repeatedly shown, not only in "Workers' International News", but in the pages of the capitalist press itself, is to-day bankrupt. In steady decline since the First Imperialist War, it had been able to keep going in the interval between the two wars upon the basis of the huge reserves built up in the pre-1914 period of prosperity and world-domination. Those reserves were finally swept away in the course of the Second Imperialist War.

The whole economic structure of British capitalism depends upon its export trade, and this in its turn depends upon the competitive efficiency of British industry on the World Market. In the period between the two Wars British industry was falling more and more into a position of inferiority as compared

with the industry of the United States. U.S. industry had behind it a much larger home market than British industry had at its disposal. It was far better technically equipped than British industry. It had behind it a far more powerful state machine. British industry could only hope to hold its own against such a competitor by means of Empire Preferences, Sterling Blocks, etc.

The recent loan agreement between Britain and the U.S.A. provides the clearest possible evidence of the economic bankruptcy of British capitalism. As the debates in the House of Commons and the House of Lords have revealed, the leaders both of the Labour Party and of the capitalist parties understand very well what the conditions of this loan will mean. The only defences which British Imperialism has been able to erect against her vastly superior American rival—the Sterling Block and Empire Preference—are to be swept away or undermined. In order to meet the financial obligations which the loan imposes, British export trade would have to be increased not by 50% but by 100%. But despite all this, the immediate needs of British Capitalism are so urgent that the loan and its conditions cannot be rejected by the British bourgeoisie and its Labour henchmen, although in the long run, an actual worsening of the position is bound to be the result.

The Second Imperialist War greatly increased the technical superiority of United States industry as compared with British industry. To-day the gap between them is so wide that British imperialism cannot hope to compete successfully with its U.S. rival on the World Market. Moreover, as a result of the immense devastation and mass impoverishment caused by the War, the World Market itself has shrunk as compared with the pre-war period, whereas the productive capacity of U.S. industry has greatly increased during the war.

Nor is this all. Britain needs huge imports of raw materials and food-stuffs. Even in the most prosperous period of British Imperialism, these imports were not balanced by corresponding exports of goods. They were paid for by the so-called "invisible exports"—by interest on the overseas investments of British capitalists, by payments for banking and insurance services made by foreign clients, by payment for the carriage of foreign goods by the British mercantile marine. In the years before the Second Imperialist War the excess of imports over exports—an excess covered by the "invisible exports"—amounted each year to the huge sum of £400,000,000. To-day the "invisible exports" have almost completely passed out of existence. British overseas investments, as has been officially admitted, have had to be sold in order to pay for the cost of the War—thus the annual tribute in the form of interest on these investments which British Imperialism drew from the rest of the world has ceased. From the point of view of international banking and insurance services New York, not London, is to-day the world centre. The British mercantile marine, up to 1939 the greatest in the world, has shrunk to a shadow of its former self while that of the United States has taken its place.

**PROBLEM
FOR THE
LABOUR
LEADERS**

The problem—to all appearances an insoluble one—that confronts British Imperialism, is thus clear. If British capitalism is to escape bankruptcy it must first of all balance its imports with its exports. To a certain extent this can be done by keeping down to war-time levels the consumption of the broad masses. But this can only be at best a temporary and a partial solution. The gap between imports and exports cannot be covered this way. The real way out

for British capitalism lies in an increase in exports and in fact even before the War was over the representatives of British capitalism announced that they planned to increase exports 50% over the pre-war figure. But here the British capitalists run up against the shrunken world market and the greatly increased capacity and efficiency of their United States competitors, which render even the attainment of the pre-war exports a matter of the greatest difficulty.

This is then the problem. How can British capitalism attempt to solve it? Only by drastically lowering their costs of production so as to bring them into line with those of the United States. This could be done by the technical reconstruction of British industry—but this would entail immense new capital investments in the out-moded British industries; investments which for a long time, perhaps permanently, would bring no adequate interest. And even if British industry were so modernised immense competitive advantages would still remain available to the United States, with its huge internal market and its actual possession of most of the existing markets. Nevertheless, upon the basis of the recent U.S.A. loan agreement, it is quite possible that a certain modernisation of British industry will take place in the coming period, though it will prove quite insufficient to restore the competitive capacity of British industry vis a vis that of the U.S.A. Another possible solution, and one obviously more favoured by British capitalism, would be to lower production costs, without modernisation, by cutting wages to subsistence level. The British capitalists have not forgotten how backward Japan was able to compete successfully on the world market before the War on the basis of the impoverishment of the Japanese factory workers. But such a solution would entail the breaking of the workers' power of resistance—i.e. the smashing of the workers' organisations by means of fascism—a way out accompanied by certain dangers for the capitalists and in any case one not immediately at their disposal.

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WORKERS WILL SUFFER Since the Labour Government has no intention of conducting an attack on British capitalism it is forced to make itself responsible for the continued functioning of this latter. The problems of British capitalism become those of the British Labour Government. And the Labour leaders have plans of their own for the salvation of capitalism in Britain, plans which, so they hope, will render unnecessary any recourse to fascism on the part of the British ruling class.

These plans are apparent from both the electoral programme of the Labour Party and its actions since it attained office. In "Let Us Face the Future"—the declaration of policy upon which the Labour Party fought the election—it is stated that the Labour Party intends to bring the Bank of England under public ownership, to bring about the public ownership also of the fuel and power industries, inland transport, and iron and steel. It promises to establish "public supervision of monopolies and cartels" and to put forward "a firm and clear-cut programme for the export trade."

It is believed by the great majority of Labour Party supporters that the carrying out of this programme would represent at least the partial achievement of Socialism in Britain. In actual fact it would mean something very different.

In the first place, the Labour Party promises "fair compensation" to the capitalists in all cases of nationalisation. What this "fair compensation" means can already be clearly seen from the example of the recently published Bill for the nationalisation of the Bank of England. The shareholders of the Bank of England hold an amount of stock with a nominal value of £14,553,000. On this stock they have for the past 22 years been receiving an annual dividend of 12%. These shareholders will receive as compensation from the Labour Government government bonds to the value of £58,212,000, i.e. four times the nominal value of the Bank of England stock. These government bonds will bear an annual interest of 3%—in other words, the Bank of England stockholders will go on receiving the same incomes as they have done in the past. No wonder that the news of the Government's proposals brought about a rise in the selling price of Bank of England stock!

There can be no doubt that similar schemes of "fair compensation" are already being worked out by the Labour Government for the industries that it intends to nationalise. The net result will be that the capitalists who at present own these industries will go on receiving almost the same incomes as they have done in the past, only in future these incomes will be guaranteed by the State and not subject to changes due to trade fluctuations etc.

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REFORMISM IS NOT SOCIALISM

It is obvious that this does not bring us a step nearer to Socialism. All it means is that the capitalists continue to draw surplus value, and the workers continue to be exploited, but that the form of their exploitation has changed, and become more beneficial to the capitalists.

For what is the general characteristic of the industries that it is proposed to nationalise, the railways, coal, iron and steel? It is precisely these industries that have, since the decline of British capitalism began, found it most difficult to yield profits to their shareholders. It is precisely these industries that are most backward as compared to their United States counterparts. It can confidently be predicted that in the post-war period their profit-making possibilities will be even less than in the past. Thus the payment to the shareholders of these industries of a guaranteed income based on past profits signifies an actual gain for the capitalists, all the more so, if, as seems probable, the past profits are taken to include those obtained during the war.

As far back as the 1870's Frederick Engels foresaw the possibility of nationalisation of this kind. He wrote:

"At a certain stage of development even this form" (that of monopolistic joint-stock companies) "no longer suffices; the official representative of capitalist society, the state, is constrained to take over their management."

And Engels went on to point out that such nationalisation could have nothing in common with Socialism:

"The modern state," wrote Engels, "whatever its form, is an essentially capitalist machine; it is the state of the capitalists, the ideal collective body of all capitalists. The more productive forces it takes over as its property, the more it becomes the real collective body of all the capitalists, the more citizens it exploits. The workers remain wage-earners, proletarians. The capitalist relationship is not abolished; it is rather pushed to an extreme."

The full significance of nationalisation in Transport House style thus becomes apparent. On the one hand the capitalists owning transport and the heavy industries will receive for the future a guaranteed income as great as that of the past. On the other hand the capitalists of the light, finished goods industries will receive cheap transport, fuel and raw materials to enable them to compete more effectively on the world market.

What role is the working class to play in this scheme for saving British capitalism from bankruptcy? They are to provide the funds necessary in order that the capitalists of the heavy industries may continue to draw their profits from the State and that the heavy industries themselves may be reorganised and modernised by the State. But instead of the workers providing such funds merely by undergoing wage cuts, according to the plans of the Labour Government, they will also pay by the more indirect (and it is hoped less obnoxious) methods of taxation, reduced consumption, etc.—in other words by much the same methods as they paid for the cost of running the War.

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LABOUR PARTY'S PROGRAMME

The programme of the Labour Government was made particularly clear in an article by Lord Latham which appeared in the *Daily Herald* of August 20th, 1945. The article is entitled "Now our job is to make Socialism pay." but it is obvious that the noble Lord really means "Now our job is to make Capitalism pay."

"Nationalisation of industries," writes Lord Latham, "must be proceeded with in the reasonable expectation that they will pay their way, not that they will come on the Budget subsidy or on the consumers for higher prices." Since the industries in question will be in a largely bankrupt condition once the brief post-war boom is over and since millions will have to be spent upon them if they are to be modernised, Lord Latham's remarks show how slight is the chance of the workers engaged in the nationalised industries even maintaining their existing wages and conditions, let alone improving them. In fact Lord Latham makes this very clear indeed when he further writes:

"While we must see to it that workers in no industry are compelled to suffer unfair conditions of employment for the benefit of the rest of the community, we must also be careful that no section, whether of workers or of employers, is permitted to hold up the rest to ransom, whether by higher prices or by unjustified subsidy from the National Exchequer, which means higher taxation upon the community generally."

Or, to put the same thing in other words, workers demanding higher wages and improved conditions will be regarded as "holding up the community to ransom" by the Labour Government. Not a word about the "holding up the the community to ransom" on the part of the capitalists demanding "fair compensation" for their shares in the nationalised industries; not a word about the higher taxation which this "fair compensation" will inevitably mean!

On this subject of taxation also Lord Latham has some very significant things to say. "As a way of fairly adjusting the contribution to be made by each citizen towards the expenses of providing collective services for the benefit of all, direct taxation has social merits not otherwise to be secured" (1), writes the noble Lord. In other words, the workers, who, in their vast majority, first paid income tax as a war-time measure will have to go on

paying it under the Labour Government, because of the "social merit" of this form of taxation, or, in other words, in order that the Labour Government can continue to pay the capitalists of the nationalised industries their profits in the form of interest on State bonds!

Lord Latham also goes out of his way to make it clear that it is precisely the workers upon whom the main burden of direct taxation will fall. He writes: "We must recognise, however, that the slogan of 'soak the rich' has now lost most of its substance, because there is not much more to soak—of income, at least."

And he proceeds to denounce those workers who endeavour to avoid paying income tax. "It would be idle to deny," he states, "that in the case of a limited number of short-sighted and selfish people, absenteeism and, indeed, strikes have been due to the feeling that wages lost will amount to no more than the income-tax avoided or, indeed, would be recompensed by a refund of income-tax already paid under P.A.Y.E. That is a bad, anti-social attitude, by whatever section of the community it is manifested."

This attitude Lord Latham regards as "the negation of Socialism". Moreover, not only does Lord Latham want the workers to continue bearing a huge burden of direct taxation; he also wants them to work harder.

He writes: "As we proceed farther and farther along the path of turning industry and commerce towards service for the community (even though much industry may remain in regulated private ownership) the more essential does it become for those engaged in industry, workers and managements, to give of their best in output and return."

Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, has since given the outline of the plans by which the Labour Government hopes to induce the workers to work harder. On October 15th, 1945, he announced to the House of Commons that the Government is setting up what he terms "tripartite working parties" in the manufacturing industries (which are of course to remain in private ownership). These "tripartite working parties" will consist "in equal thirds of representatives of employers and workers and of independent members and consisting of persons who will be accepted nationally as an authoritative body." These bodies are "to examine and inquire into the various schemes and suggestions put forward for improvements of organisation, production and distribution methods and processes in the industry, and to report as to the steps which should be taken in the national interest to strengthen the industry and render it more stable and more capable of meeting competition in the home and foreign markets."

In other words it is hoped to induce the workers in these industries not to struggle for better conditions against the employers but to collaborate with them on the basis of alleged common interests. Sir Stafford Cripps has made it clear that it is not the workers interests that will be served by these "working parties" for he states that he has "told the Chairmen that he and the independent members should have particular regard to the broad national interest involved and to the interest of consumers." And the Chairmen include such persons as Sir George Schuster, Sir Archibald Forbes, etc. whose interests lie very definitely on the side of British capitalism.

NATIONALISATION IN WHOSE INTEREST ? Thus the nationalisation schemes of the Labour Government aim, not at smashing British capitalism, but at reconstructing it at the expense of the workers. The heavy industries and transport are to be nationalised; the capitalists are to continue to draw their usual profits but indirectly in the form of interest on State bonds. This interest can only come from the working class—either from the workers employed in the nationalised industries in the form of profits, or from the working class as a whole in the form of taxation. The nationalised industries are to be modernised by the State—once again at the expense of the working class; the investments for this purpose which private capital does not find it profitable to make, coming from the State which will take them from the pockets of the workers.

These nationalised heavy industries and transport are to supply the manufacturing industries with the cheap power, raw materials and transport which they need to be able to compete with the United States on the world market. In the manufacturing industries the workers are to be drawn into class collaboration with the employers and thus induced to work harder for British capitalism.

This is undoubtedly the plan which the Labour Government is attempting to put into operation, and there is no doubt that it has the co-operation and support of significant sections of the capitalist class, especially those sections engaged in the manufacturing industries. But the Labour Leaders are due for a bitter disillusionment. They over-estimate their power of deceiving the masses, who at present still believe that the Labour Government will bring them Socialism but who in the long run will see and understand the real plans of their present leaders. Then will come a wave of working-class struggle both on the industrial and political field which, given correct revolutionary leadership, will sweep away both British capitalism and its Labour lieutenants.

But it is not only from the workers that opposition will come to the Labour Party plan. The capitalists in the finished goods industries, as we have said, to-day, give support to the Labour Government. In general, as the experiences of Italy and Germany showed, it is this section of the capitalist class which prefers, wherever possible, to rule by means of class collaboration through the medium of Social Democracy.

It is not the same with the capitalists of heavy industry. Even though the nationalisation plan guarantees them their past profits at the expense of the State (i.e. of the working class) it cannot be expected that this will satisfy them. Rather than be turned into State bondholders without direct control of industry, these capitalists, together with the financial and banking interests behind them, would prefer to remain in control of their railroads, mines and steel plants and to solve the question of profits in their own way, by drastically reducing wages and worsening working conditions. As we have said above, this would involve the complete smashing of the workers' organisations by means of Fascism, and it is no accident that in the countries where Fascism triumphed before the War it was precisely the capitalists of the heavy industries who acted as the financial backers of the fascist movements and who gained most when fascism came to power.

At present there is no prospect of the growth of a mass basis for fascism, though we are already witnessing the first signs of the rebirth of an organised fascist movement. Hence the capitalists of the heavy industries passively

acquiesce to the plans of the Labour Government. But before these plans can be fully carried into effect mass disillusionment will have begun. In fact the practical effects of nationalisation on the Transport House model will be an important factor in the spreading of such disillusionment among the workers. Trotsky long ago pointed out that:

"Bourgeois society, in its present condition, will not accept even a partial nationalisation except by circumscribing it with such conditions as must render the successful carrying through of the measures extremely difficult, and must discredit the principle of nationalisation and with it the Labour Party."

With such mass disillusionment, and in the absence of a strong revolutionary party, possibilities will exist for the formation of a mass fascist movement and there can be no doubt that it would then receive the full backing of the capitalists of heavy industry, and, when the situation had developed to a certain stage, of the capitalists of light industry also.

Such a situation can only be averted by the building of a mass revolutionary party in Britain. The fate of the British working class to-day, and in the coming period, depends upon the strength and courage of its only revolutionary leadership—the British Section of the Fourth International.

P.D.

IMPERIALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST—II

By T. CLIFF

(Continued from previous issue)

THE PROBLEMS WHICH FACE IMPERIALISM AND THE ARAB RULING CLASSES WITH THE END OF THE WAR

With the end of the second world war, British imperialism is confronted with very serious difficulties in the East and needs to adopt extreme measures to protect its interests. The Arab exploiting classes stand before similar difficulties connected with those of imperialism. An understanding of this calls for a description of the socio-economic situation during the war.

During the war, the capitalists and especially the big foreign companies active in the East, made tremendous profits. Whereas in the last war the British army spent £45,000,000 in Egypt, in this war the amount is much greater.

The war income of Egypt in 1940 was estimated at £34,000,000, in 1941 at £100,000,000, and in 1942, '43 and '44 it was at least as much as in 1941. "Times" of 20/9/43, estimated that the army expended £200,000,000 a year in the Middle East. The bourgeoisie has enjoyed extraordinary profits. Thus the big Egyptian sugar company (a French company) ended the year 1942 with £266,000; 1943 with £1,350,000. The National Weaving Factories paid 11 per cent dividends in 1938 and 22 per cent in 1942. Misr Weaving Factory in Manallah paid 7 per cent dividends in 1938 and 28 per cent in 1943. Misr Weaving Factory in the village Dawar paid 12 per cent in 1941, and 20 per cent in 1943. The Marconi Broadcasting Company paid 7 per cent in 1935 and 25 per cent in 1940. Egyptian Hotel

Companies paid 10 per cent in 1938 and 25 per cent in 1941. The number of millionaires in Egypt before the war was fifty, and in 1943 four hundred.

The bourgeoisie made tremendous profits in commerce too. Thus in the three years, 1941, 1942 and 1943, the merchants in Beirut made profits of £16,000,000. £10,000,000 of this went into the pockets of ten merchants, £2,000,000 into the pockets of another twenty merchants, and the other £4,000,000 into the pockets of hundreds of smaller merchants.

The banks also enjoyed great prosperity. In all commercial banks in Egypt, deposits increased from £E44,800,000 in 1939 to £E116,600,000 in 1942. In the Lebanon during the same period it increased from £LS26,500,000 to £LS84,500,000, and in Syria from £LS6,100,000 to £LS36,400,000. The Arab banks in Palestine paid a dividend of 20% in 1943.

At the same time the suffering of the toiling masses increased very much. The result was a tremendous sharpening of the social tension, which reached its climax in Egypt. Already in January, 1942, a bourgeois member of the Egyptian Chamber of Deputies said: "We have already stood on this platform before and warned the government of the danger of hunger, and we then remarked that he was right who said that hunger is a heretic which knows no compromise or manners. He who looks into history will know that hunger was the cause of many revolutions. And if history tells us that the revolutionary people in one of the biggest states of Europe cried from the depths of their hearts, 'We want bread,' then we heard a similar rebellious cry of the same tone before the last 'Feast of Sacrifice' in the streets of Cairo, a cry that was heard from the mouths of the hungry people attacking the bread vans, in order to snatch bread." The speaker later described the situation in the country as a "revolutionary situation." ("Al-Misri," 6/1/42.)

Another senator, in March, 1943, described the situation in these words: "The war has brought about a concentration of capital in the hands of a few

hundreds. The wealth of the rich has increased, while the poor have been forced down into more terrible poverty; the gulf between the classes has deepened. The social system is shaky and grave dangers threaten it. A good future cannot be prophesied for the country."

The peace means a great increase in the sufferings of the masses. The authorities' purchase of products to the extent of tens of millions of pounds will cease, which will lead to the dismissal of about a quarter of a million workers employed in industries supplying the army. The great majority of the 800,000 workers employed directly by the army will also be discharged. Even industries producing for the civil population will be confronted with grave difficulties in the form of foreign competition, which, during the war, was nearly non-existent, difficulties in the renewal of machinery, etc. The ruling classes are preparing to roll the burden of the crisis on the backs of the workers and peasants, and make no secret of their intentions. Thus Fouad Saraj ed-Din, a large landowner, who was Minister of Agriculture, Internal Affairs and Social Welfare, said that in order that Egyptian cotton be able to compete with Indian, Chinese and Brazilian cotton, with artificial silk and nylon, the rise of wages in agriculture must be stopped. Hafez Affi, director of the big bank, "Misr," also stated that the rise of wages deprived Egyptian industry of the possibility to compete with foreign products. The paper "Al-Ahram," of 19/7/43, states that the workers were getting a high wage which accustomed them to luxuries (—sic!).

At the same time the antagonism between the Arab industrial bourgeoisie and imperialism is increasing. There are two main bones of contention: firstly, the problem of the defence of the existing industries from the competition of foreign goods, and secondly, the problem of Britain's tremendous debt to the Eastern countries (to Egypt £350,000,000, to Palestine—here mainly to Jewish capitalists—£100,000,000, to Iraq £60,000,000). The position of the various sections of the Arab bourgeoisie

regarding these questions is different. The comprador bourgeoisie is much more interested in trade with overseas than in the development of local industry. On the other hand, the industrialists insist on raising the customs tariffs and are also more assertive as regards the British debt, for they badly need its repayment in order to renew their worn machinery. Thus at the session of the senate on 20/2/45, Senator Ahmed Ramzi Bey said that the currency restrictions meant that Egypt could not get dollars and buy in U.S.A., but only in England, and this was a serious handicap. He proposed that England supply dollars or even hand over to Egypt some of her shares in companies in Egypt, such as those of the Suez Company, Anglo-Egyptian Co., etc. He also mentioned the decline in practice, if not in theory, of the value of the Egyptian pound compared with the pound sterling. "**Al-Ahram**," of 19/4/44, states that the United Kingdom's debt to Egypt is the debt of the strong to the weak and of course it was dependent on the will of the strong whether and how it would be paid. A week later the same paper quotes Senator Mohamed Barakat Pasha as stating that the United Kingdom would not be able to pay her debts and advising Egypt to leave the sterling bloc. The same theme of leaving the sterling bloc and transferring Suez and other shares to Egyptian hands repeats itself over and over again in the Egyptian press.

The Arab bourgeoisie in the neighbouring countries is weaker and therefore less insistent. The position of the Arab exploiting classes may be summarised thus: all of them turn their faces towards the cutting of the standard of living of the masses. Some of them, the industrialists, want to use pressure on Britain in order to wring some concessions. But nevertheless one thing must be absolutely clear. Even for the Arab industrialists the first factor takes overwhelming precedence over the second.

In face of the deep abyss between the masses of workers and peasants and imperialism, the latter is interested, and will be more so in the

future, to divert the ire of the masses into a misleading side track. The majority of the Arab exploiters—the feudal lords, the comprador bourgeoisie, the merchants and usurers—identify themselves in this matter completely with imperialism. (It must not be understood that this means necessarily British imperialism. It may just as well be another—American.) The industrial bourgeoisie will perhaps try to make use of the masses' ire in order to wring some concessions from imperialism, but before long it is sure to join hands with it in an effort to direct the movement of the hungry masses away from the national and social liberatory struggle into a side channel—one of chauvinistic communal riots.

DIVIDE ET IMPERA

According to the number of communal riots, one may determine the number of days that imperialism and its fifth column in the colonies have to live. For decades, therefore, French imperialism has caused serious friction between the Christians and Moslems in Syria and Lebanon, British imperialism between Moslems and Copts in Egypt, Arabs and Assyrians in Iraq and Jews and Arabs in Palestine.

At the end of the second world war, however, the problem confronting British imperialism becomes much more difficult. On the one hand Britain is interested in pushing France aside in Syria and Lebanon and can, therefore, meanwhile, not receive communal friction between Moslems and Christians happily, as this can only help to strengthen the position of France which leans upon the Christian minority. On the other hand Britain is interested in putting stumbling blocks in the way of American penetration into the Middle East, and therefore cannot look favourably upon the disputes between "independent" Arab rulers, and "independent" Arab states, as it is interested in building a united front of reactionary kings and ministers—hence the Arab League. Moreover the endeavour of imperialism to incite communal friction between Moslems and Copts in Egypt failed dismally (for

reasons which cannot here be dwelt upon). And seeing that Egypt is the weakest link in the imperialist chain of the Middle East as social antagonisms are here deepest, Britain's difficulties in diverting the attention of the masses to chauvinistic aims are very great. British imperialism must therefore solve a very grave problem: how to keep a unity of all the Arab countries—a unity, of course, whose aims and limits are determined by Britain—and to preserve the peace between the different communities of the Arab people on the one hand, and on the other to carry out its policy of **divide et impera** in its most extreme form.

THE ROLE OF ZIONISM

Zionism occupies a special place in imperialist fortifications. It plays a double role firstly, directly as an important pillar of imperialism, giving it active support and opposing the liberatory struggle of the Arab nation, and secondly as a passive servant behind which imperialism can hide and towards which it can direct the ire of the Arab masses.

If in Tel Aviv, which has 250,000 inhabitants, there is not one Arab worker, if a rumour that there are three Arabs working in a Jewish cafe is enough to bring a crowd of thousands to the spot to smash the windows and break the furniture, if an Arab fellah who dared, before the war, to come and sell his products in the Jewish market was subjected to beatings, spoliation of his products, etc. (during the war such occurrences were not customary nor are so to-day as there was and still is a scarcity of products), if at one stroke twenty villages in the Jezreel Valley were wiped out when the land was bought from a Syrian banker, Sursuk, if thousands of evicted peasants were prohibited from looking for work as wage labourers on the land on which their families had toiled for generations, if there were constant "purges" of Arabs from the economy, if from such "innocent" acts the Zionists pass over to speaking about making Palestine a Jewish State—then is there any wonder that the Arabs oppose Zionism to the very death?

Zionism frees imperialism from the responsibility for any act of spoliation and oppression. Let us look at a few examples. An English Electric Company which builds an enterprise in Palestine nominates a Jew as general manager. The result is that while in every colony a struggle having an anti-imperialist character is being conducted—with strikes, demonstrations and boycotts—against the foreign concessionary companies, in Palestine the boycott declared by the Arabs against the Palestine Electric Company wears another guise—anti-Jewish demonstrations. In this way the Zionists, who for propaganda's sake declare the key positions of the economy to be in their hands although they are merely junior partners or even only managers, help imperialism to suck the blood of the country.

Another example will make this even clearer. While in Syria and Lebanon there were demonstrations, even bloody ones, which were crowned with victory, against the establishment of the truck company Steel Bros. there, in Palestine the "Socialist" Zionists, the General Federation of Jewish Labour (Histadrut) put themselves, for some petty recompense, at the service of Steel Bros. and assured the company's firmly planting itself in the country.

In Palestine there is one policeman or ghaffir (special policeman) for every 100 inhabitants, as against one for every 676 in England. The police budget in Palestine accounted for 27 per cent of the 1941/2 budget (excluding public works undertaken for police purposes, such as the building of police stations, etc.), as against 0.3 per cent in England in 1942/3. Such a tremendous police force is not—God forbid—intended to serve imperialism. No, it was Zionism which for years insisted on increasing the police force, insisted on the reign of order and a strong hand against the Arabs!

If the health and education budgets together do not make up 65 per cent of the police budget (in England they are five times larger than the latter) then the Zionists by no means protest against this but instead make a great ado over the fact that the government

distributes the education budget to Jews and Arabs proportionally to the number of children in the two communities. Instead they demand that the government give a greater part of the budget to the Jews, as they pay more taxes (being richer). This is demanded even by those Zionists who call themselves socialist! Imperialism is thus freed from responsibility for the widespread illiteracy and bad health conditions prevailing in the country.

Imperialism does not have to shoulder the responsibility for the fact that the big foreign companies and the big capitalists and landowners, Jewish or Arab, practically do not pay taxes. All the Zionists, from right to extreme "left" oppose income tax, as this will harm Zionist construction.

In Palestine there are not even minimal laws for the protection of tenants. Neither Arab landowners nor the government need take responsibility for this either. On the contrary, the government from time to time, in order to appear the benefactor, states a desire for laws for the protection of tenants and even maps out schemes for agricultural development. Again it is the Zionists who oppose any such laws and schemes, on the grounds that it will harm Zionist colonization which needs the eviction of tenants.

If in Palestine there is a completely autocratic regime, without any parliament or even any elected representative body, imperialism again evades all responsibility very easily: the Zionists oppose the setting up of any democratic institution, again as it will hinder Zionist expansion.

If the British army during the years 1936-39, killed thousands of Arab partisans (in the same way as Italians killed Abyssinians, or the Japanese,

Dutch and British the Javanese to-day) it did not do so in order to maintain its position—God forbid!—but to protect the Jews!*

It is a tragedy that the sons of the very people which has been persecuted and massacred in such a bestial fashion, and which to-day is the unprovoking victim of national hatred—of fascism, the highest form of imperialism—should itself be driven into a chauvinistic, militaristic fervour, and become the blind tool of imperialism in subjugating the Arab masses. In the same way that the existing social order is to be blamed for the calamity of the Jews, so is it to be blamed for the exploitation of their catastrophe for reactionary, oppressive aims.

Zionism does not redeem Jewry from suffering. On the contrary, it imperils them with a new danger, that of being a buffer between imperialism and the national and social liberatory struggle of the Arab masses.

CAN ZIONISM BE ANTI-IMPERIALIST ?

The recent Zionist terror appears to cast the above estimation of the relation between Zionism and imperialism into doubt. If the Zionist struggle to-day is against the British government is it not proof that it follows an anti-imperialist policy ?

Zionism and imperialism have both common and antagonistic interests. Zionism wants to build a strong Jewish capitalist state. Imperialism is indeed interested in the existence of a capitalist Jewish society enveloped by the hatred of colonial masses, but not that Zionism should become too strong a factor. As far as this is concerned, it is ready to prove its fairness towards the Arabs, and its readiness to give

* It is interesting that the English companies active in Palestine do everything possible to accommodate themselves to the Arab-Jewish antagonism, and to increase it. Thus, for instance, the Anglo-American Tobacco Company have intentionally built two separate enterprises. One in Tel Aviv (Maspero) supplies the Jewish market, employs

Jewish workers, and sells under the slogan "Buy 100 per cent Jewish products." The other (Karaman, Dick & Salti) supplies the Arab market, employs 500 Arab workers and works under the guise of an Arab national enterprise; thus for instance, it combined the sale of its cigarettes with propaganda against the selling of land to the Jews.

in to their just demands at the expense of Zionism. In order to gain the service of the Zionists as direct supporters in any anti-imperialist insurrection, and what is even more important, as a buffer, imperialism does not necessarily have to let Zionism flourish. A Zionist population of 600,000 can satisfactorily enough fulfil such a task. Imperialism can safely draw its plans either to widen the bounds for Zionist development or restrict them, but it need suffer no doubt about one thing: that whatever happens during an uprising of the people of the East against imperialism, Zionism will not go over to the revolutionary side. This is clearly revealed in all the activities and declarations of the most active terroristic organization in Palestine—the National Military Organization. In one of its pamphlets, "In Memory of D. Raziel," it wrote: **"We must fight the Arabs in order to subjugate them and weaken their demands. We must take them off the arena as a political factor. This struggle against the Arabs will encourage the diaspor and consolidate it. It will draw the attention of the nations of the world which will be compelled to honour the people which struggles with its arms. And an ally will be found which will support the peoples' army in its struggle."** (May, 1943.)

It is true that the Zionists are not satisfied with the fact that it is not they who fix the limits for co-operation between Zionism and imperialism, but the latter which does so. Nevertheless, even in the days of the greatest strain in the relations between them and the British government, they never stopped saying that the interests of Zionism do not go against the interests of imperialism. Thus, for instance, one of the members of the Jewish Agency wrote a few days before the great terrorist acts of November 2 (the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration): **"One of the bad principles of the traditional system (of British policy—T.C.) is that the British authorities compromise only with the one who knows how to disturb and to break their peace, while a faithful, patient and peaceful ally these authori-**

ties are accustomed to treat lightly and to betray. If this is the way to win the alliance of Britain, we cannot avoid trying to follow this path, as we are very interested in Britain's alliance with us. We cannot long maintain this one-sided alliance in the place of a mutual alliance. The Yishuv (Jewish population in Palestine—T.C.) does not intend to expel the British from the country and be their heirs. We do not see any contradiction whatsoever between mass immigration, a Jewish state, and wide and strong British bases in this country. On the contrary, we shall look upon it very favourably." (Dr. Y. Sneh, "Concerning the Essence of the Crisis," "Ha'aretz," 26/10/45.)

The same theme is harped upon interminably day after day. It is interesting that even when imperialism reveals its great desire to use the Jews as scapegoats, the theme does not change. The arms trials of the last two years have been clear proof of the provocative intentions of imperialism. For many years now, thousands of Arabs have been arrested without trial, and every Arab found with arms during the national uprising of 1936-39 was condemned to death or at least to long imprisonment. To this the Zionists did not utter a word of protest so that the ire of the oppressed Arab masses was vented against the Jews. Then an attempt was made to complete the provocation: Jews in possession of arms were publicly tried. In the whole East the Arab papers began to write that the Zionists were arming against the Arabs and England was the protector of the Arabs. But, of course, the Zionists did not say that the arms trials of the last two years were only a link in the chain of the imperialist policy of *divide et impera*. Even at this hour they did everything to prove that they were not the enemies of imperialism, but, on the contrary, its allies. Thus, for instance, in the arms trial that took place on 28/11/44, Epstein, a member of Hashomer Hatzair, the "Revolutionary Socialist" Zionist party, said to the judges: **"You who come from England will surely know how to appreciate the difficulties and dangers involved in development**

and colonization undertakings in backward countries. No colonizatory undertakings in the history of mankind have taken place without being met by the hatred of the natives. Years; and sometimes generations pass till these men (the natives—T.C.) become capable of appreciating and understanding the blessing inherent in the undertaking also for their future. But the British people did not recoil from developing these backward countries (imperialist conquest—i.e., development—T.C.) knowing that by doing so you were fulfilling an historical and humanitarian mission. The best of your sons you sacrificed on the altar of progress." What did the petroleum companies get for this?

If the Zionists are not anti-imperialist, then, why all these terroristic acts? The answer is simple. The Zionists have come into a blind alley. The victory of the proletariat of the West and the masses of the East will put an end to Zionist dreams. The continuation of the existing social regime makes every little people into a puppet in the hands of big imperialist Powers. This is especially true as regards the Jews of Palestine whose relations with their neighbours are very strained. If imperialism continues to rule over the world, then whatever the Jews do they are doomed. If the world revolutionary wave reaches a height, then all the weak peoples, including world Jewry, will be saved. But the Jews of Palestine in their special position can be saved only if they cease to be buffers between the national and social liberatory struggle of the Arab masses. The Jewish capitalists of Palestine as a class are doomed whatever happens. They are therefore incapable of anything except blind adventurism based on belief in miracles or at best a struggle to hold out a little longer.

The best prospect the Zionists can hope for is that Britain will give them a Jewish State, even though a pocket state in a small part of tiny Palestine. They think that the partition plan for Palestine can suit the interests of British imperialism under certain conditions. Such a plan will ensure the

existence of two irridentist movements, a sharp Zionist struggle for every place of work and foot of ground in the Jewish State, and economic weakness of the mutilated Arab state. These are the pros of the plan from the standpoint of imperialism. The Zionists base their calculations on this factor and no other: it is true that the position of Zionism in the struggle between the colonial people and imperialism is predetermined, and it will not change no matter how imperialism behaves, but its place in the struggle between the different imperialist Powers is not predetermined. Ben-Gurion and Weizman can be American agents with the same enthusiasm as they have been British agents for nearly thirty years. The recent Zionist terror was intended to threaten Britain with the possibility of a Zionist switch over to America, and at the same time to make it easier for the British politicians, if they so desired, to permit the construction of a Jewish State in spite of Arab opposition. (They would be able to say to the Arabs that there was a material and moral necessity to give in somewhat to the Zionists.)

Even if this "solution" is arrived at—which is far from being certain—it will be only a temporary, shortlived postponement of Zionism's burial. The Jews of Palestine and the Arabs will only be involved by this plan in terrible sacrifices, clashes and bloodshed. An immediate step towards the solution for the Jewish workers of Palestine is to bridge the gulf between themselves and the tens of millions of Eastern peoples, by renouncing Zionist dreams of domination.

The last terrorists acts—the blowing up of the railways done with the full collaboration of all the Zionist military organizations (Hagana, National Military Organization, and Stern Group)—in reality did not harm imperialism but instead served it very well. They intended to "compel" the British Government to open the gates of Palestine to Zionist immigration and colonization despite the opposition of the Arab inhabitants of the country, and those of neighbouring countries; (the former having discovered the true facts of

Zionism from first hand, and the latter learning from them). It therefore only added fuel to the fire of Arab-Jewish hatred. The bombardment of the railways on the eve of November 2, was

an excellent weapon in the hands of British agents for the organization of pogroms in Cairo, Alexandria and Tripoli.

To be concluded.

DISCUSSION MATERIAL

■ EUROPE ■

EDITORIAL NOTE.—We have published material on this question in recent issues of W.I.N., from comrades of the German I.K.D. and a reply by Comrade Grant. The resolution of the R.C.P. on the National Question in Europe appeared in our July-August issue and the elaborated position of the Party is set out in the pamphlet **REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST POLICY**—R.C.P. Conference Decisions.

The contributions which follow are from members of the Socialist Workers' Party—American Trotskyist organisation. The article by Comrade Simmons defends the position taken in the European Resolution adopted by majority vote at the Eleventh Convention of the S.W.P., and Comrade Morrow's reply supports the position taken up by the minority at that Convention.

OUR TASKS IN EUROPE

(SECTION OF R.C.P. CONFERENCE RESOLUTION RELATING TO QUESTION UNDER DISCUSSION)

The Fourth International will penetrate the broad masses and build the party of socialist revolution only with a correct tactical approach to the changing situations and moods.

It would require a whole series of terrible defeats before the bourgeoisie could establish an open dictatorial rule on the lines of the fascist regimes of Hitler and Mussolini. The cycle begins all over again, but on a new basis. The decay of the capitalist system weakens the bourgeoisie and renders it less capable of firmly rivetting its rule on the masses. It is 1917-21 with which the world is faced—but on a higher level. The degeneracy of the rotted workers' organisations gives

capitalism a breathing space. **Only if the series of revolutions fails** can the bourgeoisie hope to save its system, once again by resorting to a neo-fascism of monstrous reaction and repression. Before then the masses will have been put to the test. The proletariat will discard its old organisations if the Fourth International in its strategy and tactics is capable of integrating itself with the mass movement of the workers.

The basic task in this period is the building of the mass revolutionary parties of the Fourth International. While striving for and advocating the setting up of **ad hoc** organisations of struggle wherever the opportunity

arises, while struggling for and advocating the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only solution, our European comrades cannot hope to achieve this in the first stages of the struggle. True, the masses are seeking the socialist solution; but they will have to go through the experience in action of the policy of betrayal of Stalinism and Social Democracy in order to learn that even the old standards of life can be obtained only by the rule of the working class.

The struggle for democratic, economic and transitional demands, far from being superceded or obsolete during the course of the revolutionary epoch ahead, assumes tremendous importance for the building of the framework of our movement. Thus, side by side with the propaganda for Soviets and a Workers' Government, at this stage there must be waged an agitation for the old organisations of the workers which still maintain the confidence and support of the masses, to break their alliance with the decadent bourgeoisie and Allied imperialism, and for the leaders to match their words with deeds. Our comrades will demand that the mass organisations which claim to represent the workers, wage a struggle to take power into their own hands. A Government of Socialists and Communists! This will be the rallying cry which will be utilised by the Fourth International to mobilise the Social Democratic and Communist workers to wage a struggle against the capitalist class.

Together, and side by side with this, must go the demand for general elections on the basis of universal suffrage from the age of eighteen years. The bourgeoisie and the reformist organisations are prating about democratic rights, but they have allowed power to remain in the hands of bourgeois cliques, for the most part under the protection of Allied bayonets, without consulting the masses or receiving a mandate from them. Thus, the demand for a general election and the convening of a Constituent Assembly must play a great role in the agitation of our comrades in the first stages of the

revolutionary mobilisation of the masses. Together with these will be linked the transitional slogans in various industries at varying stages of the struggle: Nationalise the banks without compensation! Take over the mines, railways and big combines and industry, and operate them under workers' control! Expropriate the trusts which yesterday collaborated with Hitler and today collaborate with the Allied imperialists! A plan of public works! A sliding scale of hours and wages! The arming of the workers and the organising of workers' militias! There is no need to detail all the demands which will be put forward, according to the development of the situation as laid down in the policy of the Fourth International in its Transitional Programme. These demands are not in contradiction with the programme of soviets, of workers' committees in the factories and streets. But without them there is a danger that the groups of the Fourth International would degenerate into sectarian sterility and isolation. They represent a bridge to the broad masses without them the problem of organising the vanguard is rendered doubly difficult.

It is in periods such as this that the Party of the Fourth International will build itself. The Stalinist and Social Democratic Parties will not attain the stability they achieved in the pre-war era. They will be faced with a constant series of crises and splits. Given correct tactics the parties of the Fourth International will grow at their expense. However, ephemeral, centrist currents and groupings are bound to make their appearance in many countries owing to the weakness of the organisations of the Fourth International and their lack of authoritative spokesmen, such as Leon Trotsky. Authority will be built up on the basis of the ability of the young cadres of the International to learn for themselves in the course of the struggles, and on the basis of the masses' experience of the application of the programme of the Fourth International.

TROTSKYIST TASKS IN EUROPE

By WILLIAM SIMMONS (U.S.A.)

HISTORY has now written finish to the fascist era in Europe and out of its smouldering pyres of death and destruction new life, new hope, begins to grow. This is manifest in the revolutionary events already unfolding. But these are still in their early stage and a successful conclusion is not yet assured. Such an assurance can be given only when the proletariat follows a revolutionary policy.

The policy pursued is therefore the crucial factor. Upon that depends whether the revolutionary possibilities are advanced or retarded. And, as we know very well, the question of policy is decided in each instance, and at each stage of development, by whichever party gains the adherence of the masses.

Unfortunately, however, revival of political life has shown in Europe so far an overwhelming mass support for the social reformist parties, the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties. Compared to these, the parties of the Fourth International are still very small, very young and inexperienced. We can, therefore, readily agree that the first task is the building of the Marxist party. But how is this task to be approached? What strategical and tactical methods are to be employed? What should be the character of the slogans and demands advanced? The posing of these problems have led to disagreement and discussion.

To this discussion Comrade Morrow has made a contribution in the article entitled "The First Phase of the Coming European Revolution" published in the December 1944 issue of *Fourth International*. Concerning the specific question of how to build the

Marxist party I think it is fair to say that Morrow's attitude can be summed up in his insistence upon the method of democratic demands. He says:

"I repeat: the main danger *within* the Fourth International appears to me to lie in the direction of ultra-leftism. It is necessary, as we approach the first period of the European revolution, to emphasize and underline the role of democratic demands."

It is true that Comrade Morrow foresees for Europe a more or less protracted stage of bourgeois democratic developments. This he makes perfectly clear in his article. To support this view, and support equally his insistence upon democratic demands, he adduces some factors which emerged from European developments at that time. Some of these factors still exist, perhaps in an even clearer form today, without, however, supporting in the least either of his conclusions. Insofar as the possibility of bourgeois democratic developments in Europe is concerned this is determined by far more fundamental factors than those cited by Morrow, and this question has already been discussed extensively in these columns. I shall therefore confine myself here entirely to his insistence upon emphasizing and underlining the role of democratic demands. I do not think that I can be accused of an artificial separation of related questions inasmuch as Morrow makes it clear that his insistence applies especially to the immediate tasks and does not necessarily depend upon what he calls the tempo of developments. In the above quotation he says that it applies "as we approach the first period of the European revolution." And, besides, it is the immediate tasks

which present the most pressing problem.

Among the important factors emerging from the European developments, as listed by Comrade Morrow, are the following: "the revival of democratic illusions among considerable sections of the masses," because, "... new generations have grown up without any experience of bourgeois democracy and without active participation in political life." This is undeniably so. He estimates that "these masses may well have to go through a certain body of experiences before they will understand that their needs cannot be satisfied within the framework of the democratic republic." No doubt this is true, although the experience may be gained in a concentrated form and within a brief period. Comrade Morrow also concluded from Italian experiences so far, that, "the traditional workers' parties, as well as centrist and liberal democratic parties, will emerge throughout Europe as the principal parties of the first period after collapse of the Nazis and their collaborators." This is already the case in a number of European countries. It cannot yet be said for Germany, the most decisive sector of the European revolution, although, to a much more limited extent, it may also come true there.

Still there is no need, or desire, on my part to quarrel with these general formulations cited in the above paragraph. In fact, it should rather be necessary to add that the period of fascist dictatorship quite naturally produced, not only a swing toward democratic liberties; but also created a genuine need for such liberties.

In this situation the parties of the Fourth International, whether small or large, must go with the masses through this body of experience. And they must do so regardless of whether the experiences can be simulated within a brief period, in concentrated form, or at a relatively slow tempo. In conformity with the needs of each

situation they must advance, and fight for, democratic demands. Of course they dare not stop short there or permit these demands to become a noose to strangle the masses. They must follow out the theory of the permanent revolution and recognise that the genuine democratic needs cannot be satisfied without the workers' conquest of power.

At the same time we must not for one moment lose sight of the fact the social reformist parties, the centrist and liberal parties, advance democratic demands to one degree or another, in one form or another. Regardless of any failure on their part to conduct a serious struggle; yes, regardless of open betrayals of their own professed reformist and liberal programmes, they will make democratic demands. Even the Stalinists will make them. Neither of these parties can operate without them. They will in fact, after the collapse of fascism, endeavour to capitalize particularly on existing democratic illusions. They will sponsor demands for social reform within the framework of capitalism as their only means of maintaining mass support, and as a means toward keeping this system intact. They have no *other* means.

Although the actual situation in Europe is by no means too clear to us, it seems to emerge quite positively that such is the position of these parties now. In Northern Italy the militant partisan movement, evidently under the leadership of Stalinists, Social Democrats and Left wing Liberals, demand the republic. Even the Belgian Social Democrats have given feeble voice to such a demand. In France and elsewhere demands have been made by these parties for a constituent assembly, always taking care, of course, that actual measures are delayed as much as possible. Similarly demands have been made for a certain degree of nationalization.

The mere advancing of democratic demands will not serve in itself to

distinguish the Fourth Internationalists from the position of these parties. It is important therefore to recognise the fact that democratic demands are for us only incidental and episodic in the independent movement of the proletariat; and they are now especially so in view of the utter capitalist collapse. They are the present stage of developments, whenever an wherever they come into use, essentially a bridge to, and subordinate to, the more fundamental demands of the revolutionary programme. Standing alone the mere episodic slogans and demands are, of course, entirely inadequate.

ESSENCE OF THE PROBLEM

And so we come to the essence of the problem of what method to pursue to build the Trotskyist parties in Europe.

It is hardly necessary to repeat the fact that everything is relative. The brutal fascist dictatorship created a genuine need for democratic liberties; and slogans corresponding to these needs *can* and *will* serve as a powerful means to set masses into motion. At the same time this is by no means the only pressing need emerging in present day Europe. Fascism itself represented the last desperate resort toward preservation of the tottering capitalist structure. This brief experiment with the most hideous system of oppression did not strengthen the structure in the least. Its gaping holes have become veritable cataracts. The capitalist crisis retains all its characteristics of permanency. Indeed its whole structure teeters over a precipice. On the other hand, revival of democratic illusions among considerable sections of the masses, due to lack of participation in political life of the younger generation, is not the only present phenomenon. Far more pressing for them is the lack of the most meagre means of subsistence. Therefore with all its weight this

catastrophic crisis pushes the proletariat relentlessly on the road toward the revolutionary mass struggle for power.

A revolutionary situation is beginning to unfold. Objective conditions are favourable to the proletariat. And yet at this very beginning we are presented with a paradox: a proletarian revolutionary policy does not yet prevail; the principal parties of the proletariat are the social reformist parties.

Yes, these are the crucial factors emerging from the European situation today. And at the same time these are the conditions that determine the strategy and tactics of the numerically small Trotskyist parties, rather than any speculative estimates of the viability of bourgeois democracy. The question of policy pursued by these co-thinkers is equally crucial. Their most immediate and their main adversary is made up of the social reformist parties against whom they must carry on the unrelenting fight for mass influence. In a very immediate and in a very pressing sense this is their main struggle.

How are they to win out in this crucial conflict for leadership? By emphasizing and underlining the role of democratic demands? No! Our conclusion must be the exact opposite to that drawn by Comrade Morrow. This conclusion must proceed from the idea that the parties of the Fourth International possess the enormous advantage of a revolutionary program. This is the main program which they must bring forward now. Therefore, if in this main struggle anything is to be especially emphasized and underlined, it is the revolutionary content of this program. They must emphasize the socialist way out of the capitalist collapse in clear and precise revolutionary slogans. In fact they must put forward as their most pressing demand the expropriation of the capitalists and the socialization of the means of production.

THE CORRECT FORMULA

Comrade Morrow's formula should be reversed to read: it is necessary to emphasize and underline the tasks of the socialist revolution as the most pressing problem before the working masses. At the same time we should say: use every opportunity available to demand and fight for more and more democratic liberties; to demand and fight for ever greater economic concessions from capitalism. Remember, however, that such liberties and such concessions can, at the present stage of social developments, be won only as a by-product of the revolutionary struggle. The bourgeoisie will grant such concessions only when in fear of losing all its privileges. And finally: Do not fail to make it crystal clear that a successful struggle for the socialist way out of the frightful capitalist collapse can be waged only by the forces and the methods of the proletarian revolution.

Such a policy is imposed upon the European Trotskyist parties by the unfolding of the revolutionary situation. Ultimately this alone can secure for them the necessary mass influence. But it is no less imperative in its more immediate sense.

The small Trotskyist parties do not yet dispose of forces sufficient to set millions into motion. Far from it. In the first instance their appeals must be addressed therefore to the more advanced, the more politically conscious, and the more militant workers. But these are still by and large within the folds of the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties. Paradoxical as it may seem, we can be sure that the militant workers adhere to the parties still carrying the names of socialism and communism not as a sign of approval of the policies and actions of social reformism, but rather because of their burning desire to find the solution, as the case may be. What else could be expected in the absence of any other working class means of

political action sufficiently known to them?

Should we say that in order to win them it is necessary to emphasize and underline the role of democratic demands? That would be utterly inadequate. In fact it would be a flagrant mockery. Everything would in this manner be turned upside down. Let us try rather to place the problem right side up and affirm again without equivocation, the basic proposition: in the struggle to win the more advanced stratum of the European proletariat the Trotskyist parties must especially emphasize their revolutionary program. They must demonstrate beyond a shadow of doubt, by means of slogans, demands, propaganda, agitation and action, that the genuine Marxist program, together with the method and the forces of the revolution alone can lead to the socialist solution.

THE SOCIALIST SOLUTION

Objective reality will naturally present different and varying stages in the general political process of development. But these stages interpenetrate and they are directly interrelated with the movement of the masses. Changes in the one will involve changes in the other. The moods of the masses will of necessity show similar variations. And it would be illusory to expect changes continually in a progressive direction. Initial set-backs, reverses, and even possible defeats have to be counted on. Obstacles in the path of European revolutionary developments are still tremendous. In several respects they are even greater than those that followed in the wake of World War I. Direct allied imperialist and Kremlin bureaucratic intervention on the side of reaction in every serious situation is now a very real, a very potent factor of enormous proportion. Then, in addition, we have now not merely one but two reformist parties in the service of imperialism. But the small

revolutionary forces have also learned from the rich experiences and possess infinite advantages. And while it is not possible in a discussion here to attempt to formulate the detailed tactical plans for every changing situation, it is possible and necessary to emphasize both the importance and the character of their conscious intervention in the general process. Above all, that must mean that they project their revolutionary policy for the socialist solution.

While we have no text-books telling us how to make a revolution, the Marxist method is available. It has stood the tests in the laboratory of history. The October Revolution, the greatest of them all, brought its verification, and much of it is available in written and amply documented form. We should not attempt to present the conditions of October as analogous to present conditions; yet we must by all means learn from its experiences.

We can afford to learn especially from Lenin in the "rearming of the party." Trotsky relates in his *History of the Russian Revolution* how prior to Lenin's return the whole party leadership feared to go beyond the boundaries of the democratic republic. He says: "The proletariat did not seize the power in February because the Bolshevik Party was not equal to its objective task, and could not prevent the compromisers from expropriating the popular masses politically for the benefit of the bourgeoisie."

LENIN'S COURSE

And then Lenin arrived, and the "History" relates: "He swept aside legislative agrarian reform," complains Sukhanov, "along with the rest of the policies of the Soviet. He spoke for an organized seizure of the land by the peasants, not anticipating . . . any governmental power at all."

"We don't need any parliamentary republic. We don't need any bourgeois democracy. We don't need any government except the Soviet of workers', soldiers', and farmhands', deputies!"

The next day Lenin presented his famous "Theses of April 4," which expressed, says Trotsky, in simple words comprehensible to all:

"The republic which has issued from the February revolution is not our republic, and the war it is now waging is not our war. The task of the Bolsheviks is to overthrow the imperialist government. But this government rests upon the support of the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who in turn are supported by the trustfulness of the masses of the people. We are in the minority. In these circumstances there can be no talk of violence from our side. We must teach the masses not to trust the compromisers and defensists. 'We must patiently explain.' The success of this policy, dictated by the whole existing situation, is assured and it will bring us to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and so beyond the boundaries of the bourgeois regime. We will break absolutely with capital, publish its secret treaties, and summon the workers of the whole world to cast loose from the bourgeoisie and put an end to the war. We are beginning the international revolution. Only its success will confirm our success, and guarantee a transition to the socialist regime."

All accounts from these fateful days of rearming of the Bolshevik Party agree that Lenin's theses, when presented, were greeted as ultra-leftist even among the leading Bolsheviks. And to the democrats, says Trotsky, it appeared fantastic: "The Bolsheviks are a tiny minority in the Soviet, and Lenin dreams of seizing the power: isn't that pure adventurism?"

Pravda, under the editorship of Stalin and Kamenev, said four days later :

"As for the general scheme of Comrade Lenin, it seems to us unacceptable in that it starts from the assumption that the bourgeois democratic revolution is ended, and counts upon an immediate transformation of this revolution into a socialist revolution."

History nevertheless proved Lenin correct. Due to his insistence the

Bolshevik Party became armed theoretically for its struggle with the compromisers. He was concerned primarily about the party's understanding its basic objective task, namely: to lead the struggle directly toward workers' power and the socialist system. He was concerned equally about making it clear to the masses that the party understood this as its basic task and was determined to strive for its realization. This is one great lesson for us to learn from Lenin.

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TACTICAL PROBLEMS OF THE EUROPEAN MOVEMENT

1—THE STRUGGLE FOR THE REPUBLIC IN ITALY AND BELGIUM

By FELIX MORROW (U.S.A.)

For two years there has been a dispute in the Socialist Workers Party concerning problems of the European revolution. The position of the S.W.P. majority was last stated comprehensively by Wm. Simmons in his "Trotskyist Tasks in Europe" in the July *Fourth International*. His article is very useful because it serves to make clear what still remains in dispute.

In particular, it makes clear that we remain in disagreement on the correctness and importance of democratic demands in general and two in particular: the republic in Italy and Belgium; the Constituent Assembly in Italy, France, Belgium and Holland. We of the minority insist that these

demands have been and continue to be of primary importance. Comrade Simmons, as we shall see, denies that.

ONE QUESTION REMOVED FROM DISPUTE

Originally our disagreement on this question flowed from our differing estimates of the present stage of political consciousness of the European proletariat. As early as 1943, we predicted the emergence from underground of the traditional workers' parties as the principal leadership of the masses; that on the one hand this fact would be the result of the revival of democratic illusions during the war; that on the other hand these parties

would foster these illusions, teaching the masses that their needs can be satisfied within the framework of the bourgeois-democratic state; that this situation dictated to the parties of the Fourth International an emphasis on democratic demands as the lever with which to reach the masses and arouse them to struggle for evermore thoroughgoing demands.

The S.W.P. majority, on the contrary, either denied the existence of these democratic illusions or, if it granted them for a moment, it was only to predict their speedy disappearance because of the catastrophic economic situation. As crushing proof they quoted Trotsky's 1940 statement that "Today almost nothing remains of the democratic and pacifist illusions" and refused to understand that the further development of the war since 1940 had revived these illusions: the revival of national feeling under the Nazi occupation, the rise of a generation without experience of bourgeois democracy (not only in Italy, Germany and Eastern Europe, but also in the five years of Nazi occupation in Western Europe), the acute dependence on America for food and economic aid, etc.

Typical of the original position of the S.W.P. majority was this statement of its spokesman, E. R. Frank:

"I have read and heard it bruted about that there is going to be a tremendous revival of democratic illusions among the masses because the younger generation has not gone through the school of parliamentarism, that it must first go through this 'body of experience' until it is able to shed democratic illusions, what inability to understand the meaning of events and to sense the mood, the aspirations, the feelings of the masses!" (December, 1944, *Fourth International*, p. 378).

And in an editorial condemning the minority, the majority stated:

"The convention rejected Morrow's contention concerning the prospects

of bourgeois democracy in Europe. Developments since the downfall of Mussolini have reinforced the party's prognosis that the program of Anglo-American imperialism is so reactionary that the initial illusions of the masses concerning the intentions and plans of the Allied occupying authorities are swiftly dispelled by their own experiences. In other words, the crisis in Europe is so catastrophic in nature that bourgeois democratic illusions can find no fertile soil. This is further attested to by the recent events in France, Italy, Belgium and Greece." (*Ibid.*, p. 559).

The majority deduced the impossibility of democratic illusions from the economic situation. It was thus guilty of a false theory of the relation between economics and politics, deducing automatic political consequences from the economic situation. The minority, on the other hand, insisted that the (political) democratic illusions could disappear only as the result of a *political* experience of the masses with bourgeois democracy.

Now, at long last, the minority position is conceded by Simmons, who writes:

"Among the important factors emerging from European developments, as listed by Morrow, are the following: 'the revival of democratic illusions among considerable sections of the masses' because . . . 'new generations have grown up without any experience of bourgeois democracy and without active participation in political life.' This is undeniably so. He estimates that 'these masses may well have to go through a certain body of experiences before they will understand that their needs cannot be satisfied within the framework of the democratic republic.' No doubt this is true, although the experiences may be gained in a concentrated form and within a brief period. Comrade Morrow also concluded from Italian experiences so far that 'the tradi-

tional workers' parties, as well as 'centrist' and liberal-democratic parties will emerge throughout Europe as the principal parties of the first period after collapse of the Nazis and their collaborators. This is already the case in a number of European countries. It cannot yet be said for Germany, the most decisive sector of the European revolution, although, to a much more limited extent, it may also come true there.

"Still there is no need, or desire, on my part to quarrel with these general formulations cited in the above paragraph. . . .

"In this situation the parties of the Fourth International, whether small or large, must go with the masses through this body of experiences. . . . In conformity with the needs of each situation they must advance, and fight for, democratic demands. . . ."

We of the minority can only welcome this statement, which removes an issue hotly disputed since October, 1943.

BUT THE DISPUTE CONTINUES ANEW

Unfortunately, however Comrade Simmons and those he speaks for fail to understand the logical conclusions which follow from recognizing the existence of democratic illusions.

If the masses have democratic illusions, what follows? How shall we prove to the masses that the needs cannot be satisfied within the framework of the bourgeois-democratic state?

This is of course not a new problem, and our answer is the Leninist answer: The more complete democracy we can win, the more it will become clear to the workers that it is not their lack of liberties, but capitalism itself which is the cause of their suffering. In the fight for the most complete democracy, the Bolsheviks can demonstrate to the workers that

it is the revolutionists and not the reformists who are the most devoted fighters for the needs of the people.

Against this approach, the S.W.P. majority interposes an objection which, if true, would dictate an entirely different attitude toward democratic demands. The objection is that reformists also advance democratic demands and that therefore the advancing of democratic demands cannot distinguish the revolutionists from the reformists in the eyes of the workers.

Simmons states this objection as follows:

"In Northern Italy the militant partisan movement, evidently under the leadership of Stalinist, Social Democrats and Left wing liberals, demand the republic. . . . Even the Belgian Social Democrats have given feeble voice to such a demand. In France and elsewhere demands have been made by these parties for a constituent assembly, always taking care, of course, that actual measures are delayed as much as possible. . . .

"The mere advancing of democratic demands will not serve in itself to distinguish the Fourth Internationalists from the position of these parties. It is important therefore to recognize the fact that democratic demands are for us only incidental and episodic in the independent movement of the proletariat; and they are now especially so in view of the utter capitalist collapse." (My italics.)

From this assertion of the impossibility of distinguishing ourselves from the reformists on the plane of democratic demands, Simmons quite logically draws a very sharp distinction between my approach and his:

"How are the revolutionists to win out in this crucial conflict for leadership? By emphasizing and underlining the role of democratic demands? No! Our conclusion must be the exact opposite to that drawn by Morrow. This conclusion must proceed from the idea that the

parties of the Fourth International possess the enormous advantage of a revolutionary program. This is the main program which they must bring forward now. Therefore, if in this main struggle anything is to be especially emphasized and underlined, it is the revolutionary content of this program. They must emphasize the socialist way out of the capitalist collapse in clear and precise revolutionary slogans. *In fact they must put forward as their most pressing demand the expropriation of the capitalists and the socialization of the means of production.*" (My italics.)

The issue, then, is clear: we of the minority assert the tremendous importance of such democratic demands as the republic and the constituent assembly precisely from the point of view of enabling the revolutionary party to find its way to the masses. On the other hand Comrade Simmons asserts that the revolutionary party cannot distinguish itself from the reformists on the plane of democratic demands and that therefore the revolutionists must make "their most pressing demand" the expropriation of capitalism. While Comrade Simmons doesn't make it clear, we shall see that in actual practice his position means either opposing or ignoring the slogans of the republic and the constituent assembly.

Unlike the earlier period of this dispute when we were limited to theoretical considerations, we now argue in terms of the experience of our comrades and the proletariat since the expulsion of the Nazis from Western Europe. Even now we have only fragmentary information from our comrades, but it is enough to settle this dispute.

THE LEOPOLD CRISIS IN BELGIUM

Very early in the Leopold crisis, and before we were able to hear it from

our Belgian comrades, the suggestion arose how to treat the events in *The Militant* and *Fourth International*. Here was an acid test of the difference in approach between us and the S.W.P. majority for whom Comrade Simmons speaks.

At the Political Committee meeting of June 21, I introduced the following motion:

"That in our analysis of the Belgian working class struggle against the return of King Leopold, we condemn the Socialist and Communist parties for having failed to take the following steps:

"1. Expulsion from the government of the bourgeois ministers who are favourable to Leopold's return. Thereby the government would be transformed into a Socialist-Communist government.

"2. Arrest of the royal family, including the Regent and other reactionaries and industrialists who are plotting with Leopold for his return.

"3. Immediate proclamation of the democratic republic.

"4. Authorization of election of soldiers' committees by the Belgian regiments.

"5. Arming of the workers. Control of production by elected factory committees to assure continued production for the needs of the workers."

My motivation for this motion, briefly, was that the problem of problems for the Trotskyist movement is to tear away the masses from the Socialist and Communist parties. This is not to be done by propaganda for the virtues of socialism, of which the socialist-minded proletariat of Belgium is well aware, nor by equally abstract propaganda for the proletarian revolution, which the Communist party workers and many of the Socialist party workers believe their parties stand for. Our task is to contrast what their parties obviously should do with what their parties actually do in the concrete critical situations which

arise. One such situation was the attempt of Leopold to return; the Socialist and Communist parties opposed his return but advocated retention of the monarchy. To those workers who follow the Socialist and Communist parties, we say: "Your parties refuse even to break with the monarchy; at a moment when it is clear they could have gotten rid of it once for all; when such parties will not even proclaim a republic when it can be done, how can you expect them to lead you to socialism?"

The Political Committee majority rejected my motion, and adopted one as follows:

"That in exposing the role of the Social Democrats and their sham fight against Leopold, we base ourselves on the program of the Belgian comrades and especially emphasize the demand for the withdrawal of the Allied troops."

The "program of the Belgian comrades" to which this motion refers was one issued months before: *it had in it no reference to the question of the monarchy.*

The quest at issue was the monarchy. That was what the Belgian crisis was about, and that was what my motion was about. My answer was the republic. The Political Committee rejected my motion and their own gave no answer to the question at issue.

"Let us hope," I wrote at the time, "that our Belgian comrades didn't also look up a program of action written at a different time and with other situations in view. Let us hope that our Belgian comrades answered the actual question with which life had confronted them. If they did so, however, they followed a very different method than our Political Committee."

My hope in the Belgian comrades proved justified. Four days after the above motions, the Socialist and Communist parties called a mass demonstration in the industrial centre of Charleroi, to demand Leopold's abdication, i.e. continuation of the monarchy in the form of the regency of

Leopold's brother. Over 10,000 workers came out in spite of the tepid character of the demand.

Our comrades entered the demonstration with their own slogans and were able to report a signal success: "From the beginning, the slogans launched by our comrades of Charleroi: 'Leopold to Prison,' 'Down with the monarchy,' 'For the republic,' were taken up by the overwhelming majority of the demonstrators," reports the July 14 issue of *La Lutte Ouvrière*, organ of our comrades, the Revolutionary Communist Party of Belgium. This success was followed by similar responses to the leaflets and press of our comrades.

In his eagerness to demonstrate that the mere advancing of democratic demands will not serve to distinguish revolutionists from reformists, Simmons says the Belgian Labour Party gave "feeble voice" to the demand for a republic. Actually, however, it did nothing of the sort. Together with the Communist Party, it opposed the return of Leopold but accepted the continuance of the monarchy. What is true is that the Labour Party has inscribed traditionally in its program the slogan of the republic. This fact, however, far from blurring the difference between the reformists and the revolutionists, opened to our comrades a tremendous opportunity for successful agitation among the Labour Party members, calling upon them to force their leaders to carry out the republican plank of the Labour Party's own platform.

In their agitation in the Leopold crisis, our comrades did not of course limit themselves to the slogan of the republic. Their agitation followed the same method as my motion: expulsion of the bourgeois ministers; arrest of reactionaries; arming of the workers; workers' control of production, etc. This is the method of democratic and transitional demands—both woven together.

Instead of my proposal for factory and soldiers' committees—an abstract proposal—the Belgian comrades made

a concrete proposal, based on (what I had not known) the existence of Committees of Vigilance which date from the Nazi occupation and which are now merely top committees of the Labour, Communist and Liberal parties. Our comrades proposed to enlarge the committees transforming them from committees of the "democratic alliance" into really popular organs by expelling the (bourgeois) liberals and by sending into the committees democratically-elected delegates of the workers in the factories and neighbourhoods. These committees would take charge of the fight for the republic, arrest the officers who are preparing a royalist dictatorship, organize the workers' militias, etc.

What are such committees? They are soviets. Note well, however, that they are to be launched under the slogan of the struggle for the republic. In other words, at this stage it is the democratic demand for the republic which enables our comrades to popularize the idea of soviets. It is too often forgotten that soviets begin as the organs of the united front of the proletariat specifically created to struggle for a commonly-accepted demand. Far from hampering our propaganda for soviets, it is precisely the fact that the Belgian Labour Party is on record for a republic which facilitated the demand of our comrades for the mass committees required to fight for it.

Comrade Warde (who of course voted against the slogan of the republic for Belgium) now seeks to find a "profound" distinction between the slogan as used by our Belgian comrades and as used by Morrow*: for the Belgian comrades he says, it is "merely a point of departure." And I, presumably, want the republic to remain. . . . Yes, in Belgium and in Italy, too, the slogan of the republic is merely a point of departure. But without it one cannot today depart in

the direction of soviets. And there is the whole point.

Some comrades try to make a profound distinction between calling for a republic and calling for a democratic (i.e. bourgeois) republic, the implication being that our Belgian comrades are in reality calling for a socialist republic when they speak of republic. What is true, of course, is that the day the reformists proclaim the (bourgeois) republic, we shall condemn the content they give it as being a betrayal of the workers' aspirations for a better life. In this sense, the demand for the republic is an algebraic formula, the revolutionist giving it a very different content than that given it by the reformist: for the revolutionist proclamation of the republic is a step forward in the struggle for socialism, whereas for the reformist the republic is an end in itself. But this does not change the *democratic* character of the demand for the republic; it is not a socialist demand; it does not mean that we are proposing to replace the monarchy by soviet power, for in the latter case we would not be calling for the republic, but for the soviet republic. The whole point of the present situation in Belgium and Italy is precisely the untimeliness of the slogan of the soviet republic.

THE REPUBLICAN QUESTION IN ITALY

In the case of Italy, too, the Political Committee of the S.W.P. has refused to endorse the slogan of the republic, even though it is the programme of our Italian comrades.

Comrade Simmons argues: "In Northern Italy the militant partisan movement, evidently under the leadership of Stalinists, Social Democrats and Left wing Liberals demand the republic." This is one of his arguments to prove that "The mere advancing of democratic demands will not serve

* *The Belgian party leadership writes in a letter of September 10: "As you could see from our paper and also from our leaflets, we had a firm stand during*

the King's crisis the last months, more in accordance with the Morrow resolution than with the Stein (Political Committee) resolution."

in itself to distinguish the Fourth Internationalists from the position of these parties."

Even in terms of his own argument, Simmons fails to say that for two years after the fall of Mussolini, the Communist Party, the leading party of the workers, *opposed* the abolition of the monarchy. Wasn't this a perfect opportunity for the Trotskyists to hammer away in favour of the slogan of the republic, gaining prestige among the workers especially after the "left" turn of the Stalinists showed that the Trotskyists were right all the time?

That, however, is only one side of the question. Even more important is it to understand that official endorsement of a slogan by the Social Democrats and the Stalinists in no way detracts from the importance of the slogan for us. Under the pressure of the workers Togliatti and Nenni are giving lip-service to the slogan of the republic. Good! Our task then becomes to demonstrate—and a wealth of material is available—that they have done nothing to get rid of the monarchy since the fall of Mussolini, and that meanwhile the monarchist generals are building an army for use against the proletariat.

If we could not distinguish ourselves from the reformists when they raise identical or similar slogans to ours, then we would be hard-put to find anything to agitate about. Not even Simmons' proposal that our "most pressing demand" must be "the expropriation of the capitalists and the socialization of the means of production" is exempt from reformist imitation. For, as he himself admits (p. 116) "demands have been made for a certain degree of nationalization" by the reformist parties. More precisely, the Communist Party in Italy and France, for one example, stands for nationalization of the banks and all key industries. "The mere advancing of democratic demands will not serve in itself to distinguish the Fourth Internationalists from the position of these (reformist) parties," complains Simmons, but the same

could be said for many of our socialist demands. It should be obvious that something is wrong with Simmons' approach.

Trotsky answered a Spanish Simmons on just this point in 1931 when the reformist Caballero endorsed workers' control of production:

"... to renounce workers' control merely because the reformists are for it—in words—would be an enormous stupidity. On the contrary, it is precisely for this reason that we should seize upon this slogan all the more eagerly and compel the reformist workers to put it into practice by means of a united front with us; and on the basis of this experience to push them into opposition to Caballero and other fakers.

"We succeeded in creating Soviets in Russia only because the demand for them was raised, together with us, by the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, although, to be sure, they had different aims in mind. We cannot create any Soviets in Spain precisely because neither the Socialists nor the syndicalists want Soviets. This means that the united front and the organizational unity of the majority of the working class cannot be created under this slogan.

"But here is Caballero himself, forced by the pressure of the masses, seizing upon the slogan of workers' control and thereby opening wide the doors for the united front policy and to forging an organization that embraces the working class. We must seize hold of this with both hands. Certainly Caballero will try to transform workers' control into the control of the capitalists over the workers. But that question already pertains to another domain, that of the relationship of forces within the working class." (*Fourth International*, October 1943, p. 319.) Certainly Togliatti and Nenni will try to transform the proclamation of the republic into the control of the capitalists over the workers. But that question will be settled by the relationship of forces within the working class

at that point. Meanwhile, however, our Italian comrades have to grasp with both hands Togliatti and Nenni's affirmations of the republic. The difference is that in calling for united front organs (soviets) for the republic we call for class struggle against the monarchy, whereas the reformists promise to remove it eventually by means of class collaboration. It is so difficult to make this distinction clear to the advanced workers?

Today's newspapers (October 14) report great mass meetings in Rome, Milan and other cities, demanding abolition of the monarchy and speedy elections to the Constituent Assembly. Of course the meetings are under control of the Communist and Socialist parties. According to the method of Simmons, their advancing of these demands negates the importance of these demands for our Italian comrades.

But note well that the bourgeois partners of the Communist and Socialist parties in the government write in opposition to the meetings. The *Liberale* condemns the sponsors of the meetings as lacking in good faith since they know perfectly well that the Constituent cannot be convened before next spring at the earliest. The *Populo* of the Christian Democrats argues that the Constituent cannot solve the economic problems which must come first. And so on. Here is an excellent opportunity for us! We say to the Socialist and Communist party members: Your leaders sit in one cabinet with the Christian Democrats and Liberals, where ostensibly all together are preparing the Constituent as soon as possible, so your leaders say. But when you workers demonstrate for the republic and the Constituent, the bourgeois ministers condemn your demonstrations, in reality condemn the purposes for which you are demonstrating. They are using their government posts to sabotage convocation of the Constituent which will abolish the monarchy! Down with the bourgeois ministers, drive them out of the government. For a government of the

workers' parties and the trade unions.

True, Comrade Simmons and his associates support the slogan of a government of the workers' parties in Italy. But do not support the slogan of the republic and therefore would be unable to agitate along the lines indicated above. For they don't understand that at this stage the slogan of the republic is an indispensable lever for advancing the slogan of a government of the workers' parties.

Another example: At the great mass meeting in Rome against the monarchy the Action Party leader Federico Comandini, himself frightened out of his wits at the extent to which his criminal policy has permitted the royalist forces to arm themselves, tries in turn to frighten the royalists with the warning that if they try to prevent the elections to the Constituent, then "the parties that organized the Rosselli, Matteoti and Garibaldi Brigades will not refrain from appealing directly to the working classes."

Our comrades must grab hold of Comandini's words with both hands. If the Comandinis, whose policy made it possible for the royalists to arm, have to admit so much, the truth must be even more serious. Sound the alarm! Workers, there may be no elections unless the working class prepares immediately to defend the elections against the royalists! When the workers had the Partisan Brigades, the royalists cowered in hiding, but when the workers gave up arms and disbanded the brigades, the royalists came out into the open. Let us speedily correct the mistake—Committees of Vigilance in every factory, and neighbourhood! The committees to prepare the electoral lists purging them of collaborators and fascists; to guarantee the holding of the elections against the royalists; to discuss the steps to be taken in order to assure a worker-peasant majority in the Constituent; a land programme for the peasants, a social programme for the workers, etc. Delegates from the Committees shall convene in Rome

simultaneously with the Constituent, in order to keep the local committees informed of how well or ill the Constituent is carrying out the wishes of the masses, what steps must be taken everywhere to enforce the decisions of the Constituent against the king, the landlords and capitalists, etc. In a word, Comandini's "left" gesture provides a perfect opportunity for revolutionary agitation for arming the workers and for soviets. But on one small condition: the revolutionary party must also support the slogan of the republic which is today in Italy the lever for the other slogans.

AN ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST ERROR

The masses want bread, not the republic. The Constituent Assembly will not feed us. Such were the arguments of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists, and today of the Bordighists in Italy. And at bottom it is the same ultra-left error which Comrade Simmons and his associates make. This becomes clear when, after perfunctorily conceding the need of democratic demands, he writes:

"On the other hand, revival of democratic illusions among considerable sections of the masses, due to lack of participation in political life of the younger generation, is not the only present phenomenon. Far more pressing for them is the very lack of the most meagre means of subsistence. Therefore, with all its weight this catastrophic crisis pushes the proletariat relentlessly on the road towards the revolutionary mass struggle for power."

Comrade Simmons here makes the usual ultra-leftist error of counterposing the republic and the Constituent Assembly to the hunger which impels the masses to demonstrate for the republic and the Constituent Assembly. True enough, the republic and the Constituent will not satisfy the hunger of the masses. But the understanding of this by the masses still lies in the future. Today the great masses believe the republic and

the Constituent will help them. It is necessary to disabuse the masses of these illusions, but a century of Marxism teaches us that doctrinal lectures is not the way. The way lies through the struggle for the republic and the Constituent, there is no other way. In his "revolutionary" assertion of another way, counterposing socialist demands to democratic demands, Comrade Simmons leaves the road of Marxism—and all this he does, if you please, in the name of orthodox Marxism!

I leave detailed consideration of the Constituent Assembly—today the most important problem of tactics which confronts our French comrades (and tomorrow our Italian comrades)—to another article. But the whole problem can be summarized in one question which I address to Comrade Simmons: Of what body, dear comrade, do you demand expropriation of the capitalists and socialization of the means of production? To limit oneself to saying that workers should do it is anarcho-syndicalism, it is necessary to demand socialization by a *state power*. Which? The non-existent soviets? But in that case you are merely making abstract propaganda for a future society. The essence of agitation, on the other hand, is to direct a demand to an *existing* address or to one which the masses are ready to create. They are not now ready to create soviet power, but they are already moving to establish or have already established the Constituent Assembly. Which means that today—and as long as the masses do not create soviets—the demand for socialization is addressed to the (bourgeois) Constituent Assembly. He who does not understand the necessity for this paradox of demanding socialism from a bourgeois body does not understand revolutionary tactics. This lack of understanding is expressed in the attitude of the S.W.P. majority toward the slogans of the republic and the Constituent Assembly.

Nov. 7, 1945.