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No. 8

1940

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EDITOR: EARL BROWDER

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## THE NATIONAL BETRAYAL OF THE FRENCH BOURGEOISIE

BY PIERRE VIDAL

**T**HE military and political collapse of France, the really unprecedented capitulation of the French bourgeoisie and its generals, can only be understood as the result of a monstrous process of decay. It would be wrong to trace this collapse solely to a disproportion of military strength or to particular traits of the French ruling class, the French bourgeoisie. This collapse was a quite unmistakable token of the position in which the capitalist world finds itself, an unmistakable token of the baneful contradictions in which capitalism is enmeshed.

The imperialists unleashed the war, which has so profoundly shaken the world system of imperialism, under conditions that had no precedent in history. They have taken refuge in this war to force a way out of this unparalleled crisis and must now face the fact that this war has plunged them only into a still more profound crisis of the imperialist world system.

In 1914 the antagonisms between the imperialist robbers almost completely overshadowed the class contradictions between the capitalists

and the proletariat. When the imperialists launched upon the first World War they did not fear the proletariat nor the socialist revolution. This situation, however, changed fundamentally in 1917. By reason of the victorious October Socialist Revolution and the rapidly developing revolutionary movement in all countries, the antagonism between the capitalists and the proletariat came more and more to the fore. The groups of imperialist powers fighting for world domination were facing a new force, the revolutionary working class that was organizing internationally, and hence the bourgeoisie of all countries began to tremble for fear that this new force might discomfit its military power and terminate the war by a victory of the working people over the capitalist exploiters and oppressors who are responsible for its outbreak. The capitalists have never since got rid of this fear.

Since the first imperialist war all contradictions within the imperialist world system have been intensified enormously. This applies both to the contradiction among the imperialist powers, primarily the con-

tradition between the "sated" and the "unsated" imperialists, and to the contradictions between the imperialist oppressors and the oppressed peoples in the colonies, the dependent peoples in China and other countries; and finally also to the decisive contradiction between the exploited working class and the exploiting capitalists.

The impoverishment of increasing numbers of the people through grave economic crises, through the rapidly increasing concentration of capital, on the one hand, and the historic victories of socialism in the Soviet Union, on the other, have constantly increased the fear of the bourgeoisie of a day of judgment by the working people and the oppressed nations over the ruling class which has reached the end of its tether, and have ruthlessly disclosed the utter rottenness of the capitalist system.

Involved in all these contradictions, the bourgeoisie has become more and more ruthless, reactionary, terrorist and bellicose, while at the same time it has shown increasing readiness to capitulate in particularly critical situations before an external enemy rather than give the popular forces free rein and let the working people save the nation. Behind the feverish reeling back and forth of the capitalist class doomed to destruction, there could always be seen a desperate attempt to find a solution for an insoluble problem: how to unite all imperialist powers against the might of socialism, and at the same time to wrest the spoils away from one's imperialist rivals, to triumph over

them in the struggle for world supremacy.

Military aggression and capitulationism, closely intertwined, the two sides of one medal, are the outstanding features of the bourgeoisie whose attempts to escape the contradictions of moribund capitalism are as futile as was the effort of Laocoon to free himself from the toils of the giant snakes that were crushing him; the more violently he struggled the more strangling was their hold. In this situation the bourgeoisie is prepared to betray its own nation without compunction, if it may expect thus to be able to keep the people better in check; nor will it hesitate to deliver the country, which it itself had thrust into the maelstrom of war, to the tender mercies of its imperialist opponent rather than trust its own people.

This practice of national betrayal by the bourgeoisie has become notorious since 1917: When the Russian peoples decided to determine their own destinies, when the working class placed itself at their head, the Russian bourgeoisie overnight deserted to the imperialists against whom it had led Russia into war. The leading circles of the Spanish bourgeoisie called foreign armies into the land and handed Spain over to foreign imperialists when the people under the leadership of the working class were defending the independence of the country.

The moment that the capitalists of any country seriously begin to fear that their own adventurous policy might reverse the relationship of social forces in their coun-

try, they are ready to seek the protection of the very imperialists against whom they have been waging war, against whom they endeavored to work up all the national passions of the people. It is a characteristic fact that members of the House of Lords, representatives of the English big bourgeoisie, publicly approved and defended France's capitulation. Viscount Elibank gave Petain, Laval and the other capitulationists a splendid testimonial. He argued that at the present moment they had gone over to the other side to save their possessions from the Communists.\* It is hardly possible to be more frank about making a virtue of capitulationism, the betrayal of the nation by the bourgeoisie, than by declaring that it is but natural for the bourgeoisie to act in this way in its intensified struggle against the proletariat, against the working people that have awakened to political consciousness. The propounder of this principle, the honorable Viscount Elibank, is, of course, a partisan of Chamberlain.

As a matter of fact the French bourgeoisie evacuated Paris and declared the capital an open city, unconditionally went over to the other side, at the very moment when the people of Paris demanded arms and the establishment of a truly national popular government, when the people showed that it was determined to take the defense of the country into its own hands. Not military defeat but the rumblings of a decided change in the rela-

tionship of social forces, as the honorable Viscount Elibank has emphasized, was the true reason for the capitulation, for the open passage of the French bourgeoisie to the other side. This capitulation was not the first and will not be the last act of national betrayal that a bourgeoisie will perpetrate when capitalism is in its death agony.

\* \* \*

The French bourgeoisie has given the peoples an example of what any bourgeoisie is capable of doing when it has come to such a pass that it expects a reversal in the relationship of social forces. There are special reasons why the French bourgeoisie started the ball rolling, so to speak, in the present unprecedented crisis of the capitalist world, why it got into such difficulties sooner than the bourgeoisie of any other country. One of the reasons was that after the Versailles Treaty French imperialism was "surfeited," to a certain extent, that it had arrogantly assumed a position in the world to maintain which its strength was insufficient, that therefore what it feared most was change, movement, regrouping, and that it had thus become congealed in timorous, narrow-minded conservatism.

Another reason was that, thanks to the strong democratic traditions and determined resistance of the brave liberty-loving French working class after the storm of the world economic crisis, the French bourgeoisie did not succeed in establishing an open terrorist dictatorship of finance capital. Partly

\* Statement made in the House of Lords on July 11, 1940.

responsible was also the fact that after the outbreak of the war the French bourgeoisie, by its campaign of incitement against the Land of Socialism, quickly opened the eyes of the working people and made them realize the thoroughly reactionary character of the war; the fact that the French bourgeoisie overestimated the preparedness of other countries, that it was convinced that others would relieve it of the chief burdens of the war, that these others were left in the lurch by it, in case after case, that it dug itself in behind the Maginot line and permitted its adversary to overrun one country after another.

Yet other reasons may be added: that between France and England there were always antagonisms that made themselves felt in all important political and military questions, and finally that the Third Republic, which was born as the result of a national betrayal by the bourgeoisie and was erected on the graves of the Communards, particularly favored the parasitic nature of the French bourgeoisie.

The parasitic features of the French bourgeoisie have steadily become more pronounced. This bourgeoisie has become accustomed to receive a great part of its profits from the despoliation of its colonies. An increasing section of the big and small capitalists became replete and idle bondholders (*rentiers*) whose ideal it was to live carefree and in comfort at the expense of the colonial slaves who would drudge and starve for them. They were wont to devote themselves entirely to an unruffled ex-

istence without exertion or tribulations. The enormous super-profits pouring into the "mother country" from the colonies, and the increasing putrefaction of this parasitic system gave rise to a ramified system of unbelievable corruption and venality.

The whole of upper society was honeycombed with incomes of questionable origin. A state of affairs in which everyone was dickering with everyone else proved the best soil for the machinations of unscrupulous lawyers and journalists who everywhere found profitable fields for their parasitic operations. They viewed politics as a sphere in which they could demonstrate their usefulness to their masters and ensnare new moneybags and cajole them to join their clientele. Rapid changes of party adherence and of political "convictions" were nothing unusual in such a milieu.

A predominance of parasites batten on colonial super-profits is not conducive to technical progress, as Lenin already stated; its effect on the contrary is retrogressive, reactionary and tends to check all progress. True, France had a great modern industry, still it did not keep pace with the rapid technical development of other countries; it progressed technically far less rapidly than other countries. The widespread system of living on interest and dividends, with the narrow horizon and lack of enterprise which this begets, facilitated the betrayal by the leading circles of the French bourgeoisie of the cause of the French nation. Again and again the French bourgeoisie suc-

ceeded in making use of the longing for peace inherent in all peoples, and also of the particular need of the French *rentiers* for domestic tranquillity, to palm off its policy as a policy of "peace and security," and to represent the growing weakness of France as increasing "safety" for the country.

Moreover it was of great importance for this bourgeoisie that on the basis of a thoroughly parasitic capitalism there should develop an absolutely corrupt Socialist leadership. Not only was it customary in France for ambitious young people, particularly young lawyers, to join the working class movement, and then go over to the bourgeoisie at the first opportune moment, but it was also a fact that Socialists who, like Leon Blum, Paul Faure and others, did not leave the Socialist Party, pursued in absolutely shameless fashion the policy of "their" bourgeoisie. Of course this did not make them different from the Social-Democratic leaders of other countries, but the Socialist members of parliament in France knew even better than their colleagues in other countries how to prevent the workers from controlling their parliamentary activities, how to engage in parliamentary horse trading and cut a figure in fashionable salons. The equanimity with which Leon Blum cultivated his friendships with monarchist duchesses, dined and wined as a matter of course with the most reactionary financiers and nonchalantly mingled with the "upper ten thousand" was not a common thing even for a Socialist leader. In this "smart

set" of cowardly and corrupt Socialist leaders who had become estranged from the people, the French bourgeoisie found a loyal accomplice in its every act of treason and abomination.

\* \* \*

The revolutionization of the working class and of great masses of the people caused by the quite apparent bankruptcy of capitalism on the one hand and the victories of socialism in the Soviet Union on the other, and the increasing determination of the workers and all toilers to offer resistance to reaction and aggression opened up new and great perspectives in France in 1934-1935. During this period a section of the French bourgeoisie drew nearer to the Soviet Union in its foreign policy. In France itself the working class, under the leadership of the Communists, with revolutionary fervor checked the onmarch of the reactionaries. A powerful movement of the people against war and reaction developed and compelled the leaders of the Radical Socialists and the Socialists to heed the will of the masses and officially bring to fruition the aspirations of the working people for unity by establishing a *people's front*. The idea of democracy received a new content, was given added power of attraction. A fresh breeze seemed to blow, heralding a new era of progress, of peace and of the strengthening of the power of the people. The possibility was there that France of the people's front would play an important role on a new basis, that it would exert



great power of attraction over the forces of democracy and of peace in Europe. France appeared before the nations in a new light, and the *Marseillaise* which had long been a favorite parade tune of the reactionaries regained some of its ancient glory and fire.

The people's front movement and the bold yet prudent policy of the Communists instilled new life and new significance into the idea of democracy. A renovation of France, brought about under the leadership of the Communist Party by drawing on the inherent strength of the people, was in preparation; a France of the people and not a France of the two hundred families loomed on the horizon as a possible way out of the threatening danger of war. There were two alternatives: either a strong and secure France under the leadership of the workers, the toiling masses; or a weak and torn France that was sliding into war, under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. For the bourgeoisie and its Social-Democratic lackeys only the second alternative existed. They laid the axe to the roots of France to prevent the tree from flowering once more under the tender care of the people.

No sooner had the pact of the people's front been signed when treason stalked the land. On the one hand the capitalists commenced a systematic sabotage and dislocation of the national economy, proceeded to transfer their capital abroad, frustrate the building of aircraft, etc. This did not, however, prevent the reactionary forces from laying the blame for all these diffi-

culties, which they themselves had brought about, at the door of the people's front, so as to be able to accuse the popular front of weakening France and driving it to ruin.

The Socialist leaders, on their part, began to undermine the people's front from within, to prevent a close union of the workers and all other toilers, and to counteract the class unity of the proletariat which was in the making. While the avowed reformists opposed all action by the masses, called the powerful strike movement which followed the great election victory of the parties allied in the people's front a "stab in the back of the Blum Government," and preached observance of law and order, the overt and covert Trotskyites in the Socialist Party foamed at the mouth, gushing forth their rabid "radical" phrases. Their provocative demands were intended to discredit the people's front and to create a condition that would make it possible for the capitalists to say: "This cannot go on. This path leads France to ruin." The pact between the working class and the peasantry was to be frustrated through the capitalists' deliberate disorganization of the country's economic life and through the general increase in prices which they effected by every means in their power.

The policy of the reformist trade union leaders was to perpetuate the split in the working class and block the unification of the proletariat. This became particularly clear in the general strike pro-

claimed by the C.G.T.\* in November of 1938. The reformist trade union leaders sabotaged all serious preparations for the general strike and gave the Government the opportunity, through their vociferations and failure to act promptly, of mobilizing all the forces of the executive branch of the Government for the delivery of a serious blow to the working class movement. It was solely due to the strength of the proletariat, underestimated by the C.G.T. leaders, and the prudence and determination of the Communist Party that this general strike did not become a glaring defeat of the working class.

This general strike belongs really to a later stage of the development, for the first stage had reached its end during the notorious "pause" which Leon Blum had decreed while prime minister. With this "pause" commenced a steady decline: The achievements of labor were abrogated one by one, the disorganization of industry by the capitalists was systematically continued, the practical demands of the people's front program were set aside by the Socialists elected on the basis of this program and replaced by impracticable "Socialist" demands put up by a clique of Social-Democratic leaders. The struggle against the Communists became more and more the chief occupation of such politicians as Daladier, Blum, etc., who had solemnly sworn to uphold the program of the people's front. The

capitalists praised to the sky this anti-Communist policy which became more manifest with every day. They were determined completely to abolish the people's front and all gains achieved under it, and to establish, if needs be, on the ruins of France a regime of untrammelled reaction. They knew only too well that if they succeeded in smashing the Communist Party, the organizer of the people's front, it would not require much exertion to settle with the people's front as a whole.

This undermining, from within, of the people's front, the only force capable of uniting the French nation and of safeguarding France against war with all its consequences, culminated in and was outdone by the treasonable practices of the French bourgeoisie and its Social-Democratic lackeys in the sphere of foreign policy. To the French laboring masses and the French nation as a whole the victory of the Spanish people's front was a question of vital importance. The defeat of the Spanish people's republic was not only a calamity for all peoples that wanted peace, it was particularly calamitous for the people of France. It was the bounden duty of every truly national government of France to support the struggle for freedom of the Spanish people and this was especially so in the case of a government elected by the people's front, a government which had taken a stand, not only in favor of France, but also for peace and democracy. But the policy pursued by the government of Blum and Daladier dug the grave of the Spanish people's

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\* Confederation Generale du Travail (The General Confederation of Labor).

republic. Leon Blum was the inventor of the infamous policy of non-intervention which was directed against the Spanish people. The defeat of the struggle for liberation of the Spanish people, attributable to the policy of non-intervention, was a heavy blow not only to the French people's front but also to France. The descent now continued rapidly: from the non-intervention committee in London to the Munich agreement, to the sacrifice of France's allies in central Europe, to the attempt, as criminal as it was insane, to goad Germany into a war against the Soviet Union. Today the French bourgeoisie behaves as if it had become the innocent victim of the English bourgeoisie, as if it had been overtaken by the present catastrophe entirely unawares; but in actual fact it had been a most active participant in the hatching of Chamberlain's war plots, and in the launching of the war.

\* \* \*

Never was war brought on more recklessly or cynically. The French bourgeoisie considered the war a long-desired opportunity of pouncing with all its might upon the Communist Party, of quelling the working class, settling accounts with the toiling masses at the "home front" and of wreaking vengeance without let or hindrance for the period of the people's front, for the heart pangs it had to endure at the thought that the France of the two hundred families might be transformed into a strong, liberty-loving France of the people.

When the war became a reality, the ruling classes of France went to war against their own people. They waged this war with indefatigable energy; for such a war and only for such a war had they prepared themselves. Reports of victories on the "home front" kept piling up. The Communist press and the Communist Party were prohibited, the Communist trade union members expelled from their locals and handed over to the police, the Communist deputies, mayors and municipal councillors elected by the people were arbitrarily deposed and thrown into jail; scores, hundreds and thousands who raised their voices for peace and against the reactionary regime were prosecuted, persecuted, hailed into court; the families of many soldiers at the front were deprived of their work, arrested and tried by the tribunals of French class justice.

The basest schemes were devised and put into operation to afflict and torment the people and crush their stamina in order to disorganize France and break its power of resistance. Highly qualified workers were taken out of munitions works and sent to the front or put behind lock and key just because they were Communists or class-conscious trade union members. The workers of war plants became embittered and indignant at the countless arbitrary acts of every description, the chicanery and humiliations which they had to endure, while the capitalists derided the laws of military necessity and only thought of their own aggrandisement. And while the infuriated ruling classes with the

unconditional support of the leaders of the Social-Democratic movement rained blows upon the working people, well-known members of the Fifth Column, notorious traitors who sold France for a few coppers, remained completely unmolested and were allowed to consummate their treason with impunity in their business and editorial offices and at their civil and military posts.

While Germany was preparing the decisive blow against France, the ruling circles of France and their Social-Democratic servitors were diligently engaged in diverting the attention of the nation from the imminent stupendous danger, and in unleashing a furious campaign in favor of war against the Soviet Union. The war which the British and French imperialists had incited in Finland now occupied the center of the stage. Mountains of mendacious and slanderous accusations were hurled by the ruling classes and their Social-Democratic henchmen against the Land of Socialism. The French war industry was set to work for the Finnish White Guards, an expeditionary force was being prepared and military intervention was being contemplated at the Southern frontier of the U.S.S.R. Thus the eight months which passed between the outbreak of the war and the German offensive on the West were not made use of by the French bourgeoisie to prepare France for the great military collision. On the contrary, these eight months were squandered by the French bourgeoisie which in the interim waged

merciless war against its own people, launched out upon adventurous crusades against socialism and systematically dislocated and undermined the country.

The French bourgeoisie could not help knowing that the whole system of measures it had taken were frightfully enervating France, that they were jeopardizing the defense of the country not only materially but also morally, that it was not concentrating the forces of the nation but methodically dividing them and breaking them up into bits, that it was spreading everywhere the spirit of discontent and indifference, disaffection and despair. It could not help knowing that it was gambling with the future of France, that its entire policy was bound to end in a national catastrophe. Even if this or that reactionary politician entertained the hope, while thus leading France to disaster, that the fortifications of steel and concrete would compensate for the destruction of the country's moral forces, or that some new miracle of the Marne would put a sudden stop to the offensive of the enemy and that somehow they would muddle through, it is impossible that the bourgeoisie as a class should have deceived itself with such illusions. The bourgeoisie as a class deliberately weakened France because it feared the strength of the people more than any military defeat, than any national catastrophe. When it had to choose between the egoistic interests of the ruling class and the vital interests of the nation as a whole, it decided forthwith in favor of the interests of its class and

against the interests of the nation.

\* \* \*

The doom of the Third Republic was sealed by the treason of the bourgeoisie as a class. The military mistakes of the conservative army leadership with its petrified views, its overestimation of lines of fortification and its underestimation of the new weapons of attack, its adherence to traditional ideas which had been outmoded by modern war technique were not the decisive factor. They contributed to the rapid and crushing defeat, but all in all they were only the evidence that clinched the case against the rotten regime of the degenerate, corrupt and thoroughly decayed French bourgeoisie. That this bourgeoisie after its first severe military defeats capitulated post-haste, that it quickly discontinued the struggle to forestall a regrouping within the popular forces, that it evacuated Paris and caused the panicky mass flight of the population in order to drown the forces of the people and of the army in this torrent of horrors and disasters, that the Machiavellian ambiguity of the order issued by Petain to discontinue the struggle but to continue military resistance meant the *coup de grace* for the army and spread panic fear throughout the country to prevent the people from expressing its will by word and deed—these are all the earmarks of the monstrous betrayal by the bourgeoisie as a class. To receive as quickly as possible at the hands of the conqueror the authority which their own people had refused them, to celebrate as quickly

as possible on the ruins of France their triumph over the working people which an erect France did not permit them—such and none other was the ambition of the reactionaries who so ignominiously personified the French bourgeoisie. The greatest defeat that France ever suffered is considered a political victory by them, a victory of their class over the heroic French proletariat, over the freedom-loving masses of the French toilers, over the masses of the nation who under the people's front movement had shown their ability to repel the forces of reaction in open struggle.

\* \* \*

These jackals who attack their own prostrate people to eat their fill on the fields of battle cannot but know that the nation feels nothing but hatred and contempt for them. They have been assigned the task of establishing a regime of famine, disgrace and terror, to crush the French working class, the backbone of the nation, to transform France into a backward peasant country and to "accustom" the French people to the yoke of slavery. This certainly is no program with which to gain popular support. The shrewd scoundrels who have been commissioned to emasculate the French nation after its defeat now seek to gain their ends by profiting on the wrath, despondency and confusion that are now rampant in the chaotic mentality of the lower middle classes.

They do their utmost to divert the accusing eyes of the masses from those solely responsible, the trea-



sonable bourgeoisie and their obsequious coadjutors. Of course they would much prefer to lay the responsibility for the national catastrophe at once at the door of the Communists, of the revolutionary and class-conscious workers, but this would be so crass, so obvious a lie that nobody would believe it. Therefore "anti-Communism" is not assigned a prominent role for the time being but there can be no doubt that in the not-too-distant future it will occupy first place. For the present the jackals deem it more expedient to howl to a different tune.

The spearpoint of their agitation is directed at the present time against England. Popular sentiment was never very much in favor of that country. The popular masses of France considered England the country that left the fighting and dying to France and was ever ready to sacrifice the French people. The French bourgeoisie has its full measure of responsibility for the unleashing of the war; it gave full support to the policy of Chamberlain. But the French people were convinced that England was chiefly to blame for the war and that the French had been used as catspaws to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for England. After the collapse and particularly after the destruction of the French fleet by English battle-ships the resentment against England considerably increased. It is this resentment on which the henchmen of the French bourgeoisie sitting in the French government speculate. They hope to evoke a wave of hatred against England

and thus to obscure the question of responsibility and the monstrous treason of the bourgeoisie. Thus, they hope to prevent the union of the people against their immediate oppressors, and to divert outraged national sentiment into the channel of a nationalist movement against Great Britain. They hope that such a nationalist movement will make them influential among the lower middle classes and thus will strengthen the foundations of their own disgraceful regime.

The French bourgeoisie is of course fully aware of the fact that the people cannot simply be told that nobody in France was responsible. It therefore has recourse to the often tried expedient of anti-Semitism and is prepared to jettison the Jewish capitalists. Thus, it would not only curry favor with the conquerors but would divert the attention of the people from the actual culprits. It realizes, however, that this will not be enough and is therefore dropping several of the men who have done yeoman's service for reaction and have fully deserved the just wrath of the masses. The warrant issued for the arrest of Daladier, who undoubtedly belongs to the inner circle of those responsible for the defeat of France, is one of the steps which the French bourgeoisie is compelled to take to screen its treason as a class and to make scapegoats of individuals for the sins of the whole gang of capitalists and their myrmidons.

And finally the wretches who expect to profit from this calamity view the profound disillusionment

of the masses in democracy as an opportunity of offering the unbridled terrorist dictatorship of a group of reactionary bankrupts as the sole remedy under the circumstances. This same class, the bourgeoisie, which used to give a democratic tinge to its domination at the same time it was destroying the democratic rights of the people, this class which weakened France unto death through the crippling and hamstringing of the democratic forces of the people, now has the effrontery to put the blame for the complete rot and decay of the capitalist *foundations* of the social structure upon the democratic *facade*. Consequently these traitors, for whose rule France is paying so heavy a penalty, now demand that this lethal domination should become "totalitarian" in character so that the people may be totally submerged in misery and bondage.

Such are the measures by means of which the destroyers and devastators of France seek to sidetrack the question of responsibility, once more to hoodwink the masses and to use the bewildered middle classes, the embittered officers and terrified coupon clippers as a mass basis for patching up their regime of famine, ignominy and terror. By launching the slogan of "Take revenge on England!" they will seek to administer first aid to the wounded national sentiment. In the name of "law and order" they will seek to egg on the badly frightened petty-proprietors against the proletariat and above all against the Communists. In the name of the "incorporation of France in a new Europe"

they will seek to raise anti-Marxism, anti-Communism, to the position of a national doctrine.

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The French bourgeoisie of 1940 has surpassed by far the outrages committed by the "Versaillists" in 1871 and it will continue to surpass them. The French bourgeoisie has systematically squandered the heritage of the great bourgeois revolution. In its mouth the words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" have long ago become an impudent lie. But now it deems the time appropriate to drop even the traditional phraseology of 1789 and to set up instead the watchword: "Work, Family, Fatherland!" What insolence on the part of people to whom nothing could be more unfamiliar than honest labor, who have deprived numerous families of their livelihoods, who have sold and betrayed their fatherland a hundred times. There is only one watchword which these people could proclaim with untarnished veracity: "Profits, Deceit, Betrayal!" The policy pursued by the French bourgeoisie has been an embodiment of these three base ideas and has led to the collapse of France.

What delirious acts this miserable bourgeoisie may yet intend to perpetrate and what paeans of victory over their own people these treacherous bankrupt politicians are still expecting to sing may be gauged from certain declarations of these taskmasters in whose eyes the yoke of slavery takes on the form of a triumphal arch. The relics of French parliamentarism who con-

gregated at Vichy to celebrate their own political funeral have annulled the constitution of the Republic and adopted a new "authoritarian" constitution which rescinds clause for clause the Declaration of the Rights of Man proclaimed in 1789, in order to envelop the great history of France in this gruesome shroud. They have proclaimed a mummy marshal as dictator, as the "chief of the French state." This mummy, which obviously became confused and mistook himself for Louis XIV, and the capitulation as an intoxicating victory, prefaced the constitution with the following pronouncement:

"We, Philippe Petain, Marshal of France, declare that on the basis of the constitutional law of July 10, 1940, we assume the functions of chief of the French state. We accordingly direct, etc., etc."

It only needed that this ghostly document written in the majestic plural to camouflage the singular defeat it attests should end in the words: *L'état c'est moi!* (I am the state!)

But behind the cheap pathos of these capitulators without honor there is clearly discernible the intention of the reactionaries to settle accounts with the French people and first and foremost with the French workers. The crafty resolution on the revision of the French constitution contains the following clear-cut statement:

"The Government needs *plenary* authority to be able to decide, undertake and negotiate, in order to be able to save what must be saved [meaning the two hundred fam-

ilies and their fortunes], to destroy what must be destroyed [meaning all the rights of the people, all organizations of the laboring masses], to establish what must be established [meaning the terrorist dictatorship of the capitalists over an enslaved and humiliated France]."

Further on in this document we read:

"Incorporated in the continental system of production and exchange France will once more—and to its own advantage—become primarily an agricultural and peasant land. . . ."

Thus France's taskmasters are determined to transform France into an agrarian hinterland, to demote it to the status of a semi-colonial country and to split up and smash the working class, the backbone of the nation. According to their program France is to become a land of peasants and artisans, reminiscent of medieval feudalism, of the period preceding the bourgeois-democratic revolution, is to become virtually a semi-colony. For good measure the new "government" has petitioned Germany to grant it access to the occupied territory and turn over to it Versailles and the government quarter of Paris. In support of this petition it stated that "signs of disloyalty" toward the new government had been observed in Paris, and added:

"We shall put an end to these discussions. There shall be no more discussion either in the factories or in the countryside. We do not renounce the principle of profits which represents an incentive, nor

the reserves in the form of savings. . . .”

Let the people suffer in silence and may our profits prosper—such is the long and short of this program. In this way the French bourgeoisie shows its determination to drain the cup of its “victory” to the bottom. Jackal-like it will make a transient parasitic repast of this defeat and coin whatever advantage it can from the utter havoc wrought in France. But it will never succeed

in extinguishing the nation’s hatred of the dishonorable, ignominious and traitorous ruling class or in preventing the masses of the people from arriving at the realization that France was beaten by its own bourgeoisie and their Social-Democratic lackeys. Further developments will largely depend on the activity of the various class forces, on the progress of the class struggle. But the future of France is guaranteed by the French proletariat.

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## A "FEDERATED EUROPE"

BY J. REVAI

**A**S THE peoples of Europe strive in the midst of the difficult times they are living through to draw the lessons of their bitter experiences and are on the lookout for a way of escape, they inevitably stop to think about the connection between the present national catastrophes, catastrophes affecting many peoples, and the national leadership exercised by the respective reactionary bourgeoisie. The imperialist war of today is the natural consequence of the development which had its commencement in the period of 1918-23 when the attempts of the revolutionary workers to wrest the leadership of society away from the bourgeoisie ended in failure.

Only against this historical background does the inescapable responsibility of the Social-Democratic leaders for the present bloodshed and suffering of the toiling masses, of the peoples and nations, become evident. For all ideas and prophecies of the Social-Democrats during the last twenty years pursued at bottom but one purpose: to imbue the working class and the whole people with the conviction that it was the mission of the bourgeoisie and of it alone to lead hu-

manity to happiness and prosperity. The slogan of a "democratic development" into socialism, the glorification of "organized capitalism," the pronouncement that "planned economy" was possible within the frame of bourgeois property relations, the promise of "eternal peace" as the handiwork of the League of Nations, an offspring of Versailles—all this aimed at educating the working class in the spirit of a renunciation of its historic mission and at fostering the illusion that capitalism is capable of overcoming its contradictions itself. The chief cause of the great suffering and the harrowing experiences of the working class and the masses in general in the capitalist countries is the circumstance that the majority of them put faith in these Social-Democratic promises and entrusted their destiny to the bourgeoisie.

The Social-Democratic leaders entered upon the second imperialist war with "new" ideas and promises. In all countries the masses were opposed to the war unleashed by the imperialists. From its very inception they had the feeling that it was possible to avert this war, that the real causes and aims of the



war had nothing to do with the interests of the people but were rooted solely in decaying capitalism. In view of this mood of the people, the imperialist war incendiaries and their Social-Democratic coadjutors feared that the working people, particularly the proletarians, would quickly see through the true character of the war and would menacingly demand to know why they were being sent to their death, and who was sending them to their death. The reactionary leaders of the Second International considered it necessary to whitewash the capitalists, to exonerate them from all blame for the war and to dangle before the masses "war aims" that would satisfy the latter's craving for a just and lasting peace. They considered this so much the more necessary as profound unrest was noticeable also among the followers of Social-Democracy—a process of political clarification not only among the masses but also among the functionaries of the Social-Democratic parties.

The reactionary Social-Democratic leaders consequently produced "new ideas" which proclaimed the possibility of creating a condition of general welfare and permanent peace through a "reorganization of capitalism." At the same time they demagogically preached a "war of liberation for democracy," a war for the "emancipation of the oppressed peoples." A bare eight months of war sufficed to cause these slogans to suffer shipwreck. This collapse was brought about not so much by the

military victories of the German armies as by the national betrayal of the French bourgeoisie (and the bourgeoisies of a number of other countries). An idea which expresses the just cause of the people cannot be brought to naught by force of arms. Real collapse is the result of the exposure of the inherent falsity of an idea by pitiless reality.

In many countries the Social-Democratic workers are among the immediate sufferers of the catastrophe that has befallen the peoples. But even in these circumstances some of their leaders seek to "adjust" themselves to the new situation. How are we to explain the fact that part of the Social-Democratic leadership is changing from the support of British and French imperialism to the support of German imperialism? Because it has turned out that certain Social-Democratic "war ideas," even if invented originally for the purpose of veiling the true war aims of specifically Anglo-French imperialism, can be used as ammunition by any imperialism you choose.

This clearly appears from the fate suffered by one of the most important Social-Democratic war ideas, the slogan of a "Federated Europe."

The slogan of a Federated Europe was launched by the Labor Party immediately after the outbreak of the war. In the party's manifesto of February, 1940, this slogan figured as the "peace program" of the British Labor movement. It was then taken up by the leaders of the Socialist Party of France. After the joint conference

of the Labor Party and the French Socialist Party held at the end of February, 1940, "Federated Europe" became the common platform of both parties. It was soon the program of the entire Second International and as such was popularized by all Social-Democratic parties.

What was the substance of this Social-Democratic idea of a "Federated Europe"? It contained three chief elements:

First, differing from the League of Nations, this new European organization was to be not only a political but also an economic organization of the European states. There was to be instituted a "planned economy" on a European scale which would abolish anarchy of production, organize the economic division of labor in Europe and enable Europe to act as one economic unit for purposes of world trade.

Second, in contrast to the League of Nations, this "Federated Europe" was to limit the sovereignty of its member states, to create an international executive, a "super state authority" provided with the material instruments of power necessary to enforce the decisions of the "federation."

Third, the "core" of the federation was to be formed by the alliance between England and France which was to be transformed into a "permanent" alliance. The political and economic system of cooperation between England and France during the war was to be the prototype and the basis of the economic and political organization of

Europe after the achievement of victory.

These "Socialist" plans were immediately taken up by the British and French bourgeoisie and interpreted to suit their own ends.

The British and French imperialists were in thorough agreement with these ideas of the economic organization of Europe and a super state authority.

R. H. S. Grossmann dealt with this subject in an article which appeared in the *New Statesman and Nation* (issue of January 20, 1940), entitled "British War Aims and French Security." In this article he claimed that England's responsibility for the fate of Europe ought not to be only "moral" in the future. To quote:

"The test of Britain's good will in this matter is the extent to which she is prepared to permit her manpower and her wealth to be used for the policing of Europe both before and after the Treaty of Peace is signed. . . . *The Allied Supreme Command should be continued in existence together with all the machinery of economic cooperation.*" (Emphasis mine—J.R.)

Sir Norman Angell was even more explicit. In an article which appeared in *Reynold's News* of January 7, 1940, he spoke of the "power of attraction" which the economic might of the Anglo-French bloc would exert over the small states. He stated, for instance, that the already established French and English alliance would be in a position to offer the Scandinavian countries and Holland the same economic position in the new empire as is occu-

pied by Canada, Australia and all the other dominions. According to Angell, the factors that favorably affect such dominions as Canada and Australia must lead to the addition of similar "dominions." He did not hesitate to call the contemplated European federation by its right name, for he referred to it as the new empire, the member states of which are denominated dominions.

Sévérac, the French Socialist Party's "expert" on questions of peace, voiced the same sentiments as Norman Angell on the economic organization of a European federation. He, too, took this to mean the "generalization of present economic relations" between "Great Britain and France." Sévérac spoke of an internationalization of production by means of a specialization that would correspond to the soil and the natural wealth of each particular country. He further mentioned the internationalization of trade and the creation of a super-national authority charged with the regulation of quotas, currency, labor conditions, and capital investments (*Populaire*, February 24, 1940); that is, he spoke of a "planned economy" within a European federation, a "planned economy" which would have put the small states of Europe economically at the command of British and French monopoly capital, would have forced upon them a "specialization" of their national economy to suit the economic needs of England and France, would have shackled their industrialization, opened their markets to English and French merchandise and

capital, and forced them to waive all measures of economic protection.

But the small nations of Europe would not have come only under the economic domination of the great imperialist powers. Walter Lippmann, the American journalist, revealed in *The New York Herald Tribune* the true significance of the "Federated Europe" also in other respects. In his opinion, the absurd idea, that all peoples with a common language must or can exist together in a fixed political structure, is bound to atrophy and die out in a federated Europe. According to him questions of boundaries and national minorities will not play a great role at the Peace Conference. The right of small nations to national self-determination, the right to lead an independent political existence, was thus openly denied in the name of a "Federated Europe."

"Empire," "the policing of Europe" by an Allied Supreme Command—such was the concept which disclosed the real content of the Social-Democratic "peace slogan" of a "Federated Europe." In actual fact, it was a question of creating a *European empire* of England and France, of the establishment of their joint rule over Europe. That the war alliance between England and France was to constitute the "core" of the European federation was also interpreted by the British and French imperialists in their own way. "Effective guarantees" had to be set up against a revivification of the imperialist competitor. The "guarantees" that had been

established at the time in Versailles had proved powerless against the elemental force of the economic law of imperialism, the law of uneven development.

The reinvigoration of imperialist Germany and, finally, her forcible bursting of the bonds of Versailles led to the thought in England and France that the disparity between Germany and the England-France combination must be made infinitely greater than it was under the Versailles pact. In the place of the League of Nations, which formally was based on parity among its member states, a "peace organization" was to be created which would rest openly on the *primacy* of England and France, and would tie Germany hand and foot. The equal status of the small European states was also to be abolished and they were to be incorporated in the strait-jacket organization of the European dictatorship of England and France!

One might think all these plans were dead and buried today. But they are no more dead than the fabled phoenix: they were burned in the flames of the French defeats but have arisen anew and in new shape in and after the German victories.

The *Völkischer Beobachter*, which used to fight passionately year in year out against the idea of a Pan-Europe, has now become a sponsor of this very idea:

"But the core of the Pan-European idea was correct; Europe actually had to constitute itself a single economic region and must do so now if it wishes to build its exis-

tence on firm foundation." (June 9, 1940.)

The Social-Democratic idea of a European federation was premised on the economic organization of Europe. The idea current today of a "new European order" proceeds from the same basic thought. In Germany, Schacht is working on a plan for a "directed continental economy," "an amalgamated European economy directed from one center," a "planned economy for the whole of Europe." (*Dagens Nyheter*, June 27, 1940.)

The starting point of the Social-Democratic idea of a European federation was the consideration that the economic organization of Europe would have to evolve from the war economy of the victorious imperialist powers and would have to be developed further on the basis thus created. The same idea of a "new European order" may be found in National-Socialist newspapers:

"In the middle of the war many countries changed their orientation and turned to continental Europe. Thus, it is claimed that the violent concussions that have shaken the continent will lead to an emergency economic league of the European states, and that under the pressure of the war something was in formation which great Germans had long been dreaming of; and the conviction was expressed that this community of destiny may well be expected to last beyond the period of the war." (*Sudost-Echo*, Vienna, June 14, 1940.)

Both the Social-Democratic apostles of European "planned economy"

and the apostles of "directed continental economy" take as their starting point a new *division of labor* forced upon the small and the weak by the economic (and political) power of the great. Schacht almost duplicates the words of Sévérac when he speaks of the necessity of an "inter-European and perhaps later even international division of labor." Both groups of "European plan-makers" mean by this the exclusion of "all unsound competition among industries," the curtailment of industrial activity in the dependent countries (particularly those of southeastern Europe), the retrogression of their economy to the level of colonies, of purely agrarian countries. Bearing out the above interpretation of these plans there was talk in Vichy of a return to "peasant France," by which was meant the abandonment of industrial, that is, *proletarian* France.

In the plans of "Federated Europe" drawn up by the Coles and the Sévéracs, England and France were to form the "nucleus"; in Schacht's plan of Europe this was reserved to Germany and Italy:

"The structure of continental economy will in all probability be one of graded differentiation. Its *nucleus* will be formed by the major economies of Germany and Italy which together with the other national economies of the continent form one grand economic complex of Europe." (*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 9, 1940.)

Individual Social - Democratic leaders like De Man begin to take this new "nucleus" as their point of orientation. One may reproach

De Man, the president of the Belgian Labor Party, who, in a manifesto which will forever remain a monument of the cowardly and contemptible desertion and capitulation of a certain sort of Social-Democratic leaders, had appealed to his party to become the mainstay of the monarchist "unity party" of the Belgian bourgeoisie in formation—one may reproach this De Man with having betrayed his country, sold his people, left the nation in the lurch, but he cannot be reproached with having betrayed the Social-Democratic idea of "the organization of peace in Europe." On the contrary, he gives as his reason for joining the victors the need for the "organization of Europe."

"Peace could not arise out of a free agreement of sovereign nations and imperialist countries warring with each other. *It can arise only in a Europe that is united by common laws and in which economic frontiers have been removed.* . . . A socialist order is being established but there will be no supremacy of any class or party, but only a common weal, the token of which will be national solidarity which will soon become *continental, if not international, solidarity.*" (Emphasis mine—I.R.)

Thus De Man is veiling his going over to the other camp by trotting out the old idea of "continental solidarity" (of the bourgeoisie).

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The idea of an "organization" of Europe was not born in the present war. It was put up as a political



slogan during the first imperialist war; it was a slogan advanced by Trotsky whose "United States of Europe" was the political concretizing of Kautsky's theory of "ultra-imperialism." The Centrists who put up this slogan took as their premises the transformation of predatory and bellicose imperialism into a tame and peaceful imperialism, and the emergence of a "new era" in which imperialist wars would be supplanted by "peaceful" agreements among the imperialists for the joint exploitation of the world. In his struggle against the Trotskys and Kautskys, Lenin exposed the utter falsity of this "theory" of ultra-imperialism and of the political slogan of the "United States of Europe" corresponding to it:

"The only objective, i.e., real, social significance Kautsky's 'theory' can have is that of a most reactionary method of consoling the masses with hopes of permanent peace being possible under capitalism, distracting their attention from the sharp antagonisms and acute problems of the present era, and directing it towards illusory prospects of an imaginary 'ultra-imperialism' of the future." (V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," *Selected Works*, Vol. V, p. 109, International Publishers, New York.)

Simultaneously Lenin pointed out that while impossible in the sense of a peaceful adjustment of imperialist antagonisms, as a renunciation of war, a "United States of Europe" was perfectly possible in another sense:

"Of course, *temporary* agreements

between capitalists and between the powers are possible. In this sense the United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists . . . but what for? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty *against* Japan and America." (V. I. Lenin, "The United States of Europe Slogan," *Ibid.*, p. 140.)

Here we find the real motives for the creation of a European federation fully and accurately exposed. It is a question of forming a fighting alliance against the forces of socialism, against the colonies and against the imperialist competitors overseas. These three elements, according to Lenin, constitute the *parasitism* of the "United States of Europe." In his book on imperialism Lenin quotes the English economist Hobson who stated:

"We have foreshadowed the possibility of even a larger alliance of Western states, a *European federation of the great powers* which, far from forwarding the cause of world civilization, might *introduce the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism.*" (*Cited place*, p. 95.)

And Lenin agrees with this statement but adds the following proviso: "Unless the forces of imperialism are counteracted." (*Ibid.*)

A quarter of a century has elapsed and tremendous changes have occurred in the world since Lenin made these authoritative statements which presaged these deep-seated tendencies in the development of imperialism. A "United States of Europe" has been put upon the order of the day in one form or an-

other, has been set up as the *war aim* of the imperialists; on the basis of the most profound laws of development of imperialism it has become the program of both the English and the German imperialists, and of the reactionary leaders of Social-Democracy as well.

It might be objected that by and large the three programs were not identical inasmuch as the one group wants to unite the European states by force, while the other aspires to their revolutionary union.

We do not intend to deny that there actually are certain differences in the programs. These differences concern, however, only the *degree* of centralization of the European empire, the external methods of the imperialist domination over the European peoples and nations, the tightness of the bonds that are to hold together the individual elements, but they do not concern in the least the essential point of the case.

A "United States of Europe" (after the example of Napoleon's decrees of continental blockade), "Pan-America" (after the example of U.S.A. imperialism)—such are the prototypes after which imperialism now laying claim to European leadership is patterning its ideology in pursuance of its war aims.

The *analogy* with "Pan-America" is being emphasized both by those who represent the idea of a federation of Europe as well as by those who advocate the idea of a new European order. The French magazine *Esprit* (April, 1940), contains the sketch of a European federation modeled after the Pan-American

Union. It openly admitted that the Union is "*a protectorate exercised by the United States.*" A uniform customs policy and the creation of an "executive" of the Pan-American Union, in whose favor the "national sovereignty" of the countries of Latin America is to be "restricted," are declared necessary because of the revolutionary, anti-imperialist movements in Latin America, the expropriation of the oil companies in Mexico, and the industrialization of Argentina which runs counter to the interests of the United States. And from the experience with this "Pan-American" body the conclusion is drawn that a "European federation" can be established only if one European power will attain sufficiently predominant "economic hegemony."

A German newspaper draws a similar analogy with Pan-America:

"Very often Americans may be heard to say: Why don't you do what we did? When will you finally form a United States of Europe? Of course, to bring this about over there it also took a war, and it may even be said it took a whole series of wars. . . ." (*Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 3, 1940.)

It is not the point here that the union of the North American States into a *national* state (in the War of Independence against England and the war of the North against the slave-holding South) is intentionally mixed up with the *imperialist* war of the United States against Spain at the end of the nineteenth century, and the endeavor to "unite" the American continents under the

domination of United States imperialism. The point is that in this quarter too "Pan-America" is cited in support of the claim to the right to "unite" Europe and to *monopolize* the domination of Europe, just as American imperialists cite the Monroe Doctrine in support of their contemplated monopoly of the domination of America.

Thus, both sides cite "Pan-America" as their authority. Is there any justification for this? Yes, there absolutely is. And this is not changed by the fact that the European imperialists reject the idea of a "Pan-America," the American imperialists the idea of a "Pan-Asia," and the Asiatic imperialists likewise a "Pan-America." According to Carl Schmitt, a prominent Berlin expert on questions of international law, things are developing in the direction of the creation of "systems of major spheres with a ban on the intervention of powers alien to these spheres," but every imperialism believes that the "intervention ban" applies only to the "major sphere" dominated by it, but not to its "intervention" in questions affecting the "major sphere" of another imperialist power.

As a matter of fact it is no accident that the ideas which form the basis of Social-Democracy's plan of a federated *Europe* exert their influence *independently* of their specifically continental-European features and details, on the plans and ideologies of *all* imperialisms which are striving for the mastery and subjugation of *their* respective continents. This applies not only to the American imperialists; it applies

just as much to the Japanese imperialists who could borrow their arguments for the justification of their program, the establishment of a "new order" in Asia, from the Social-Democratic theories about a "European federation."

The process of the concentration of capital, which has been accelerated by the cyclical crises of post-war capitalism and by the general crisis of the capitalist system, has been the occasion, in connection with the accentuation of the market problem, for the creation of large spheres of economic influence with a monopolist and politically safeguarded domination of the markets and the resources of the territories concerned.

The tremendous accentuation of the contradictions between the great imperialist rivals has given rise to the idea of the conquest of *whole continents* by the most powerful imperialist states, which would drive off and annihilate their rivals in order to be able to launch the fight for world domination with their rear assured and "their own" continent firmly under their heel.

The rise and strengthening of the socialist state, and the liberation movement of the proletariat and the oppressed peoples have given rise to the idea of a union of the reactionary bourgeoisie independent of national boundaries and interests under the leadership of the strongest and most powerful imperialism.

These three elements jointly constitute the basis upon which the "Pan-Asiatic," "Pan-American" and "Pan-European" ideas have sprung up, irrespective of all differences in

the rise, development and historical peculiarity of these ideas in Europe, America and Asia.

In Social-Democratic ideology there are certain views which make it possible for the reactionary Social-Democratic leaders to play a leading part in the elaboration of the most important war time ideas of imperialism.

In the first place: their *imperialist economism*, to use an expression of Lenin's. All Social-Democratic theories of "planned European economy," of a "division of labor" in Europe, etc., can be traced back to the age-old opportunist "theory" according to which the unification of large territories is considered to be in the interest of economic progress. This was the "theory" which caused the opportunists even before the first imperialist war to welcome imperialism as a progressive phenomenon of social development. The enthusiasm of the opportunists for "the economic progress" effected by imperialism was so great that they considered national oppression and the destruction of independent states as secondary and unavoidable concomitants of this economic progress and condemned *national resistance* against imperialism as reactionary and anti-progressive.

As early as the World War Lenin pointed out in his struggle against the species of imperialist economism which at that time was advocated by Bukharin and Pyatakoff that genuine Socialists were opposed to fragmentation and isolation and favored unification, that is, large uniform economic areas. But they combat all "unification" which is

the result of imperialist force, which violates peoples and nations, which facilitates the chauvinist contamination of the working class of the oppressing nations and renders more difficult the international education of the working class of the oppressed nations. Lenin exposed the fallacy of posing the destruction of small states as an *economic question* which disregards the question of their national freedom and independence and sanctions the violation of the right of national self-determination by the imperialists in the name of "economic progress."

In the last analysis the Social-Democratic theories of "European planned economy" as the basis for a "federation" of the European states amount to a declaration that national independence and freedom have been "economically" superseded, are "economically" obsolete. They discredit and undermine the idea of national resistance to the conqueror on the ground that it is incompatible with "progress." They are ideas of national subservience and national betrayal at present, and the renunciation of the struggle for national liberation in the future. They are the ideas of slaves who reflect the ideas of their masters.

The experience of the present imperialist war is cited in support. Has it not proved that amidst the rivalries of the big imperialist states the small countries and states are unable to defend their neutrality and independence with success? Is the fact that they are no match for their big imperialist neighbors in point of armament, organization and economic resources not proof positive

that the productive forces have come into collision with the old national frontiers, that the existence of independent small states has become incompatible with the imperialist system? From the fact that the small states are militarily at the mercy of the big imperialist states the conclusion is drawn that the national independence of small peoples is an antiquated idea. Indeed, the system of small states is antiquated, since modern productive forces reach beyond their narrow boundaries and imperatively demand the establishment of a new social system. The various small states were "spheres of influence" of the imperialist big powers even before this war. Their "independence" was only a veil for imperialist machinations, as was evidenced by the Baltic states.

But the right of national self-determination of peoples is by no means antiquated. Yet this right is often flouted by the imperialists. What about the people's declaring, in view of the increasingly palpable incompatibility of imperialism with the independent existence of small nations, that it is not their national independence but capitalism that has become antiquated? Imperialism "overcomes" the contradiction between the development of the productive forces and the national borders by trampling down independent peoples and drowning their liberties in blood. What if these peoples should draw a different conclusion from this contradiction, if they should solve it by the overthrow of imperialism? In fact, only socialism is able to meet the de-

mands of modern productive forces and at the same time do justice to the will of the peoples for freedom; only socialism can build a world of universal prosperity, progress and peace based on the fraternal collaboration of peoples and nations.

On the other hand, a system of "continental economy" which would be centrally "directed" in conformity with the monopoly capital interests of the dominating power, would inevitably lead, precisely because of the enormous strengthening of monopoly domination, to "autarchy," to economic warfare with the other powers, and, from the standpoint of the division of labor and development of productive forces on a world economic scale, to a complete absence of economy, to increased stagnation. "Continental planned economy" would carry imperialist parasitism to its extreme and would, at the same time, be a weapon in its defense.

But it is precisely the maintenance of this parasitic position of Europe that the Social-Democratic "theoreticians" and leaders are interested in. All their ideas and plans for the "unification" of Europe merely conceal their belief that bourgeois Europe must assume the leadership of the capitalist world. This is the second reason why they were capable of playing the part of the ideological vanguard of European imperialism.

The third and decisive reason is the determination of the reactionary leaders of Social-Democracy to wage, hand in hand with the bourgeoisie, a life-and-death struggle against the forces of socialism.

Every "European plan" means an attempt not only to confederate the *states* of Europe against the imperialist rivals in America and Asia but also to unite the ruling *classes* of Europe against the proletariat, against the working people, against socialism.

All exponents of plans for the organization of Europe maintain that it is a question of "organizing peace" in Europe; but in reality it is a question of *organizing war in permanence*. For it would be the function of such a European "organization" to secure the rear of this or that imperialism in its struggle for world domination, whether it be against Japan or against America, to cover its flanks and to mobilize all the forces of European capitalism for this struggle. It would be absolutely false to think that matters will not reach a pass where such a war will break out, for that would mean to overlook the insoluble contradictions of capitalism and to set up the premise that imperialist capitalism is non-expansionist, is not out for domination and despoliation.

But an imperialist "organization"

of Europe would also be a perpetuation of war in Europe itself. The Versailles peace has shown that large peoples cannot be subjugated for any length of time. No victory of arms, no "organization of peace" can fix for all time the relation of forces. Every change in the international relation of forces will inevitably cause the spirit of imperialist revenge—the idea that today you got me, tomorrow I'll get you—to flare up and will again and again involve the peoples of Europe in sanguinary war catastrophes.

*Struggle and struggle alone can decide the question of the feasibility of these imperialist "planned-Europe" schemes.* It is the class struggle of the working class against "its own" imperialism and against the national betrayal of "its own" bourgeoisie, it is the struggle of the popular masses for the defense and the reconquest of national independence, the struggle of the peoples against imperialism, that will have the last say, the decisive say, in determining the future of all imperialist "European plans."

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## IMPERIALIST ANTAGONISMS IN THE PACIFIC

BY W. LEITNER

**T**HE Pacific Ocean, which covers more than one-third of the surface of the globe and washes the shores of three continents, has become the scene of imperialist antagonisms which affect the destiny of half the human race. In late years world commerce has shifted very largely from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The growing competition for markets and sources of raw materials in the Pacific has led to diplomatic conflicts and rivalry in armaments, particularly in naval armaments, and has increased the danger of an imperialist war breaking out in this part of the world as well.

The war that Japanese imperialism is waging against China already reveals Japan's striving for hegemony throughout Eastern Asia. After three years of war and great losses in men and material, Japanese imperialism has failed to subjugate the Chinese people. Today, the war in Europe has sharply brought into question the fate of the possessions of European countries in the Pacific. Japanese imperialism is driving more and more to the south, towards the possessions of Holland, France and Great Britain in the Pacific.

Japanese warships forced their way into the harbors of French Indo-China and compelled the French administration of this colony to put a stop to trade with and the transit of goods to national China. The Japanese troops of occupation on the Chinese mainland are closing the ring around that important outpost of British imperialism in Eastern Asia, Hong Kong. Japanese statesmen are proclaiming a sort of Monroe Doctrine for the whole of Eastern Asia. The Japanese Government is beginning to order the Dutch authorities in the Netherlands Indies to export raw materials to Japan. There are growing signs that Japanese imperialism is making preparations for another war of conquest.

From the West, the United States imperialists, in their craving for new markets, tropical raw materials and new fields for the investment of capital, are turning their gaze to the Orient. The United States is maintaining a powerful fleet in the Pacific and is carefully watching every step Japan is taking.

British imperialism, which for decades has enjoyed supremacy in the Far East, whose will has prevailed from North China to Aus-

tralia, from the South Sea Islands to India, is losing position after position. In China, it is striving, by means of a policy of compromise with Japanese imperialism, to save at least its investments. Meanwhile, Japanese imperialism is creeping ever closer to Great Britain's most important possessions.

At the Washington Conference, in 1921-22, Japan was compelled for a time to withdraw from the positions she had gained in China during the World War. She had to forego the notorious "twenty-one demands" that she had forced upon semi-colonial China during the World War by means of which she had hoped to convert the 450,000,000 population of this country into her vassals. Japan was compelled temporarily to withdraw from the Shantung Peninsula, which she had seized from Germany during the World War. By signing the Nine-Power Treaties, Japan pledged herself, at least on paper, to respect the independence of China; and by the Washington Naval Treaty she was compelled to limit her navy to 60 per cent of the United States and British navies. As a result of United States pressure, the Anglo-Japanese alliance, which Japan had brought about to use as a weapon against tsarist Russia, was dissolved. Lastly, Japan had to suffer the humiliation of having large areas in the Pacific closed to her.

The policy of the United States seemed to have triumphed. Her "open door" policy in China, which she had advocated for decades, seemed to have become the decisive factor in the politics of the Pacific.

It seemed that thanks to her vast accumulations of capital, her enormous economic strength, the United States would play the decisive role in the economic development of China. Such were the anticipations in high financial circles in America. The dream of the "peaceful" economic development of Eastern Asia under the aegis of the United States seemed about to be realized.

In 1927, Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka presented a memorandum to the Japanese emperor, which is all the more important today for the reason that the imperialist plans outlined therein have, step by step, drawn nearer to achievement in the last few years, and because, in this memorandum, Tanaka proclaimed objects which seemed fantastic in 1927 but which have become much more real today.

Concerning the policy of Japan's principal rivals, Great Britain and America, Tanaka expressed himself as follows in his memorandum:

"The Nine Powers Agreement is exclusively the reflection of the spirit of trade rivalry. England and America wanted, by means of their great wealth, to smash our influence in China. The proposal for the limitation of armaments is merely a means of curtailing our military power and depriving us of the possibility of conquering the huge territory of China. On the other hand, the wealth of China will be in their hands, exclusively. This agreement is a plan by means of which England and America wish to



smash our plans. . . . England can allow herself the luxury of talking about trade only because she has India and Australia, which supply her with foodstuffs and other goods. The same refers to America, for South America and Canada satisfy her requirements. Their energies can be wholly devoted to the development of trade in China for the purpose of enriching themselves. But the reserves of foodstuffs and raw materials in Japan are becoming less and less as her population increases. If we put all our hopes upon the development of trade, we may be smashed by England and America, with their invincible capitalist might. In the end we get nothing at all." (*Communist International*, No. 22, 1931, p. 735.)

Tanaka then went on to demand, as a first step towards the subjugation of China—the step that was taken several years later—the conquest of Manchuria:

"In order to win real rights in Manchuria and Mongolia, we must use this district as a base, and penetrate into the rest of China under the pretext of developing our trade. . . . With all the resources of China at our disposal, we shall pass forward to the conquest of India, the Archipelago, Asia Minor, Central Asia and even Europe." (*Ibid.*)

Lately, the Japanese imperialists have given very definite evidence of their designs upon the above-mentioned Archipelago, particularly the Netherland Indies. Noteworthy also today are Tanaka's remarks about the possible resistance of the United States to the far-

reaching plans of the Japanese imperialists. He wrote:

"But in pursuing this policy we shall be brought face to face with the United States. . . . If we wish, in future, to gain control over China, we must crush the United States. . . ." (*Ibid.*)

How has the United States reacted towards Japan's striving for conquest up to now? When Manchuria and part of North China were occupied, the Secretary of State at that time, Henry L. Stimson, declared that the United States would not recognize these or similar conquests. The economic monopoly which Japan established in Manchuria called forth numerous protests on the part of the United States. Since the outbreak of the war in China these protests have been almost a daily occurrence. But in all these protests not a shadow of a desire is observed to render even the slightest assistance to the Chinese people in their struggle against the Japanese conquerors.

It is the selfish interests of the American trusts and banks that the United States Government is striving to protect by its policy in China. By signing the Nine-Power Treaties the United States pledged herself to respect the independence and integrity of China. Compare this with the statement made by Secretary of State Cordell Hull last spring in connection with the establishment of the puppet government of Wang Ching-wei. He said that this government—

“. . . appears to be following the pattern of other regimes and systems which have been set up in China under the aegis of an outside power and which, in their functioning, have especially favored the interests of that outside power and denied to the nationals of the United States and other third countries the enjoyment of long-established rights and equal and fair treatment.”

It is quite evident from this diplomatic statement that the United States completely ignores the question of the sovereignty and independence of China, and is guided solely by her own imperialist interests in China.

If, at the same time, we bear in mind the uninterrupted supply of American war materials to Japan, which came hurtling down in the shape of bombs upon the defenseless civilian population of Chinese cities, the real nature of American policy in China will become apparent. In spite of all past and present expressions of sympathy for the Chinese people, in spite of the vast amount of propaganda conducted by America for decades, ostensibly for the purpose of bringing the American and Chinese republics closer together, the policy of the United States has been to prevent the growth of a really free and strong China.

In the past few months the big press in the United States has devoted considerable attention to the United States' policy in China. The opinions expressed seems to waver between the fear of losing the Chinese market as a result of the

Sino-Japanese war, and the fear of an independent and strong China. The business circles that are interested in trade with Japan let it be known that the present trade with Japan was far more important than the undeveloped trade with China. And, just as Neville Chamberlain once remarked in connection with the conflicts between Japan and China that no matter who wins, he will need British capital, so certain American capitalist circles anticipate that Japan will permit them to cooperate in the exploitation of China.

Wang Ching-wei and his Japanese backers have declared often enough that foreign capital will be permitted to take part in the exploitation of China. These promises, however, are treated rather sceptically in broad American circles. Indicative of this is a statement made in the April issue of *Foreign Affairs* that there can be no doubt as to what Japan's objects in the economic field in China are; that it is quite evident that China will be developed exclusively in the interests of Japan. In the opinion of this writer the Chinese will play only a subordinate role, and foreign capitalists will either be subjected to drastic restrictions, or expelled altogether. And he goes on to say that the foreign businessman who believes that Japanese domination in China will open up greater prospects for him is blind to the facts.

The policy of the United States in China definitely pursues the object of drawing out the conflict, and by encouraging the government of

Chiang Kai-shek, on the one side, and supplying Japan with war materials, on the other, she is striving to weaken both belligerents to such an extent that not only will China be entirely dependent upon her, economically and politically, but even Japan will have to submit to her.

The opinion of that section of the American bourgeoisie which desires a more active policy in China was expressed in a characteristic article in the April issue of *Harper's Magazine*. The writer of this article opined that it was never worth going to war over trade, and that America's trade with China was relatively slight. Nevertheless, he said, this trade had been growing steadily and had increased sixfold in the period from 1910 to 1930. It reached its apex in the years just before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, and the accelerated industrialization of China promised an expansion similar to that witnessed in certain periods of the nineteenth century. China is the only country about which this can still be said, he said. If this potential trade were lost by the intervention of a third power with whom friction already exists, the loss would be intolerable. It would be running in the face of history to expect that a great commercial nation would voluntarily forego such trade opportunities.

However, the writer of the article then went on to express the opinion, rather widespread in the American press, that the United States will be able to blockade Japan only when the European war comes to an end.

When the American-Japanese commercial agreement was cancelled, the American press advanced the argument that no effective measures could be undertaken against Japan until the United States was protected against surprises in the Atlantic, and that, therefore, no embargo could be placed upon the export of war materials to Japan.

The well-known journalist, Walter Lippmann, has more than once uttered the warning in the *New York Herald Tribune* that Japan could retaliate to economic repressions on the part of the United States by seizing important sources of raw materials, particularly the Netherlands Indies. Lippmann, too, pleads for a more cautious policy towards Japan until after the European war, when the British navy comes back to the Pacific.

These cautious utterances have strengthened the hand of those Japanese circles who desire to take advantage of the present situation to act swiftly so that Japan may "insure herself against a blockade" by seizing the Netherlands Indies and other rich sources of raw materials in the South and strengthening her sea power by controlling the chain of islands that are strung out from Japan to the South.

The Japanese press is watching the United States' soaring naval and air expenditure with nervous unrest. Japan cannot hope to keep pace with the United States' new warship construction. Japan would be outstripped in an armaments race with the United States. To this it must be added that the wide

cruising range of the new American warships is leading Japanese naval circles to the conclusion that they are intended for operations in the western Pacific, in Japanese water. Commenting on this in the April issue of *Contemporary Japan*, the Japanese naval expert, Ito, says:

"Japanese warships present an entirely different picture from the American in that armament is strengthened at the sacrifice of cruising range. This testifies clearly to Japan's strategic plan, which is aimed at defensive operations in the western Pacific. . . . All the new warships of the United States are designed and built with a view to extending their cruising range to the utmost. . . . To put it another way, the American naval building plan is based on offensive operations in waters thousands of miles from American bases of operation, namely in the western Pacific, an area which the American Navy regards as the scene of its hypothetical battle."

This mournful plaint of Japanese naval circles would seem to be justified by the statement recently made by Admiral Taussig before the Naval Affairs Committee of the United States Senate that war with Japan was "inevitable."

During the past few weeks relations between the United States and Japan have become more strained as a result of the dispute over the Netherlands Indies. Japan has demanded a voice in determining the fate of this colony. The Netherlands Indies are an important source of raw materials. Their

extensive oilfields are exploited by British and American firms. They produce about 35 per cent of the world's rubber output and 20 per cent of the world's tin output; they possess almost a monopoly of quinine, and their forests contain valuable timber. It is this wealth of natural resources and advantageous strategical position that induced the Japanese Government, after Holland was occupied by German troops, to proclaim its interest in maintaining the status quo of the Netherlands Indies, which was only another way of proclaiming its aggressive designs. State Secretary Hull quickly reacted to this with his own declaration in favor of maintaining the status quo of the Netherlands Indies. The real interests of the United States in the Netherlands Indies were revealed by the *New York Herald Tribune* in its issue of April 17, 1940, in the following words:

"Japan's normal dependence on the Netherlands Indies for essential resources does not compare with those of Britain and the United States, because Britain takes 19 per cent of the Netherlands Indies' total exports, while the United States takes 19.7 per cent and Japan only 4.5 per cent. Moreover, Britain and the United States have heavy investments in oil, rubber and tin."

The occupations of the Netherlands Indies would immediately bring Japan within reach of other important sources of raw materials, such as the rubber plantations in Malay and Australia's wool. Japanese troops would be brought into

dangerous proximity to the great British naval base of Singapore, and the temptation would be great to seize control to all the islands between Formosa and the Netherlands Indies, particularly the United States protectorate, the Philippines. That Washington is conscious of the danger of Japan reaching out for the Philippines is proved by the restrictions the Philippine Government has imposed on Japanese immigration, which has caused considerable annoyance in Japan during the past few weeks.

At the end of June, General Sadao Arita, then Japanese Foreign Minister, openly proclaimed Japan's aspirations by demanding that the world be divided into spheres of influence, and by stating, as regards the sphere of influence that Japan claimed, that:

“. . . the countries in Eastern Asia and in the South Seas are closely connected with each other. Their unification in a single sphere naturally follows from this.”

Thus, Japan is laying claim to no less than domination over the whole of the South Seas, from the Netherlands Indies in the west, to the French Society Islands in the south-east, which lie more than half-way to the South American continent. It remains to be seen how, and how quickly, Japan will proceed to realize this vast program, which was already outlined in the Tanaka memorandum.

After he had made the above-quoted declaration, Arita was sharply criticized by certain Japanese newspapers for not indicating

the practical measures by which these plans were to be realized. As a result of the pressure of the military clique, the government of Admiral Yonai was compelled to resign. Prince Fumimaro Konoye was pushed into the foreground by the army. In his first public statement, Konoye said nothing about the practical steps of Japan's foreign policy in the Pacific; but in the speech he delivered over the radio on July 23, he openly announced the new government's orientation in foreign policy and, in particular, Japanese designs for expansion in the South Seas.

Lately, considerable activity has been observed in Japan on the part of those political circles who are striving to take the greatest possible advantage of the war in Europe and for this purpose to seek a further agreement with Germany and Italy. In view of the prospects of a prolonged imperialist war in Europe and of the situation now being created in the Pacific, these opinions are finding a favorable echo in Germany and Italy.

In the opinion of Japanese circles, there are two factors which call for haste: first, the favorable opportunity that the European war has created, and, secondly, the United States' enormous armaments program.

The plans that Japan is pursuing in the South Seas run counter to the interests of the United States even more than her plans in China. Their success would mean a loss of important raw materials for American industry. The situation in Europe and the expectation that

later on Japan will be more compliant might tempt the United States to continue to confine herself to protests and declarations. Nevertheless, the United States' naval program—which will give her a navy twice and three times as large as Japan's—speaks for itself. It is compelling the Japanese imperialists to make haste, thus causing the friction between Japan and the United States to become more acute. This is partly indicated by Roosevelt's demand for the introduction of licenses for the export of oil, metals and scrap steel, which is regarded in Japanese circles as a step against Japan.

The program proclaimed by the Japanese Foreign Minister, Arita, represents, above all, a greater menace than ever to the interests of British imperialism in the Pacific. Great Britain once condoned the Japanese conquests in Manchuria and North China, and pleaded Japan's cause in the League of Nations. At that time, the reactionary circles of the British bourgeoisie hoped that the Japanese army would continue to advance north. All the greater is the disillusionment now that Japan's expansion threatens Great Britain's most important spheres of interest.

Great Britain sees her large investments in China, her rich concessions in the principal Chinese cities and her shipping in the Chinese rivers seriously menaced. Already, Hongkong is within range of Japanese guns.

After the authorities in Indo-China had yielded to the Japanese demand for control over commerce

with China, the British Government also agreed to the restrictions of commerce between Burma and national China for a period of three months. This step roused considerable indignation in political circles in China, for by this concession Great Britain closed one of China's most important means of communication with other countries. But this step did not curb the appetite of Japanese imperialism in China. The British Government expressed the hope that Japan would conclude a just peace with China within three months. But in Japan this was regarded as interference in matters that did not concern Great Britain.

This is the result of the fact that Great Britain's policy in Eastern Asia is still more determined by fear of the growth of a truly independent China than is the policy of the United States. Great Britain's investments in China are larger than those of any other power. The main concern of the British imperialists has been and is to save these investments, and to induce Japan, by means of important concessions, to show some regard for British interests in China. Hence, the honeyed words addressed to Japan by the British Ambassador in Tokyo last March. He said:

“Two countries [Great Britain and Japan], which in the time of their alliance passed through a period of exceptional prosperity and mutual beneficial cooperation, have witnessed a reaction which, whatever its causes, has been definitely prejudicial in its effect on their political and economic well being.

. . . But truth will out and already there is growing up in each country an appreciation of the extent to which the actions of the other have, during the last years, been vilified and misrepresented. . . . Japan and Great Britain are two maritime powers on the fringe of continents and vitally concerned with the events on these continents. Methods may in some cases differ but both countries are ultimately striving for the same objective, namely, lasting peace and the preservation of our institutions from extraneous subversive influences."

This speech caused great surprise in the United States. It was even feared that it foreshadowed an Anglo-Japanese understanding at the expense of American interests. The unfriendly reception of the speech in the United States prompted the British Government to declare that British policy in China had undergone no change. Thus, in view of the present situation, British imperialism finds itself compelled to give careful consideration to United States policy in the Far East.

Apart from this, the speech of the British Ambassador in Tokyo was an unconcealed attempt, once again, to scare the ruling classes of Japan with the specter of communism. But the effect of this dodge was that Japan's "liberating mission" in Eastern Asia was pushed more to the front than ever in Japanese propaganda. The international concessions in China, particularly the British concessions, were depicted to the Chinese people as citadels of foreign oppression. The Japanese aggressors are doing their very ut-

most to conceal the objects of Japanese imperialism by indulging in the farce of "driving the Western nations out of China."

Every concession that Great Britain has made to the Japanese aggressors in the last ten years has only whetted their appetite for more. If Japan succeeds in establishing her hegemony in the South Seas, Great Britain will not only lose vital sources of raw materials, but her principal naval base, Singapore, will be directly threatened, and Japan will reach the fringe of Australia. For decades British imperialists have uttered warnings about the dangers hovering over Australia, which, though nearly as large as Europe, has a population of about 7,000,000. Great Britain spoke of Australia as "the reservation of the white race," although it was really in the interests of the big capitalist sheep farmers who own vast tracts of land that the settlement of this part of the world by Asiatics was prevented. And now, by proclaiming her aspirations for domination in the South Seas, Japan is threatening to bridge the gulf to Australia.

Whatever British imperialism may still do to reach an understanding with Japan, the aims proclaimed by the Japanese imperialists are of such a nature that, in any case, they affect the fundamental interests of both British and American imperialism.

Events are developing in the Pacific with such dramatic rapidity that it has long lost its right to this name. There will be no peace in the Pacific as long as the half of the

human race that inhabits this part of the world serves as the object and pawn in a furious struggle for markets, raw materials, investments and naval bases. The masses of the Chinese people have shown that they will not bow to colonial oppression and exploitation. As impe-

rialist antagonisms in the Pacific become more acute the other oppressed nations in Asia, following China's example, will be roused more and more and realize that their only salvation lies in fighting every form of colonial oppression.



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## WHITHER IRELAND?

BY L. TAYLOR

**T**HE more clearly events after France's military defeat seem to herald a gigantic duel between British and German imperialism, the more pronounced becomes the strategic and political importance of Ireland.

Ireland, this first and oldest colony of England, which for more than 700 years has been waging an incessant struggle for national liberation, has now once more come into the limelight of publicity.

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A casual glance at the map of Europe shows the importance that must attach to Ireland from the military-strategic point of view. Ireland in the hands of an enemy would be a mortal danger to British rule on the seas. It is therefore a vital necessity for British imperialism to have undisputed possession of that island.

England's enemies have always included Ireland's peculiar strategic situation in their calculations. They always launched their military operations against England with an eye to Ireland's position on her flank. This was the case in the sixteenth century during the war of

Philip of Spain against Elizabeth; this was the case in the seventeenth century during the war of Louis XIV against William III; this was the case in the war of Napoleon against England, as well as during the last World War. In each instance Great Britain's adversaries banked on the active assistance of the Irish. Philip of Spain made three attempts to land troops to unite with the Irish insurgents; the French tried twice to land in order to deliver a blow against England jointly with the Irish who had risen against her. And, similarly, the Germans had sought to land a shipload of arms in 1916 to lend support to the Irish uprising (see Sir Roger Casement's trial).

Of great significance are Napoleon's words uttered at St. Helena concerning Ireland's strategic importance:

"If I had launched my attack in the direction of Ireland instead of in the direction of Egypt, it would have meant the end of England."

In connection with the Irish uprising of 1916, Lenin wrote:

"The general staffs in the present war assiduously strive to utilize all

national and revolutionary movements in the camp of their enemy: the Germans utilize the Irish Rebellion, the French—the Czech movement, etc. From their standpoint they are acting quite properly." (V. I. Lenin, "The Irish Rebellion of 1916," *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, International Publishers, New York.)

The situation in the present war is analogous. It is rendered still more complicated by the circumstance that the Dutch, Belgian and French coasts facing England, which for hundreds of years she had jealously guarded both diplomatically and militarily, are now in German hands.

In 1932, Lloyd George said in the House of Commons that the wits of Britishers have been considerably sharpened by the experience of the last World War, in which the Irish coast became a death-trap for their ships. He added that if the coast of Ireland had at that time been in the control of some independent power, it would have finished Great Britain, and concluded that the British would never take such a risk again. (*London Times*, July 20, 1932.)

On July 11, 1940, Reuter's reported that England's attempt to conclude an agreement of joint defense with Eire was not successful and that therefore England was to undertake the defense of Ireland herself, that the government was paying close attention to the position taken by Ireland, in view of the fact that an incursion into Ireland would not affect Ireland alone but would involve England no less. . . . The dispatch further stated that if

such a situation should arise England's armed forces would doubtlessly take appropriate counter-measures.

Ernest Barker's book *Ireland in the Last Fifty Years, 1866-1918*, is, perhaps, the most pithy exposition of the actual state of affairs. Thus, the author says on page 99:

"It has been the misfortune of Great Britain, or her fault, or both, that there has generally been a discontented body of Irishmen ready to see in her peril their own opportunity."

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For many decades it has been a current saying in Ireland that "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity." And, indeed, the history of the liberation struggle of the Irish people which has already lasted 700 years, the history of its innumerable rebellions and defeats, has shown that Ireland in her desperation has always sought aid from without, either among the revolutionary movements of the peoples of Europe and America, or in the ministerial cabinets of Paris, Madrid, Rome, Berlin or Washington.

Henry Robert Mitchell's *The Evolution of Sinn Fein*, Dublin, openly states in its Introduction:

"On neither side was there any misapprehension of the meaning and object of the contest. The English Government, whether it employed naked force, intrigue or legal fiction, aimed at the moral, material and political subjugation of the Irish; the Irish, whether they fought in the field or intrigued in the cabinets of Europe, whether allied with France or with Spain

or English royalists, had but one object, the assertion of their nation independence."

Michael Collins, the well-known Irish nationalist, was also outspoken concerning the reasons which led the Irish nationalists to make common cause with the enemies of England. In his *The Path to Freedom*, London 1922, he says on page 69:

"Our hostility to England was the common factor between Germany and ourselves. We made common cause with France when France was fighting England. We made common cause with Spain when Spain was fighting England. We made common cause with the Dutch, when the Dutch were fighting England."

Such expressions of opinion by leading Irish nationalists can be multiplied *ad libitum*. They are an expression of the implacable hatred of centuries.

The terrible specter that long frightened the British diehards and landlords, "the Irish question," still haunts them to this day despite the numerous "reforms" and despite the "peace pact" of 1921, which created the "Irish Free State." Ireland is still a thorn in the flesh of British imperialism, a permanently open wound that will not heal as long as it is attempted to heal it with *imperialist* means.

Although the Irish Free State has the legal status of a dominion, it differs from all other British dominions in not having joined in the war against Germany and having declared its neutrality instead. This

fact alone shows that the present crisis of the British Empire, of which so much was spoken and written before the military censorship was established, has already assumed sharp forms in Ireland.

Under the pressure of the masses who are inimical to British imperialism, De Valera has assumed an ostensibly hostile attitude towards England, as he has done so many times before since he has been in power. But in actual fact he has helped England to ensure its undisputed rule over Ireland. Very much in point here is the statement of *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* made on July 12, 1940, to the effect that Eire's Premier, De Valera, insisted on a policy of strict neutrality and that in consequence the British Government had worked out independently a plan of action for its sea and air forces.

In other words, British imperialism pays not the slightest heed to Ireland's "strict neutrality," but at the same time makes it possible for De Valera to save his face before his followers and the Irish people as a whole. It must be mentioned that with wise prevision British imperialism had reserved the right to defend Ireland in the agreement of 1921. According to its terms the Irish Free State undertook in the event of war to place all its harbors at the disposal of the British Government and to grant all other facilities that England might deem necessary.

Ireland's demands now voiced by De Valera are quite worthy of note, not only because of their ultimate aims and possible political conse-

quences, but particularly because of the dramatic events out of which they arose and which relate to a period far back in the nineteenth century. According to London newspaper dispatches De Valera does not only advocate the maintenance of "strict neutrality under all circumstances" but is particularly anxious to secure the reunion of Northern Ireland (Ulster) and Southern Ireland (the Irish Free State), and this demand broaches the chief problem in the political relationship between Ireland and England. However, Reuter's parliamentary reporter adds at the same time that the unification of Ireland is impossible on the basis of the latter's neutrality. He then continues that if De Valera could be gotten to take England's part, there was reason to suppose that the complicated question of the reunion of Ireland might at last find a final solution.

If additional proof is needed that De Valera and the British Government are playing a game in which each has been assigned his part in advance, let us refer to a report published by Reuter's on July 14, 1940, which stated that Dublin (Eire's capital) was calmly awaiting the further development of events connected with the war in Europe, but that at the same time government circles in Eire were of the opinion that the country should not allow itself to be taken unawares by sea, land or air forces, for which reason measures of defense have been instituted on a broad scale.

Thus we see that despite the

eminent danger which threatens it now, British imperialism seeks to keep on maneuvering with regard to Ireland without surrendering one jot or tittle of its dominant position. In view of the anti-British mood of the masses and their increasing lack of confidence in his government, De Valera, the political exponent of the Irish bourgeoisie which is cooperating with England, likewise tries to maneuver by resorting to the use of radical phrases taken from the arsenal of Irish revolutionary history, which still strikes responsive chords in the hearts of certain sections of the Irish people. We see further that England, on the pretext of defending Ireland, is already creating the necessary military conditions to forestall a possible revolutionary uprising by the institution of a military dictatorship. The harsh persecution which is the lot of the adherents of the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.), the Communists, the cut-and-out republicans and the anti-British elements that are carrying on the revolutionary traditions of the Irish people, handed down from the last World War, is proof positive of this.

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The inextinguishable hatred for the British rule of violence has its roots far back in history. This hatred cannot be appeased as long as this rule of violence continues, whether in open or concealed form.

The history of the relations between Ireland and England is marked by a continuous struggle for freedom on the part of the Irish

people, and by a continuous war of depoliation and extermination on the part of the ruling class of England. In his letter to Marx, dated October 24, 1869, Engels wrote:

“Irish history shows one how disastrous it is for a nation when it has subjugated another nation. All the abominations of the English have their origin in the Irish Pale.” (*The Correspondence of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, p. 264, International Publishers, New York.)

The Pales are the parts of Ireland first subjugated by the British. They were won as the result of the bloodiest massacres that history has ever known.

Religious hatred, which since the time of the Reformation—which was a complete failure in Ireland—has been added to national hatred; the seizure of Irish estates by Henry VII, Henry VIII and Elizabeth, and the bloody suppression of the insurrections provoked by England; the literal extermination of the population of Drogheda and Wexford by Cromwell, who drove the people into the swamps and settled his own soldiers in great numbers on the land of the slain “papists”; the draconic penal laws and land confiscations of William III which reduced the Irish to the position of rightless pariahs; the brutal suppression of the “United Irishman” by Pitt, and the rule of robbery to which the Irish peasants have been subjected in a still greater measure since; the policy of destruction pursued by the British parliament against Ireland’s industry, commerce and navigation and the complete indifference of the

British “empire builders” to the chronic famines in Ireland; the systematic diversion of world commerce away from Ireland’s coast despite its excellent natural harbors, to ensure England’s monopoly in the field of navigation; the hermetical sealing of the Emerald Isle to keep it immune from the “political contamination” of the outer world; the steady robbery of Ireland by excessive farm rents, taxes, imports, customs duties, interest charges and price dictation, and the abominable suppression of every urge for independence of the Irish people by an army of policemen, gendarmes, spies and provocateurs; the enormous swindle practiced by Gladstone, Asquith and Lloyd George and their policy of Irish Home Rule and agrarian “reforms”; the splitting of Ireland into a North and South in 1920 and the policy of “divide and rule” followed with regard to Ireland; the creation of the Irish Free State in 1921 without the slightest change in the actual relationship of forces; the policy of corrupting the Irish bourgeoisie and the utter brutality of England’s post-war policy down to the recent terrorist sentences and executions of Irish nationalists—constitute a brief sketch of the terrible road of suffering which the brave and liberty-loving Irish people have had to traverse.

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Ireland’s struggle for liberty and independence was always closely intertwined with the similar struggles of other peoples. And so it is that Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin

have always taken great interest in Ireland's fate. When Frederick Engels came to Manchester in 1842 he made contact not only with the Chartists but also with the Irish Revolutionists and Socialists. In fact his wife, Lizzy Burns, was one of them. Engels visited Ireland twice, in 1855 and 1869. The traces of the terrible famine of 1845 during which more than a million persons perished, and of the famines and pestilences of the following years which exacted another million victims, were clearly visible to Engels. In his letter to Marx, dated May 23, 1856, Engels described the following scene of desolation:

"Whole villages are devastated, and there among them lie the splendid parks of the lesser landlords, who are almost the only people still living there, mostly lawyers. Famine, emigration and clearances together have accomplished this. There are not even cattle to be seen in the fields. The land is an utter desert which nobody wants. . . .

"The country has been completely ruined by the English wars of conquest from 1100 to 1850 (for in reality both the wars and the state of siege lasted as long as that)." (*Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.)

Marx also evinced great interest in the fate of the Irish people whose struggle for liberation he most actively supported. At the end of November, 1869, Marx introduced in the General Council of the First International a resolution on the Irish question which was adopted after prolonged and stormy debate. The resolution welcomed the struggle of the Irish for an amnesty of

the imprisoned Fenians, the heroic fighters for the liberation of the Irish people from the yoke of Great Britain.

Marx devoted the most minute attention to the solution of the Irish question. In a letter to Kugelmann dated November 29, 1869, he wrote:

"I have become more and more convinced—and the only question is to bring this conviction home to the English working class—that it can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland in the most definite way from the policy of the ruling classes, until it not only makes common cause with the Irish, but actually takes the initiative in dissolving the Union established in 1801 and replacing it by a free federal relationship." (Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 643.)

The main issue of the preceding century in Ireland was the land question. In proportion as the population became decimated by being robbed of its lands, by famine, crop failures, epidemics and physical extermination in the course of numerous insurrections, and also as a result of emigration—the only "export industry" which was and is "flourishing" in Ireland, down to the present day—Ireland's national struggle began to be intimately linked up with the class struggle of the terribly poor agricultural laborers, small farmers and industrial workers, the spearhead of which was directed against the English landlords and capitalists.

The Irish bourgeoisie, which in this period was exposed like the other classes of the Irish people to

various measures of oppression on the part of the English ruling class, particularly in the field of industry and commerce, was able throughout the nineteenth century until the very recent past to utilize the national revolutionary, anti-British movement of the Irish people for its own purposes.

Even today the Irish bourgeoisie knows how to harness considerable parts of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie as well as of the proletariat to its own chariot with the aid of the Social-Democratic leaders. On the other hand, the English ruling class has been able, through concessions of various kinds, through its strong position in industry, in the banks and in Ireland's trade, to win the Irish bourgeoisie over to its side and to make common cause with it against the Irish people. Naturally, to the extent that this cooperation between the Irish bourgeoisie and the English ruling class becomes visible to the masses and they become conscious of it, their movement is directed also against their own bourgeoisie. This process which set in in Ireland about the turn of the century and which became more intense at the beginning and during the World War, but particularly during the post-war period, may be expected to undergo sharp accentuation at the present juncture, when the Irish bourgeoisie through the logic of events is compelled to show its true colors.

The systematic depopulation of Ireland on the part of England pursued a quite definite end: to make Ireland the cattle run and truck

garden of England. Consequently, Ireland was transformed from a country of farm land into a country of pasture land, became the famous "emerald isle" whose task it is to supply the English ruling class and the corrupt labor aristocracy with that well-known "free breakfast." Today only one-twentieth of the entire arable area is sown to grain. England has been importing more live cattle from Ireland than from any other country; the same applies to dairy products, poultry, eggs, ham, etc. The degree of Ireland's economic dependence upon Great Britain is best illustrated by Ireland's balance of foreign trade. By means of various customs, currency and credit manipulations and a number of trade prohibitions, Great Britain has brought it about that it receives almost 100 per cent of Ireland's exports and supplies almost 100 per cent of Ireland's imports. On the average, exports to Great Britain in the period from 1909 to 1927 accounted for 95 per cent, and imports from Great Britain for about 80 per cent of Ireland's total. It strikes one as highly paradoxical that in a farm-products exporting country like Ireland the importation of foodstuffs should constitute so big an item (about 40 per cent). For this surprising phenomenon there is a simple explanation: Ireland sells her high-grade foodstuffs and purchases lower-grade foodstuffs in their place. To the present day the potato has remained the staple article of food in Ireland.

In *Capital* Marx mercilessly flayed this excruciating form of

the colonial exploitation of Ireland by the English ruling class. In the chapter on "The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation," a whole section is devoted to Ireland. To quote from it:

"England, a country with fully developed capitalist production, and preeminently industrial, would have bled to death with such a drain of population as Ireland has suffered. But Ireland is at present only an agricultural district of England, marked off by a wide channel from the country to which it yields corn, wool, cattle, industrial and military recruits." (Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 724, International Publishers, New York.)

But England's ruling class found ways and means not only of robbing the Irish peasants of their land but also of exacting exorbitant rents for this same land from its tenants, in so far as they did not escape their reach by emigration. Even today the Irish farmers must pay the English landlords an annual total of £3,000,000 as an annuity for the land which they had gracefully returned to them after many "reforms" and "land bills." In this connection Marx wrote sarcastically:

"The Irish famine of 1846 killed more than 1,000,000 people, but it killed poor devils only. To the wealth of the country it did not the slightest damage. The exodus of the next twenty years, an exodus still constantly increasing, did not, as, e.g., the Thirty Years' War, decimate, along with the human beings, their means of production. Irish genius discovered an altogether new way

of spiriting a poor people thousands of miles away from the scene of its misery. The exiles transplanted to the United States send home sums of money every year as travelling expenses for those left behind. Every troop that emigrates one year draws another after it the next. Thus, instead of costing Ireland anything, emigration forms one of the most lucrative branches of its export trade." (*Ibid.*, p. 726.)

During the nineteenth century over five million Irish emigrated to America. Ireland, which in 1806 had a population of eight million, had only 3,200,000 left in 1901. The census of 1926 stated its population to be 2,900,000, while in the United States alone there are today approximately ten million Irish. The stream of emigrants from Ireland continues uninterrupted even today. In the period of 1921 to 1939 the average annual emigration was 25,000, constituting a total approximating half a million. England was bound to be affected by this wholesale emigration. She had to pay for this criminal despoliation of an entire people by being faced with the most sanguinary rebellions and conspiracies that history has recorded, and which the Irish people always resorted to in their wild desperation. The peasant conspiracies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the "Whiteboys," the "Oakboys," the "Steelboys," the republican "Society of United Irishmen," the "Irish Catholic Association," and the society known as "Young Ireland," from the secret league of the "Fenians," the Irish "National League" and the "United



Irish League" down to the "Sinn-Fein" and the "Irish Republican Army" (I.R.A.) all constitute an uninterrupted chain of secret societies, groups of conspirators and terrorist organizations which are the expression of the indomitable will to secure independence and of the terrible and even desperate straits to which the English ruling class again and again reduced the Irish people.

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Marx and Engels clearly saw the basic evil of the Irish question and the means for its solution. Marx's words addressed to Meyer and Vogt on April 9, 1870, sound as if they had been written today:

"If, on the other hand, the English army and police were withdrawn tomorrow there would immediately be an agrarian revolution in Ireland. . . . The destruction of the English landed aristocracy in Ireland is an infinitely easier operation than in England itself because the *land question* has hitherto been the exclusive form of the social question in Ireland, because it is a question of existence, of *life and death*, for the immense majority of the Irish people and because it is at the same time inseparable from the *national* question quite apart from the passionate character of the Irish and the fact that they are more revolutionary than the English." (Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, pp. 645-46, International Publishers, New York.)

Marx's solution of the Irish question can be applied even today. Marx formulated this solution as early as November 2, 1867, in a letter to Engels:

"I used to think the separation of Ireland from England impossible. I now think it inevitable, although after the separation there may come *federation*." (*The Correspondence of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, p. 228.)

Lenin's comment hereto was as follows:

"Such was the program that Marx suggested to the English workers in the interests of Irish liberty, of the acceleration of social development and of the liberty of the English workers; because the English workers cannot secure liberty as long as they keep (or even permit the keeping of) another nation in slavery.

"But alas! Owing to a number of special historical causes, the British workers in the latter end of the nineteenth century found themselves dependent upon the Liberals and were imbued with the spirit of Liberal-Labor politics. . . .

"And the Liberals dragged out the liberation of Ireland for *half a century*, and have not even completed it yet!

"It was only in the twentieth century that the Irish peasant began to be transformed from a tenant farmer into a free landowner. But Messieurs the Liberals imposed upon them the system of *buying out the land at a 'fair' price*. They have paid, and will continue to pay for many years, millions and millions in tribute to the English landlords as a reward to the latter for having plundered them for centuries and for having reduced them to constant famine." (*Lenin on Britain*, p. 55, International Publishers, New York.)

How true these words are is apparent from the "conflict" between

the De Valera government and the English government, concerning the £3,000,000 annuity payable yearly as a redemption of the land, payment of which the English government firmly insists upon and which it finds means of collecting down to the last penny through all kinds of customs manipulations against Ireland, economically so completely dependent on England.

In the long-drawn-out double game which such "Liberals" as Gladstone, Asquith and Lloyd George played in connection with the Home Rule Bill, and in which they incited Anglo-Saxon and Protestant Ulster against the Catholic South, the imperialist policy of "divide and rule" was applied in classic fashion to Ireland.

In the Irish question, British imperialism—and it is immaterial whether the Liberals or the Conservatives were in the saddle, not to mention the times when "Labor governments" were in charge of British Empire policy—has always received the full backing and far-reaching support of the reactionary leaders of the Labor Party. The Hendersons, MacDonalDs, Snowdens and Thomases are in no respect outdone today by the Attlees, Greenwoods, Morrisons and Citrines. Although severely wounded, Connolly, a revolutionary labor leader, was ordered to be shot, after the bloody suppression of the Dublin uprising of 1916, by order of the English government in which Henderson, the leader of the Labor Party, held a ministerial seat. In the conflict over the "oath" between De Valera and the English gov-

ernment in 1932, as well as in the dispute about the £3,000,000 annuity, Thomas, a MacDonald Socialist, represented the interests of British imperialism not one scintilla worse than the honorable Sir John Simon would have done. Similarly, the Attlees, Greenwoods, Bevins & Co. loyally support today the policy of British imperialism toward Ireland.

In reply to the ambiguous and treacherous policy of force applied by British imperialism, the beginning of the World War witnessed a mighty flaring up of Irish nationalism, particularly of the Sinn Fein movement, the radical trend of which was joined by the consistent republican and the revolutionary sections of the workers under Connolly. The resistance of the Irish people, which had remained unbroken despite the defeat of 1916, received a setback in 1921 through the treachery of the Irish bourgeoisie. The Irish bourgeoisie, which used to call out British troops against the native workers even before 1914, had sold out the cause of the Irish people to British imperialism for the sake of economic advantages and sham political concessions. The result of this betrayal was the tearing of Ireland into two parts and the creation of the "Irish Free State," a dominion in which, with the exception of this new and decorative title, everything remained as of old.

The Irish bourgeoisie joyfully greeted every "concession" which England made. It hoped that with her aid it would be able to consolidate its power in the country and

launch an offensive against the working class, the rural proletariat and the small farmers who began to insist upon their social demands and to protest against the shameful peace that had been concluded. One cause of the civil war in Ireland during the first years after the world imperialist war was the general discontent of the lower and middle farmers who were being exploited by the landlords, land speculators, usurers and banks, and who demanded a radical agrarian reform. Another was the general dissatisfaction of the industrial and rural proletariat occasioned by the rapid deterioration of their standard of living and the tremendous rise in unemployment.

At any rate, British imperialism gained its goal. In 1922, in a speech he delivered in the House of Commons, Lord Birkenhead was already in a position to give the Irish bourgeoisie the following testimonial of good behavior:

*"The Free State Government hopes in a short time to be strong enough to suppress any groups that may seek to rebel against it. And I would much rather see the Free strong enough successfully to do no doubt that she will soon be strong enough to successfully do so." (The Communist International, No. 8, 1932, p. 18.)*

Lord Birkenhead was not mistaken. The Griffiths, Collinses, Cosgraves and De Valeras have exceeded all expectations.

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Obviously, the Irish people could

not say amen to such a state of affairs. The conclusion of peace between the Irish bourgeoisie and British imperialism necessarily led to friction and splits within the camp of the bourgeoisie, and to a further political differentiation of the Irish people. Gradually, an anti-British mass movement took shape. It consisted of industrial and rural workers, small farmers, some sections of the urban petty-bourgeoisie, a portion of the professional people and intellectuals as well as of those bourgeois groups which refused to put up with the existing state of affairs and espoused the national-revolutionary traditions of the Sinn Fein.

The Right wing of the Sinn Fein movement (Collins, Griffith, Cosgrave) which accepted the agreement reached with British imperialism now began a cruel campaign of suppression against those Irish republicans who continued the struggle for the unity of the Irish people. With the aid of British troops, the republican movement was put down and innumerable Irish republicans were shot. In 1923, De Valera, who at one time had been the leader of the Radical wing of the Sinn Fein, also capitulated.

Only a small group has collected in the irregular Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) and maintains its military organization illegally. The program of the I.R.A. calls for the complete secession of Ireland from England to be effected by the use of armed force.

Between the middle class, reactionary and anti-Communist lead-

ers of the I.R.A. and its rank and file members who are anti-British and anti-imperialist in their sentiments, who at the same time adhere to their class demands and on many questions are in sympathy with the Communists, there is a rent which becomes particularly visible in times of relative political calm. This portion of the workers which favors the revolutionary struggle often finds its way to the Communists as its class-consciousness develops. Thus, at the congress which founded the Communist Party of Ireland in 1933, three-fourths of the membership came from the ranks of the I.R.A. The split in the I.R.A., which occurred in 1934 and the convocation of the republican congress by the Left elements of the I.R.A., together with the Irish Civil Guard and individual trade unions, for the purpose of intensifying the fight against British imperialism and Irish capital, quite considerably enhanced the process of class differentiation within the I.R.A.

The leaders of the I.R.A. with their contradictory and often outspoken reactionary program have degenerated more and more into an imperialist agency which is misusing the just national demands of the Irish people to further the interest of foreign imperialists. The group of politicians which heads the I.R.A., what with their susceptibility for all kinds of influences from without, their inclination for terrorist methods and their policy of evading all burning social issues in Ireland are, as experience has shown, much more apt to hinder

than advance the Irish people's fight for national independence. For it is a fact that this attitude of the I.R.A. leadership leads not only to the comparative isolation of the I.R.A. movement from the masses but also to a state of affairs in which terrorist acts are used to justify and facilitate the terror of the British and the De Valera authorities in the eyes of the world, while it is often difficult to ascertain where in these acts national-revolutionary indignation begins and the provocation of this or that imperialist agency ends.

The increasing discontent of the masses with the policy of the Irish big bourgeoisie now in power, which discontent has become exceptionally acute since the outbreak of the terrible agrarian crisis in Ireland, has now reached a dangerous tension point. The masses are bringing to the fore with increasing emphasis not only purely economic but also political and national demands, and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Irish bourgeoisie, headed by De Valera, to continue its policy of national betrayal. Although it is still making attempts to maintain its former leading position in the national liberation movement by recourse to all manner of demagogic jugglery, as, for instance, its latest demand for the reunion of Ulster and Southern Ireland, it is doing so with appreciably declining success.

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Since 1932, the process of proletarianization has made extraordi-

nary progress among the masses of Ireland as a result of the fierce economic crisis, of the discontinuance, in the main, of money remittance from America, and the stoppage of emigration there, and also of the one-sided promotion of large-scale farming by means of tax privileges, credit facilities and subsidies. At the same time the land question has become a burning issue in the countryside. Seventy per cent of the 560,000 peasants own only 23 per cent of the land, while the big farmers and landed proprietors own 11,000,000 acres out of a total of 19,000,000 acres.

These dismal prospects of the overwhelming majority of the Irish population, the merciless terror of the former Cosgrave and present De Valera government against the Irish Workers' League and against the Communists, as well as the open encouragement of O'Duffy's fascist Blue Shirts, in addition to the continuous sharp practices indulged in by England when fixing customs duties in connection with the collection of the £3,000,000 annuity which has become an unbearable burden for the mass of the farmers—all this has once more brought to the surface during the last few years the inveterate and inextinguishable hatred of the working people of Ireland for their native bourgeoisie and imperialist England. At the same time the old national demands have, in consequence, been revived with new vigor—particularly since the beginning of the present war.

During the last few decades the Irish working class has come out in

increasing strength with its own class actions in the national liberation struggle of the Irish people, and these class actions were free from all illusions with regard to the national bourgeoisie of Ireland.

The great Dublin strike in 1913 was already evidence of the proletarian unification of Ireland, despite religious and national prejudices and the poisoned atmosphere which the English bourgeoisie had created between Ulster and Southern Ireland, between the Irish and the English workers, and which it is anxious to maintain even today. Equally clear and truly patriotic was the stand taken by the Irish workers in the last World War under the leadership of Connolly, when they, differing from the Irish bourgeoisie which sided with British imperialism, launched the slogan: "Neither King nor Kaiser!" meaning, neither for British nor for German imperialism, but for Ireland's freedom. Under the influence of the proletarian and radical elements led by Connolly, the Sinn Fein had declared as early as the World War that they are out to protect the interests of Ireland, that the Irish Volunteers would defend Ireland for Ireland's sake, under the Irish flag and under Irish officers.

Although the working class of Ireland, including the rural proletariat, possesses notable numerical strength (a total of half a million) it has not yet become the central political force that it should be as a class. The explanation for this is the peculiar historical class stratification, political traditions and the considerable influence of the nation-

al-revolutionary fighting organizations and of the Irish intellectuals. The weakness of the Irish working class in the national liberation movement of the past was primarily due to the lack of strong class leadership in the form of a revolutionary class party. This peculiar situation of the Irish working class, determined by social-economic, historical and political conditions, was a further reason why the Irish Communist Party was formed so late (1933). Since then the Irish working class has, however, grown considerably in class-consciousness, political organization and unity as a result of a whole number of class actions. The part which the Irish working class plays in the present day struggle for the national liberation of the Irish people is therefore incomparably greater and more important than that which it played during the first imperialist war.

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The history of Ireland proves once more the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist teaching that the national question cannot find any solution within the capitalist system.

The history of the struggle of the Irish people for liberty and independence shows that a national revolutionary movement which does not link up its struggle with the struggle of the masses for their

class demands will again and again be doomed to failure.

The task of uniting and freeing Ireland cannot be accomplished by the Irish bourgeoisie, which has already gone over into the camp of British imperialism and counter-revolution, nor by the I.R.A. whose leadership is under the influence of foreign imperialists. This task can only be shouldered by the Irish proletariat and peasantry. Only the economic and political struggle of the Irish workers and peasants against capitalism and landlordism can become the central force that will be capable of leading Ireland's struggle for liberation consistently to its conclusion.

Despite the threat of foreign invasion England and Ireland will be unable to find common ground as long as the former maintains her old imperialist positions with reference to the latter. Ireland can place no confidence in England if England does not grant the chief political demands of the Irish people; the demand for the reunion of Ulster and the Free State, and the demand for the complete political independence of all Ireland.

The solution of the Irish question offered by Marx in 1867 has great political significance even today.

As long as Britain's rule of force continues in Ireland in open or concealed form, Ireland will remain the Achilles' heel of the British empire.

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## CHINA'S THREE YEARS' WAR FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION

BY LING PAO

**F**OR three years now, the 450,000,000 people of China have been waging a heroic national war for the freedom and national independence of their country.

This just and progressive war that the Chinese people are waging against the Japanese aggressors is also of international importance because it helped to some extent to hinder the expansion of the imperialist war in Europe and is now, by weakening Japanese imperialism, hindering the extension of the war to the Far East, to the Pacific. The war waged by the Chinese people is accelerating the growth of the movement for national liberation in the colonies and semi-colonial countries, and opens wide perspectives for all the oppressed nations of the world.

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On July 7, 1937, the Japanese military clique, in starting operations in China, counted on conducting a "lightning war," and on achieving a "lightning victory." At all events, they proclaimed that: "The subjugation of the whole of China will require an army of only 200,000 to

300,000; the whole matter will be settled in two or three months."

What have the three years of war in China shown? The plans of Japanese imperialism that were based on a lightning war in China have collapsed. In spite of her economic backwardness and her political and military weaknesses, China has united all the progressive forces in the country and has not only succeeded in putting up a stern resistance to the enemy, but also in involving Japan, strategically and tactically, in a long war calculated to exhaust the latter's reserves in materials and men.

It took the Japanese two to three months to occupy the capital of China, and over a year to occupy Hankow, Canton and other centers. But have the Japanese succeeded in subjugating China? No!

Looking at the map of China one might get the impression that Japan has occupied a large part of the country. Actually, however, of the nine hundred districts in the so-called occupied zone only about one hundred are in the hands of the Japanese, including the forty-two districts in the Province of Hopeh,

which the Japanese imperialists had occupied before the war. The Japanese are in command of only the big cities along the railways and lines of communication. That is, they control, as the Chinese say, only points and lines, whereas the rest of the territory is either entirely in the hands of the Chinese, or serves as the field of operations of the Chinese guerrilla forces who are preventing the Japanese from gaining complete control of and exploiting the occupied regions.

The Japanese High Command has been compelled to increase its expeditionary forces in China year after year. Nevertheless, the rate of progress of the Japanese troops into the interior has diminished from year to year. In the first year of the war, the Japanese advanced 1,300 kilometers\* into the interior of the country; in the second year, they advanced 310 kilometers, and in the third year, in spite of all their efforts, they have not managed to advance more than 300 kilometers. One of the decisive drawbacks from which the Japanese army in China is suffering is that the troops are stretched along a wide front of over 4,000 kilometers with an extremely attenuated line of communication.

In the first year of the war twenty-five Japanese divisions, making a total of 600,000 to 700,000 men, were sent to China. At the present time, thirty-three divisions, making a total of over 1,000,000 troops, are being maintained there.

In the first year of the war, one-third of the Japanese troops were

employed in "punitive expeditions" against the Chinese guerrilla forces, but in the second and third years of the war they have been compelled to employ half their fighting forces against the growing guerrilla movement in the occupied regions, and, above all, against the Eighth Revolutionary People's Army, which is operating in North China.

According to the figures quoted by the Minister for War of the Chinese Republic, Japan's total casualties during the three years of war amount to 1,600,000 men. Notwithstanding the diminishing scale of military operations from year to year, Japanese casualties have steadily increased. It must be borne in mind that Japan's mobilization reserves do not exceed 6,000,000 men. China's casualties in this war amount approximately to 2,000,000 men, but her mobilization reserves amount to from 40,000,000 to 45,000,000 men. China already has an army of 6,000,000 men.

Recently, the Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese Air Forces stated that up to April 30, this year, 848 Japanese airplanes had been destroyed; 256 of these were destroyed in the air by Chinese airmen, 253 were destroyed while on the ground, and the rest were brought down by anti-aircraft guns. The number of Japanese airmen killed in China is 1,055, fifty-one were taken prisoner and forty-two are missing.

The morale and fighting efficiency of the Japanese troops are deteriorating from year to year. In the first year of the war, the Japanese soldiers fought very stubbornly and,

\* Kilometer = .62137 miles.



as a rule, never allowed themselves to be taken prisoners; but in the second year, and particularly in the third year of the war, the Chinese army has repeatedly disarmed and captured Japanese soldiers. There have been several cases of Japanese soldiers going over to the side of the Chinese National Army, bringing their arms with them.

The troops of the puppet government, numbering at present 500,000, rise against their officers at every opportunity and go over to the side of the Chinese National Army with all their equipment. Last March, the *North China Daily News* reported that 150,000 soldiers of the puppet government had gone over to the side of the Chinese army.

Thus, contrary to the expectations of her government, Japan was compelled to engage in a "major war" against the Chinese people who are united in a National United Front. As far back as the autumn of 1938, the Japanese Prime Minister Konoye was obliged to admit that "the country must abandon all illusions about a quick and easy victory in China and be prepared to meet exceptional difficulties; all the forces of the Japanese nation must be mobilized." At that time, the Japanese Minister for War, Itagaki, stated that "the war in China will last another ten years"; and at a conference of prefects held in Tokyo last May, Prime Minister Yonai stated that "final victory is still a long way off."

In spite of their partial successes, the ruling circles of Japan have been compelled to change their war

plans, and they are seeking for ways and means of extricating themselves from the war. This explains the "peace" declaration made by Prime Minister Konoye in December, 1938, and his statement regarding the establishment of a "new order in Eastern Asia." By these means he sought to induce the Chinese Government to accept a peace of capitulation. The Japanese set out to "conquer China with the hands of the Chinese themselves."

Konoye's declaration was followed by a fierce economic and political offensive against China, while military operations continued. But Japan has undertaken no more wide frontal attacks as she did during the first year of the war, and is not doing so now.

The situation at the fronts in the first half of 1940 reveals definite signs of a further diminution of the striking power of the Japanese troops. This is illustrated by the following facts: On November 24, 1939, the Japanese troops occupied Nanyang on the South front, and in January, 1940, the main Japanese forces marched on Wanen. On February 2, Wanen was captured by the Japanese, but as a result of the pressure of the Chinese forces they were compelled to withdraw after losing 20,000 men; and on February 17, the Chinese troops stood before the walls of Nanyang.

During the last few months (April to June, 1940), stubborn fighting occurred on the front in Central China. The Japanese Command concentrated large forces on this front. General Cheng Cheng, Chief of the Military-Political

Council of the Chinese Army, estimates the Japanese casualties during the fighting in Hupeh and Hunan at 55,000 killed and wounded. The Chinese captured 2,600 horses, 80 tanks and 2,000 motor trucks.

In the effort to "conquer China with the hands of the Chinese themselves" the Japanese set up the puppet government of Wang Ching-wei, the so-called "Central Government." The Japanese invaders are striving to create mass support for this puppet government and for Wang Ching-wei by forming all sorts of organizations; and they are striving to influence Chinese public opinion by propagating pro-Japanese views in politics, science, art, religion, morals and so forth. At the same time the activities of Japanese agents operating in the camps of the National United Front have been greatly increased with the object of disrupting it from within. Acts of diversion and terrorism against Chinese patriots are also resorted to. Making strenuous efforts to compel China to capitulate, Japan is striving to take advantage of the situation created by the war in Europe to isolate China completely from the outside world.

The Japanese imperialists are striving as far as possible to cover the cost of their war with the resources of the occupied regions, and to extract as much material and capital as they possibly can out of them for the purposes of the war. One of the slogans of the Japanese imperialists is: "The war must pay for the war." Wang Ching-wei is striving by means of threats, as well

as by promises of high dividends, to induce the Chinese capitalists to cooperate in Japanese undertakings. Recently, General Nitsio, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese forces in China, issued an order that a number of Chinese undertakings that had been seized by the Japanese be restored to their former owners if they are prepared to cooperate in business with the Japanese, to form "united companies." A number of Chinese capitalists, particularly the compradores, at once expressed their readiness to accept these terms and have begun to cooperate with Japanese business undertakings.

Nevertheless, the Chinese people are fighting the invaders with greater determination and vigor than ever before, and are resisting the plunder of the material resources of their country with all means in their power. In this field, particular activity is displayed by the Chinese workers in the occupied regions. They desert the factories en masse and join the guerrilla forces. In spite of all prohibitions, they organize strikes and thereby cause the Japanese imperialists no little damage. In Shanghai and Tientsin, meetings of workers were held which passed resolutions emphatically protesting against Wang Ching-wei's "Central Government" and calling upon all workers to refuse to submit to this government.

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The Japanese are in occupation of all the important cities, economic and political centers, big ports and main railway lines, the big canals

and rivers, and are blockading the whole coast of China.

How is it that not China, but Japan, wants "peace" and a speedy end of the war?

Naturally, it is not the Japanese imperialists, but the Chinese people and their government who desire a genuine peace that will secure the freedom and national independence of the country. But the Chinese people and their government know that such a peace can be achieved not by capitulation or compromise, but only by hard and stubborn fighting. They know also that this entails a long war, that only such a war can lead to the economic and military exhaustion of the enemy and to the expulsion of the invaders from their country.

The three years of war have considerably shaken the economy of Japan. Japan has already spent over 18,800,000,000 yen for war purposes. Her war budget rose from 454,000,000 yen in 1931-32 to 7,124,000,000 yen in 1939-40, a fifteen-fold increase. War expenditures accounted for 73 per cent of the total budget of 1939-40. During the war period, the national debt has risen from 10,000,000,000 yen to 24,000,000,000 yen, that is to say, nearly a two-and-a-half-fold increase.

Japan's gold reserve is at the point of exhaustion. During the three years of war, Japan—which is largely dependent upon imports of strategical raw materials (she imports 76 per cent of her iron, 92 per cent of her oil, 70 per cent of her non-ferrous metals, 98 per cent of her raw cotton, 95 per cent of her wool, 100 per cent of rubber,

etc.)—has spent over 2,000,000,000 yen of her pre-war gold reserve, as well as the gold obtained during the period of the war and a large part of the gold wrung out of the general public. From the beginning of the war to the end of 1939 Japan's trade shows an unfavorable balance of 2,169,000,000 yen.

How does Japan finance the war? The war in China is at present financed by the issue of new loans, higher taxes and currency emissions. The latter have increased from 1,500,000,000 yen in 1937 to 3,500,000,000 yen at the beginning of 1940. The issue of internal loans in Japan are as follows:

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Yen</i>    |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1937 .....  | 1,485,000,000 |
| 1938 .....  | 4,356,000,000 |
| 1939 .....  | 5,280,000,000 |
| 1940 .....  | 6,000,000,000 |

This year, loans amount to an average of 86.6 yen per head of the population, whereas the wages of a textile worker amount, on the average, to 200 or 250 yen per annum, and the average annual income of a small peasant ranges between 200 and 400 yen. This vividly shows what a heavy burden these compulsory loans impose upon the masses of the Japanese people. As a consequence of the war, direct and indirect taxes have increased from 1,680,000,000 yen in 1937 to 3,910,000,000 yen in 1940. Direct taxes alone have risen 25 to 30 per cent.

Japan's economic difficulties are increasing to an extraordinary degree. The majority of the Japanese workers are working eleven and

twelve hours per day and more than one-fourth of them are working fourteen hours a day.

The conditions of the working people of Japan are becoming worse also as a consequence of food difficulties. The shortage of agricultural produce is due to the shortage of agricultural labor, the sharp decline in livestock, the shortage of agricultural implements, and the shrinking of the cultivated area. One of the results of this situation is a steady rise in the price of all commodities, particularly those of everyday use.

All this is causing the growth of anti-war and revolutionary sentiments, which the ruling classes of Japan are striving to suppress by means of the sternest possible measures. Thus, according to official reports, in Tokyo alone, in 1938, 13,000 persons were arrested for anti-war activities. Anti-war sentiments are even growing in the Japanese army, where numerous cases of insubordination, and even of mutiny, have occurred.

It is obvious that the situation at home is compelling the Japanese Government to seek for a speedy termination of the war. And this policy is also dictated to the Japanese imperialists by the whole international situation. Anxious to derive some benefit from the European war, Japan is not only making efforts to entrench herself in China, but also to seize Indo-China, Siam, Indonesia and—if a favorable opportunity occurs—the Philippines, Hongkong and Burma, or at all events, to entrench herself in those countries. For this purpose

Japan needs the very forces that are now engaged in the war in China.

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How is it that the Chinese people, badly armed and weakened by long years of internal war, can defend themselves so stubbornly against a far superior enemy and prevent him from achieving his object? It is mainly because all the progressive forces in the country are united in the National United Front. If China, torn by internal conflict, were not united in the National United Front, she would have been unable to resist the Japanese imperialists for three years.

The National United Front was established on the initiative of the Communist Party. As early as 1931, when Japan occupied Manchuria, the Communist Party of China proposed that the internal war be stopped and that all the armed forces of China be united for the purpose of driving the Japanese invaders out of Manchuria. In August, 1935, when Japan tried to seize the Province of Hupeh, the Communist Party issued an appeal to the Chinese people and to all the Chinese armies to unite the forces of the nation against Japanese aggression. Later, the Communist Party repeatedly proposed that a National United Front be formed for the purpose of resisting the Japanese invaders. During the events in Hsiang (in December, 1936), the Communist Party succeeded in averting another great fratricidal war and, eventually, in

laying the foundation for a National United Front.

Finally, in September, 1937, two months after the Japanese invaded North and Central China and captured Peiping and Tientsin, the Kuomintang accepted the Communist Party's proposal for cooperation in the struggle against the Japanese invaders. On September 23, 1937, Chiang Kai-shek declared that "in this critical period for the nation, only the united forces of the nation can vanquish Japanese imperialism."

After cooperation had been established between the two most powerful political parties in China—the Kuomintang and the Communist Party—other political parties and groups joined the National United Front, and all the progressive forces in the country rallied around the Central Government of China, headed by General Chiang Kai-shek.

China entered the war without a united army, and without a united command. In addition to the central army under the command of the Nanking Government, there was the Chinese Red Army, and numerous provincial armies, which for years had been fighting each other. The central army, and particularly the provincial armies, were badly trained and equipped. The Chinese army possessed a total of 600 airplanes of obsolete design, and suffered from a shortage of arms and ammunition.

In the very first months of the national war for liberation, the Chinese army was placed under a single command. Under the direction of the National Government,

vigorous efforts were made to mobilize the masses of the people for the army, and to give them military training. In the Province of Kwangsi alone, 3,000,000, and in the Province of Szechwan, 5,000,000, were mobilized and trained. In the Province of Hunan all the male population from the age of 18 to 36 were given military training. In the Provinces of Hunan, Hupeh, Shansi, Kwantung, Shensi, Kiangsu and Honan, about 4,000,000 men were mobilized and given military training. Exceptionally important successes in military training were achieved by the people in the regions controlled by the guerrilla movement.

In these regions, where the Eighth Revolutionary People's Army, formed out of the Red Army, is stationed, even children perform auxiliary work for the army, acting as dispatch bearers, literature distributors, and so forth. The women do Red Cross work. Many women have volunteered for the front after taking a course in military training. In the Shansi, Hupeh and Chahar border district, 3,000,000 received military training.

The Eighth Revolutionary People's Army is playing a particularly important part in organizing the guerrilla warfare and extending its field of operations.

The section of the Eighth Army commanded by Neh Young-cheng started guerrilla warfare in the border region of Shansi, Hupeh and Chahar. In the course of a year, this section took part in eighty major and minor battles, repulsed numerous Japanese attacks and held

large Japanese forces in North China. It has now converted the region of Shansi, Hupeh and Chahar, an area of 100,000,000 square kilometers with a population of about 12,000,000, into one of the strongest guerrilla bases controlling over 70 districts.

Another section of the Eighth Army, commanded by Chow Lung, is operating in the northwest region of Shansi, where also a guerrilla base has been established which controls thirty districts with a population of about 2,000,000.

A third section of the Eighth Army, under the direct command of Chu Teh, is operating in the region of Shansi and Honan. Here, the guerrilla troops control 60 to 70 districts. This section of the Eighth Army has rendered great assistance to the other sections of the Chinese Army operating in Suchow and Wuchang. It has taken part in over one hundred battles, and several times has broke through the enemy's encirclement. In April, 1938, this section of the Eighth Army repulsed a heavy Japanese attack that was simultaneously delivered on nine sides.

In addition to these, the Command of the Eighth Army has formed several other armed units which are now carrying on guerrilla operations in the rear of the Japanese forces.

In 1939 alone, the Eighth Army fought over 1,800 big battles against a total of 50,000 Japanese troops. General Kuwashi, Commander of the 110th Japanese Division, had to admit in a confidential report to Army Headquarters that by its

skilful methods of organization the Eighth Army had won over vast masses of men, that its bases were very strong and that, therefore, he found it difficult to cope with it.

In the region of Nanking, Shanghai and Hankow, a Fourth Revolutionary People's Army has been formed under the leadership of Communists. The guerrilla forces in this army even attack big cities like Nanking and Shanghai. They destroy the principal railway and telegraph lines and keep the Japanese garrisons in a constant state of alarm.

All this shows that the Eighth and Fourth Revolutionary People's Armies are, and will continue to be, the most loyal and reliable bulwarks of the National United Front in China.

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China is indebted to the National United Front for the positive results she has achieved in building up the state on the basis of the "Three Principles" of Sun Yat-sen.

One of the most important factors in the democratization of the political system in China was the establishment of a People's Political Council and of provincial and district People's Political Councils, and also the democratization of the village elder system. In the State People's Political Council established in July, 1938, all the anti-Japanese parties and organizations are represented.

At the Fourth Session of the People's Political Council, it was resolved to convene a People's

Congress to adopt a constitution for China. This important political decision was strongly supported by the people and endorsed by the National Government. The People's Congress is to be held at the end of 1940, and a wide campaign in preparation for it is being conducted throughout the country.

Of importance in the work of democratizing the political system was the introduction by the National Government of measures such as the publication of the objects of the anti-Japanese war and of the program of building up the state, the introduction of laws against abuses and tyranny of officials, and the shooting of some particularly corrupt and tyrannical officials, prefects, governors, and even of Chang Fu-tsu, the Chairman of the Provincial Government in Shantung. All this serves to clean up the administration and to eliminate corruption, imposition of unauthorized taxes, tyranny of officials, etc.

It is characteristic that in 1938 and 1939 May Day was celebrated in China after being prohibited for ten years. The further democratization of the political system has stimulated the activities of the working class and has helped to enlist the broadest masses of the working people in China for the national war for liberation.

The democratization of the political system has been particularly effective in the regions controlled by the guerilla armies. For example, in the Province of Shansi, the district prefects are elected by the people. In the Province of Anh-

wei, the district prefect also serves as the head of the guerilla units and of the home defense units.

In the border regions of Shansi, Kansu and Ninghsia, where the Eighth Revolutionary People's Army is stationed, all members of the administration are elected by the people and are obliged to report on their activities to their constituents. The people have the right to demand the recall of any official who has betrayed his trust. All the district prefects and all the heads of government bodies are closely connected with the people. During military operations they are to be found in the front lines, but in "peaceful" times they carry on important constructive work.

During the period of the war the Chinese Government has also achieved successes in the field of economic construction. It succeeded in good time in evacuating the important arsenals and big munitions works from the territories now occupied by the Japanese. In Southwest, and partly also in Northwest China, new industrial centers have been created. These can provide the minimum requirements of the army, and particularly the necessary arms and munitions such as rifles, cartridges, shells, grenades, etc.

At the present time, the State Commission for National Resources, of which Chiang Kai-shek is the head, controls 45 large enterprises, which are extremely important for the purposes of defense. In addition, 30,000 small industrial cooperative societies have been formed which manufacture general consumers'

goods as well as equipment and uniforms for the army. Nevertheless, enormous tasks still confront the Chinese people in the field of economic development and in mobilizing all the economic resources of the country for the requirements of the war.

Measures have also been taken to improve the conditions of the peasantry and of the masses of the workers generally.

In the region of Chungking, where 100,000 industrial workers are now concentrated, the workers demanded the formation of united trade unions. In the city of Chungking a newspaper workers' trade union has already been formed, and there is also a textile workers union which unites the workers in the big Yiu Fui Mills. The union fights for higher wages and better working conditions for its members. In some provinces, in spite of the resistance of the landowners, and partly also of the Government officials, rents were reduced 25 per cent. In the regions where the Eighth Army is stationed, rents were reduced in all districts. In the Province of Shansi, an agrarian reform was carried through, the keynote of which was "a fair distribution of the burdens of the war"; here rents were reduced by half. An important measure carried out by the Government was the transfer of unoccupied land and even of private land to peasant communities and the refugees from occupied regions. In the border regions of Shensi, Kansu and Ninghsia, and in the regions within the zone covered by the Eighth Army,

the workers were given increases in wages.

All the measures for increasing the fighting efficiency of the army and for improving the conditions of the working people were made possible by the National United Front and the wide assistance rendered by the Chinese people. These measures, however, are far from having been applied in all districts; but their fulfilment is absolutely essential for the purpose of achieving the victory of the Chinese people.

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The three years of war the Chinese people have waged for national liberation have shown that they are capable of continuing the struggle in spite of all difficulties, and that they will certainly do so.

China has many grounds for confidence in victory over the Japanese imperialists. The Japanese military clique has been compelled to wage a long war; but in such a war victory can be achieved only by the side that can hold out longest. China has lost a considerable part of her territory; but the unoccupied regions of China are of vast dimensions and provide the Chinese people with great possibilities for continuing the war. The unoccupied regions of China have a population of about 300,000,000. China possesses vast reserves in men and material.

The greatest danger that threatens China is a split in the National United Front, the danger of capitulation. Although the National United Front has overcome severe difficulties and has achieved important suc-



cesses during the three years of war, and although the Chinese people is continuing to offer stubborn resistance to the enemy, the danger of a split is by no means averted. Never in the course of the whole war has the danger of capitulation loomed so definitely before the people as it is at present.

What are the roots of this danger? Mainly, the internal situation in China. A section of the bourgeoisie and of the landowners in China, particularly the compradores, have been frightened by the growing dimensions of the national war for liberation and by the menace to their class interests which they hold higher than the interests of the nation. These sections are ready to capitulate to Japan so as to take part in the plunder of China as the agents of Japanese joint stock companies. The treachery of a section of the national bourgeoisie has naturally increased the difficulties of the National United Front. It has encouraged the treacherous elements in the country who are ready to capitulate; and it has stimulated the activities of the advocates of compromise with the Japanese imperialists.

Traitors and capitulators like Wang Ching-wei, who have openly gone over to the side of the Japanese, have roused the contempt and hatred of the whole of the Chinese people, and are therefore less dangerous than the traitors and capitulators in the camp of the National United Front, the advocates of "compromise."

Certain vacillating politicians who are under the influence of the capit-

ulators are trying to increase the exploitation of the masses of the working people and to hinder the mobilization of the national resources. They are striving to suppress the democratic regime established in a number of regions, and to liquidate the democratic gains that have been achieved. These politicians are striving to disrupt the National United Front from within, and to weaken the power of resistance of the Chinese people. Some of them are counting on the assistance of Great Britain and the United States and grossly underestimate the strength and resources of China herself. These people assert that the war against Japan cannot be continued without the assistance of Great Britain and the United States. Some of them base their hopes on the mediation of foreign powers, particularly the United States, and believe that with the help of these powers it will be possible to reach a compromise with Japan. But such a compromise will be barely distinguishable from downright capitulation.

Naturally, not every traitor and capitulator openly calls for capitulation. Some say: "We are in favor of the anti-Japanese war, in favor of the National Government; but we are opposed to the Communists."

The out-and-out traitors are openly carrying on a campaign for the dissolution of the Communist Party, the Eighth and Fourth Armies and the border regions. There have been many cases where to please the traitors and capitulators, representatives of local administrations have confiscated and destroyed

anti-Japanese newspapers and books published by the Communist Party of China, and have permitted the distribution of pro-Japanese newspapers and books. There have been cases where Communists have been arrested and shot, and armed attacks have been made on units of the Eighth Army. For example, General Chang Yin-wu and his troops made an open attack on units of the Eighth Army; in the Province of Shantung the troops of Cheng Ching-yung attacked guerrilla units led by Communists. In northwest China, reactionary generals captured Nangching and Szenang—district cities in the Shensi, Kansu and Ninghsia border district—but were subsequently driven out.

The Communist Party of China is aware that among the capitulators, among all those who are expressing opposition to the Communists, there are not a few misled and vacillating elements who must be convinced of the error of their views and won over to the side of the National United Front. It is, therefore, doing all it can to establish friendly relations with those units of the Chinese Army that had been hostile to the Eighth Army in the past.

But in the interests of the Chinese people the Communist Party and the Eighth Army are compelled to put up a stern fight against the provocateurs and capitulators; for if the struggle against them were suspended, it would mean sinking in the mire of opportunism, that is, surrender of principles and the abandonment of the struggle to defend the interests of the people.

The danger of capitulation springs also from the specific character of

the present international situation. Before the European war broke out, the British, French and American imperialists to some extent helped China in her resistance. They desired to use the Chinese people as a means of exhausting Japan, and to use Japan as a means of weakening China so as to come in as arbiters later on. But as the imperialist war in Europe developed, Great Britain and France began to urge the termination of the war in China as they desired to draw Japan into the Anglo-French bloc. In addition, they counted on utilizing China's vast resources of raw material for their war purposes. Now, however, with the defeat of France, the situation has changed. Unable to defend their interests in the Far East, Great Britain and France are pursuing a course of compromise with Japan. France has closed the Indo-Chinese frontier, and Great Britain has agreed to stop the transit of goods to China from Burma.

The Chinese Government regards the conduct of the French and British governments as direct assistance to China's enemy. Wang Chung-hui, the Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs, declared that the conduct of the British Government was unfriendly and illegal. It was a direct violation of the treaty between Great Britain and China concluded as far back as the nineteenth century. According to this treaty, neither side has the right to close the road from Burma to China, either in peacetime or wartime.

Taking advantage of the complacency of Great Britain and France, Japan was enabled to strengthen the blockade of China in the south and

the east. This has increased China's economic and military difficulties. At the same time, however, it has opened the eyes of the Chinese politicians who had harbored illusions about Great Britain and France, who had counted on the assistance of these powers and had underestimated the strength of the Chinese people in the struggle against the Japanese invaders.

The capitulators in China claim that in view of Great Britain's agreement with Japan, China's position is hopeless, that she is now cut off from the outside world.

In answer to this it must be said that the international situation is by no means so unfavorable for China. Undoubtedly, Great Britain's conduct has reduced the possibility of foreign trade and of importing arms. Nevertheless, the cancellation of the Japano-American commercial treaty and the introduction of licenses for the export of oil, steel scrap and other metal scrap from the United States are signs that the antagonisms between the United States and Japan are becoming more acute and will weaken the forces of Japanese imperialism.

China possesses all the possibilities for victory; but in order that these possibilities may be realized it is absolutely essential resolutely to overcome the danger of capitulation. Now every honest statesman in China who wishes to see his homeland independent must more than ever build his hopes on the Chinese people and on their inexhaustible strength. The Chinese people will still further strengthen their National United Front, which gives

China a specific advantage over Japanese imperialism.

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How can the danger of capitulation be averted? The Chinese Communists and all honest patriots are of the opinion that, first of all, it is *now more than ever necessary to intensify the fight against all avowed and tacit capitulators and traitors, and unswervingly to continue the war for national liberation.* In the rear of the Japanese, guerrilla warfare must be intensified more than ever, and the existing guerrilla bases must be strengthened.

Secondly, all the Chinese Communists and all honest Chinese patriots are of the opinion that *the unity of the nation, and particularly the unity of action of all anti-Japanese parties, groups and organizations, must be strengthened and fortified.* Above all, cooperation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party must be strengthened, and a relentless struggle must be waged against the despicable plans to split the National United Front. All those who on the pretext of "fighting the Communists" are pursuing a policy of capitulation and carrying on disruptive activities must be ruthlessly combated.

The Communist Party of China is the backbone of the National United Front in the struggle against Japanese imperialism. That is why every honest Chinese patriot regards it as his duty resolutely to oppose the slanderous attacks on the Communist Party.

Thirdly, the Chinese Communists and all honest patriots are of the opinion that *in order to avert the danger of capitulation, the broad masses of the people must be drawn into the work of civil and military development*. If the people are not given democratic rights it is impossible to wage a heroic self-sacrificing war against a serious enemy.

The Communist Party of China, which is in the front line of the struggle against Japanese imperialism and is fighting for the establishment of an independent republic, continues to advocate the policy of a National United Front.

The Communists are exerting all their efforts to secure the early convocation of the People's Congress that will really represent the interests of the people and will adopt a constitution that expresses these interests.

Thus, the continuation of the anti-Japanese war, the strengthening of the unity of the nation and the further democratization of the Government are the conditions that guarantee that the difficulties, and the principal danger, a split and

capitulation, that now confronts China, will be overcome. If these conditions are adhered to, the Chinese people will be guaranteed a decisive victory over the Japanese aggressors.

The national war for liberation waged by the Chinese people has entered its fourth and critical year. The responsibility of all the political parties for the destiny of the Chinese people has grown immeasurably. A great responsibility for the destiny of the Chinese people rests upon the Communists. The unshakable determination of the Communist Party of China, and of the whole of the Chinese people to continue the war, the policy of armed resistance against Japan pursued by the National Government, as has once again been testified by the Seventh Plenum of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang that took place at the beginning of July this year, go to show that the Chinese people will succeed in overcoming the main danger—the danger of capitulation—and of driving the Japanese imperialists from Chinese soil.

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## THE SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE

BY C. DOIDJASHVILI

**T**HE mass transition of Soviet agriculture to the system of collective farming, which took place in the summer of 1929, and the abolition of the capitalist elements in the villages denoted a fundamental, revolutionary social transformation which in its effect was of equal importance with the revolutionary transformation of October 1917.

“The distinguishing feature of this revolution is that it was accomplished *from above*; on the initiative of the state, and directly supported *from below* by the millions of peasants, who were fighting to throw off kulak bondage and to live in freedom in the collective farm.” (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 305.)

Today collective farming has become deeply ingrained in the life of the peasantry throughout the Soviet Union. On the premises of the Agricultural Exposition of the U.S.S.R. in Moscow there is a model village, a Soviet village, as it in part already exists today and in part is in the process of creation. Around the village Soviet, the beautiful club, the school, the maternity home and the

children's nursery are grouped the buildings of a state and a collective farm, the workshops of a machine and tractor station, modern stables, barns and storehouses and various agro-technical laboratories. This village is entirely electrified and equipped with telephones and radios. Every one of its parts demonstrates the fundamentally new features which socialism has brought to the peasantry in the U.S.S.R. All improvements shown in this village are true copies of corresponding improvements in various actual villages.

In all villages of the U.S.S.R. the essential elements of this new, Soviet village exist, for everywhere the advent of the new in the countryside has commenced in one form or another. Of the two possible forms of development in the countryside, the capitalist and the socialist, the socialist has been finally victorious. Today there are approximately 243,000 collective farms in the Soviet Union. The socialist sector of agriculture comprises 99.1 per cent of the area under cultivation and produces 98.7 per cent of the entire agricultural output. A total of

about 6,500 machine and tractor stations today furnish equipment to till three-fourths of the cultivated area of these collective farms, and more than half of the tilled area is today reaped with combines.

The tremendous electrification of the entire country, which Lenin in his day considered the decisive factor, has contributed powerfully to the transformation of agriculture and paved the way for the new culture in the countryside.

How is life organized on one of these collective farms?

The enemies of Soviet rule have spread all kinds of horrendous tales and provocative lies to discredit the collective farm system among the peasantry. They would have people believe that collectivization in agriculture means the socialization, that is, the common ownership and use of dwelling houses, furniture, truck gardens, poultry, etc., that all personal property is abolished, and other such nonsense.

What are the actual facts with regard to what is common and what is personal property on the collective farms of the U.S.S.R.? The land, the draft animals, the farm machinery, seed and fodder reserves, farm structures, barns, sheds, storehouses, clubs, schools, theaters, factories for working up agricultural products, such as mills, dairies, etc., are all used in common by the members of the respective collective farms. They constitute the bulk of the *collective* property of the collective farmers. In addition every collective farmer has a subsidiary establishment of his own which is his personal property and is protected as such by the

Stalin Constitution. This personal property of the collective farmer includes his dwelling house, his vegetable and fruit garden, minor structures (barn, stable), all his household goods and his own cattle (cows, sheep, pigs, poultry), etc. The model statutes of agricultural artels (producers' cooperatives) which were confirmed by the Government of the U.S.S.R., state in this regard:

"Every collective farm household may possess for its own use two to three cows and in addition young cattle, two to three sows and their litter, a total of 20 to 25 sheep and goats, an unlimited number of poultry and rabbits, and up to 20 beehives."\*

Thus, in addition to the *basic* common property from which each collective farmer derives his main income, there is also his personal, auxiliary enterprise from which he derives a supplementary income.

The productive and social activities on each collective farm are regulated by a set of rules which are adopted at a general meeting of all the members of the collective farm.

The principles according to which work and the internal organization of the collective farms are regulated may be stated as follows: All able-bodied members of the collective farm, both men and women, are divided into work brigades and groups. To every brigade or group a definite section of the land together with the necessary means of production (cattle, tools, machines,

\* The figures given refer to agricultural districts with developed cattle raising; in districts which predominantly raise grain or cotton or tobacco, the figures are changed accordingly.

etc.) is assigned for a specified time. Every brigade is headed by a brigade leader who is made responsible for the proper distribution of the work. For purposes of calculating both the quantity and the quality of work produced by each member of the collective farm, the "workday norm" is taken as the unit. It represents the standard of output per day, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in any particular kind of work, such as plowing or sowing per hectare, threshing of a specified quantity of grain, etc. These standards are fixed by every collective farm, taking into consideration the specific conditions of work (the number and quality of the cattle used, the machinery available, etc.).

This method of calculation supplies the incentive for producing more and better work, inasmuch as those who work honestly and well have the opportunity of earning two or three "norms" per day, that is, achieve in one day two or three "workday" standards, and correspondingly receive two or three times as much products and money as those who perform only one such norm a day. Naturally, the more "workdays" you have to your credit the more prosperous you are.

The basis for the development of the collective farm is comprehensive democracy, freedom of opinion, freedom of criticism and collective control of all its activities. Thus, for instance, members are taken in or expelled at general membership meetings, at which two-thirds of all the members of the collective farm constitute a quorum.

The general membership meeting

elects the chairman and the management of the collective farm, who are in charge of its current work during the interval between membership meetings; it also elects an auditing committee. Only general membership meetings can decide on the artel rules, the annual production plan, the budget, the rates of pay for the various kinds of work and the quantity and quality of output that shall constitute a "workday"; they confirm the contract with the state-owned machine and tractor station for the necessary plowing, sowing, reaping and threshing; vote on the annual accounting of the management and on the report of the auditing committee; determine the reserves and funds to be set aside (seed and fodder reserves, funds in aid of invalids, old people and orphans, etc.); fix appropriations for the maintenance of the children's nurseries, etc. (It should be noted here that the total of these reserves and funds may not exceed 2 per cent of the total production of the collective farm.)

Thus, all important questions of production, finance and organization are decided by general membership meetings of the collective farmers, that is, by the collective farmers themselves. To this must be added that the personal rights and the personal freedom of the individual members of the collective farm are in no wise restricted. Every member has the right to leave the collective farm or settle in a different district, to go to work in a factory, or to return to individual farming, etc. In such personal matters everyone is free to decide as he pleases.

If a member withdraws from a collective farm he receives back the share he contributed at the time of his entry, with the exception of 25 per cent, which becomes part of the indivisible property of the collective farm. Like every other citizen of the Soviet Union, a collective farmer may use his personal property as he chooses. He can sell it, give it away or will it to his family or anybody else.

Every collective farm receives from the state for its use in perpetuity sufficient land to enable every one of its members to lead a life of prosperity and culture. Today the collective farms have at their disposal far over one million tractor and combine operators, an army of truck drivers and chauffeurs, more than 300,000 agronomists, zoological specialists, veterinarians, assistant veterinarians and other qualified personnel. And there are hundreds of thousands of collective farm chairmen, accountants and brigade leaders who have been specially trained for their work.

The Soviet Government spends 500,000,000 rubles yearly for the promotion of agricultural science. The collective farms are being assisted by no less than 1,474 agricultural experimental institutions, of which 93 are large institutes, 28 research institutes in cattle breeding, 45 institutes for the cultivation of plants, four institutes for the mechanization of agriculture and sixteen institutes for special branches, such as flax and cotton growing, the development of technical and medicinal crops, etc. In addition to the 300 state experimental stations there are 15,000 well-equipped

collective farm laboratories, an entire network of agricultural higher schools, technicums and special schools (as for instance the schools for combine and tractor operators where the course of instruction is two years). Thousands of professors and teachers come to the assistance of the collective farmers to enable them to apply the latest achievements of science to agricultural production. Thus, it will be seen that the Soviet Government, the Communist Party and the working class render every possible assistance to the collective farms in the organization and development of their work so as to enable the collective farmers to lead a prosperous life.

On the other hand, the collective farms incur certain obligations towards the state. The first and most important of these is the actual, proper and maximum utilization of the land assigned to the collective farms, that is to say, the appropriate organization of crop rotation, the use of fertilizers, and the sowing of the land in accordance with the provisions of the state plan worked out for every agricultural crop, etc.

The second undertaking is to deliver agricultural products at fixed prices. The quantities of grain, meat, milk, wool, vegetables and other products to be so delivered are calculated according to the hectareage of the land assigned, with due consideration of the quality of the soil, climatic conditions, transportation facilities, the possibilities of developing cattle raising and other factors obtaining in the particular republic, region or district. Thus, the obligatory delivery of grain for the entire Soviet Union amounts to



925,000,000 poods;\* that is, from 12 to 13 per cent of the entire harvest of the country; or, to be more exact, the collective farms deliver to the state on the average one centner\*\* of grain per hectare\*\*\* of land in their possession. The percentage of wool, skins, etc., deliverable to the state at fixed prices, is greater.

This method of determining obligatory deliveries is a result of the experience obtained during the preceding period of development. Originally a collective farm's obligatory deliveries to the state of grain and other agricultural produce were calculated per hectare of its *sown area* while the quantity of cattle to be delivered depended on the number of heads of cattle on the collective farm. This system resulted in insufficient attention being paid to increasing the sown area and crop yield and to the complete utilization of pastures, and this retarded the growth of cattle raising. In various districts the survival of a petty bourgeois psychology was responsible for many collective farmers devoting more time and attention to their own auxiliary husbandry than to the collective farm, in the expectation of selling the products of their own private plots at the unregulated, higher prices prevailing on the collective farm markets in the cities. They did not realize that for the sake of passing advantage they were in the long run only harming themselves, for by checking a further development of the collective farm they were neglecting

their chief source of income. To prevent this injury of the common interests of the collective farmers by the backward elements among them and to give the collective farms a new and powerful incentive for the further rational development of their several enterprises, the Soviet Government in the spring of 1940 decided upon the above-described new method of basing obligatory deliveries not on the area sown but on the total area in the possession of the collective farm. Collective farms which fulfil all their obligations promptly receive special awards in the form of preferential deliveries to them by the state of leather goods, textile goods and other articles of consumption.

The policy adopted by the Soviet state with regard to the collective farms has been highly successful, as is illustrated by the following figures: During the last three years (1936 to 1939) the number of cattle departments on the collective farms has risen to 2,472,000. In addition most of the collective farms have one or more poultry departments as well as vegetable gardens and orchards. Thus the collective farms have bread, meat, milk, poultry, wool, leather, vegetables, etc., and, therefore, not only do the collective farmers receive cash from the sale of the products of the collective farm but a considerable portion of the collective farm harvest is also paid to them in kind. To this must be added that the income received by the collective farmer from the collective enterprises, whether it be in cash or in kind, is tax free. Agricultural taxes are paid only on in-

\* 1 pood=36.113 lbs.

\*\* A centner = 110.23 lbs.

\*\*\* Hectare = 2.471 acres.

come received by collective farmers from their personal enterprise, and even this tax is very low.

The state is also giving much aid to invalids, whether incapacitated by war or at work, to the families of Red Army men, and to families who have suffered from natural calamities. It also exempts these categories from the payment of taxes.

As a result of the socialist transformation of agriculture, crops and crop yields have steadily increased in the U.S.S.R., in spite of droughts which prevailed in the Eastern and Southeastern districts in 1936 and 1938. Although in 1913 tsarist Russia had a record crop, a comparison of this crop with that of the collective farm period demonstrates the tremendous superiority of collective farming.

Calculated in million centners, the following are the figures for grain and industrial crop production:

|                    | 1913 | 1934  | 1935  | 1936  | 1937    | 1938  | 1938<br>% of 1913 |
|--------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| Grain .....        | 801  | 894   | 901   | 827.3 | 1,202.9 | 949.9 | 118.6             |
| Cotton (raw) ..... | 7.4  | 11.8  | 17.2  | 23.9  | 25.8    | 26.9  | 363.5             |
| Flax (fibre) ..... | 3.3  | 5.3   | 5.5   | 5.8   | 5.7     | 5.45  | 165.5             |
| Sugar beets .....  | 109  | 113.6 | 162.1 | 168.3 | 218.6   | 166.8 | 153.0             |
| Oil crops .....    | 21.5 | 36.9  | 42.7  | 42.3  | 51.1    | 46.6  | 216.7             |

How tremendous the possibilities of increasing crop yields are is shown by the crop figures of the 187,000 collective farms for 1938. Of these, 58,000 farms achieved a grain yield of 66 poods and more per hectare, 35,000 farms had 78 poods

and more, while hundreds of collective farms had yields per hectare of 104 to 158 poods.

Individual specialized work teams, such as the famous groups of the collective farmers Yefremov and Chumanov, achieve still higher figures. The latter attained grain yields of 427 to 457 poods per hectare. Their initiative inaugurated a countrywide movement, known as the Yefremov movement, for increasing grain crop yields.

As a result of these crop increases the incomes of the collective farmers have trebled since 1934. Specifically, incomes paid in kind have multiplied 2.5 times, and those paid in cash have multiplied four times.

There are hundreds of collective farms whose annual income exceeds the million ruble mark. Note for instance the following figures showing the income of the Stalin

Collective Farm in the region of Zaporozhye, Ukraine:

| Year       | Rubles    |
|------------|-----------|
| 1937 ..... | 3,005,880 |
| 1938 ..... | 3,360,722 |
| 1939 ..... | 3,540,634 |

To take an instance from one of the national republics, a territory whose agriculture was formerly particularly backward, we quote the following income figures for the Bezbozhnik Collective Farm of the Bargashansk district (Armenia):

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| 1937 ..... | 1,517,000 |
| 1938 ..... | 2,523,500 |
| 1939 ..... | 3,326,058 |

When all the accounts of this collective farm were settled, the following sums were paid per work-day norm:

|          | IN CASH | IN KIND         |                  |                  |                  |
|----------|---------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|          | rubles  | (kgs.)<br>grain | (kgs.)<br>grapes | (kgs.)<br>cheese | (litres)<br>wine |
| 1937.... | 9.02    | 1.5             | 0.5              | ....             | 0.5              |
| 1938.... | 12.30   | 2.0             | 0.65             | 0.1              | 1.0              |
| 1939.... | 15.00   | 2.5             | 0.4              | 0.3              | 1.0              |

For what purpose does the collective farm expend its income (in addition to paying its members for their workdays)? This may be gathered from the expenditure side of the balance sheet of the above-mentioned Stalin Collective Farm:

While the income was 3,540,634 rubles in 1939, expenditures were as follows:

|  | Rubles  |
|--|---------|
| Various taxes, mainly for communal purposes .....                          | 100,800 |
| Social insurance .....   | 84,000  |
| Purchase of materials .....  | 73,049  |
| Veterinary service .....   | 15,643  |
| Combating of pests .....   | 5,790   |
| Chemical fertilizers .....   | 10,000  |
| Fuel and oil .....   | 60,437  |
| Various implements and apparatus .....                                     | 37,000  |
| Fodder .....   | 20,000  |
| Contractual payment for work done by the machine and tractor station ..... | 30,700  |

|   | Rubles         |
|---|----------------|
| Wages for seasonal workers  | 20,750         |
| Organizational and administrative expenses .....                                      | 70,580         |
| Telephone and postal expenses .....   | 25,000         |
| Remitted to reserve fund.....   | 95,000         |
| Further remitted to reserve fund, by decision of the general membership meeting ..... | 40,000         |
| Special training of qualified workers .....   | 10,000         |
| Kindergarten .....  | 25,000         |
| Children's nursery .....  | 29,065         |
| Maintenance of radios and loudspeakers .....  | 15,000         |
| Subsidy to club .....   | 3,400          |
| <b>TOTAL.....</b>   | <b>771,214</b> |

Thus with the inclusion of several small items, expenditures totaled about 800,000 rubles, or about one-fourth of the gross income, while three-fourths of the gross income was distributed to the members of the collective farm.

How do the collective farmers spend their incomes? The answer to this question must take into consideration the fundamental change in the Soviet village. Formerly the mass of the peasantry merely vegetated, barely eked out an existence. Nothing could have been more dreary than life in the Russian village in which the church and the saloon were the only "diversions." How different is life in the new Soviet village! The numerous cultural establishments have raised the intellectual standard of the collective farmer. Today almost all villages have their own library and reading room, their club for amateur performers and sound motion

pictures, a full program of lectures of a general educational character and courses for the various agricultural trades. The great technical achievements, such as the machine and tractor stations, laboratories and agricultural experimental stations, in whose work the collective farmers take an active part, greatly enlarge the horizon of the rural population. The village intelligentsia (which formerly consisted of the trio: the village priest, teacher and medical assistant) today numbers hundreds in every locality and it is this above all that has thoroughly changed the character of rural life.

In accordance with these tremendous changes the requirements of the peasants have greatly increased. Whereas formerly year in and year out they wore bast shoes, coarse linens and roughly dressed sheepskins, city clothes are now becoming the rule in the rural districts. Whereas formerly they slept on straw or on the oven and the furniture of their huts was confined to a table, some benches and sacred images, today in the newly-built houses, apartments with such conveniences and modern improvements as spring sofas, metal beds, radios, phonographs, electric kitchen utensils, attractive pictures and even pianos are to be met with more and more frequently.

All these facts eliminate the difference between town and country more and more. And the collective farmers are increasingly aware that they owe their new mode of life to the socialist system of economy, that this is the only social system

that can guarantee them prosperity and happiness also in the future.

\* \* \*

Long and difficult was the road which the Russian peasants had to traverse until they arrived at this new and happy life. In pre-revolutionary Russia 27,699 big landowners owned 70,000,000 hectares of land, that is, about as much as 30,000,000 peasant families. These big proprietors had their tremendous estates worked by the peasants and the landless rural poor and so became enormously rich. While famine was raging in the Russian countryside, the big landlords exported inordinate quantities of grain amounting, in 1901 to 1905, to 608,900,000 poods (approximately 10,000,000 tons). Their desire to increase their profits from grain exports impelled the landlords constantly to intensify their exploitation of the peasantry. From 1907 to 1911 no less than 800,000 peasant families were compelled to sell their land to the banks to cover their debts. The small peasantry was going to wrack and ruin.

The imperialist war of 1914-18 increased the misery of the down-trodden peasants. It imposed heavy burdens not only upon the working class but also upon the peasantry. Life became intolerable. During the months of May, June and July, 1917, that is, on the eve of the great socialist October Revolution, peasant revolts increased enormously in number. Thus, for instance, in May of that year there were 259 local peasant uprisings and in July there were 1,122.

The slogan launched by the Bolshevik Party to nationalize all the land of the landlords became ever more popular among the masses of the toiling peasants. Finally, for the first time in history, the fight of the peasants was crowned with success—the socialist October Revolution solved the peasant question once and for all. On the second day of Soviet power the peasants received from the Soviet Government what they had been fighting for for hundreds of years. More than 100,000,000 hectares of land were turned over to them for their perpetual use.

The land decree written by Lenin and adopted by the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets on November 8, 1917, began as follows:

“1. Landlord ownership of land is abolished forthwith without compensation.

“The landed estates, as also all appanages and monasterial and church land, with all their livestock, implements, farm buildings and everything pertaining thereto, shall be placed under the control of the Volost Land Committees and the Uyezds Soviets of Peasant Deputies.” (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 406.)

Clauses 3 and 4 of the decree established that until the great transformation in the countryside shall have been realized, until the corresponding laws shall have been adopted, the “peasant mandate” compiled from 242 local mandates of peasants are to serve as a guide.

The fifth clause of the decree reads as follows:

“5. The land of ordinary peasants

and ordinary cossacks shall not be confiscated.” (*Ibid.*, p. 407.)

It must here be explained that the ordinary peasants and cossacks whose land, according to the decree, was not subject to confiscation, constituted 90 per cent of the rural population. All these not only retained their land but received in addition almost all the land of the landed proprietors which the state had confiscated. This was the way in which the socialist October Revolution solved the peasant question in Russia.

These measures were of course only the initial steps. Lenin at that time constantly pointed out that the individual peasant farms were a constant source of capitalist development and would remain such despite the nationalization of the land. He therefore showed the peasantry a new road which would destroy the basis for the capitalist differentiation of the peasantry (their separation on the one hand into kulaks—rich peasants—and on the other hand into small and middle peasants, who were steadily facing ruin).

This road was shown in Lenin's cooperative plan, the plan of uniting the small, economically weak individual peasant farms into big, large-scale production, cooperative societies—the road of collectivization in the Soviet villages. In 1926, only two years after the publication of Lenin's historic article entitled “On Cooperation,” 16,760 collective farms had come into existence, so great was the enthusiasm engendered by the idea of collectivization in the countryside.

This was a further step forward but a correct program could not of itself bring about the final victory of the collective farm system. The main precondition for such a victory was the creation of a material basis for this new order in the countryside, that is, the industrialization of the country, for only a highly industrialized state could supply the collective farms with the necessary agricultural machinery, such as tractors and combines, chemical fertilizers and so forth. It alone could train the requisite technical personnel (tractor and truck drivers, chauffeurs, etc.), and raise the political and cultural level of the masses of the rural population to the required standard. A tremendous struggle ensued. On the one hand, mighty agricultural machinery plants sprang up and supplied the collective farms with the needed machinery. On the other hand, the kulaks fought fiercely in defense of their privileged position in the countryside. They concealed their supplies, engaged in speculation and even practiced open terrorism against the collective farmers and the advocates of collectivization.

Finally, in 1929 the material basis for the complete development of collectivization had essentially been created. There already existed a considerable agricultural machinery industry, and adequate personnel had been trained, and now the masses of the peasantry were convinced that collectivization was the right road to prosperity and a cultural life. In the summer of 1929 collectivization grew by leaps and bounds. In his historic article en-

titled "A Year of Great Change," Comrade Stalin wrote:

"The last hope of the capitalists of all countries, who are dreaming of restoring capitalism in the U.S.S.R.—'the sacred principle of private property'—is collapsing and vanishing. The peasants, whom they regarded as material for manuring the soil for capitalism, are abandoning *en masse* the lauded banner of 'private property' and are taking the path of collectivism, the path of socialism. The last hope for the restoration of capitalism is crumbling." (J. V. Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. II, p. 177.)

\* \* \*

Since the year of great change only eleven years have elapsed. But during this period a technical and social transformation has occurred in the U.S.S.R. which is unprecedented in the history of mankind. The following figures show the tremendous progress achieved in the mechanization of all basic forms of agricultural work in the Soviet Union.

|                            | 1928                             | 1932   | 1938 |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|------|
|                            | (In per cent of cultivated area) |        |      |
| Plowing                    |                                  |        |      |
| Hand plow                  | 9.8                              | ...    | ...  |
| Horse-drawn plow           | 89.2                             | 81.0   | 28.5 |
| Tractor-drawn plow         | 1.0                              | 19.0   | 71.5 |
| Sowing                     |                                  |        |      |
| By hand                    | 74.4                             | 51.7   | 12.8 |
| Horse-drawn sower          | 25.4                             | 28.3   | 30.5 |
| Tractor-drawn sower        | 0.2                              | 20.0   | 56.7 |
| Harvesting                 |                                  |        |      |
| Scythe and sickle          | 44.4                             | 35.4   | 8.5  |
| Horses                     | 55.4                             | 54.6   | 43.1 |
| Tractors and combines      | 0.2                              | 10.0   | 48.4 |
| Threshing                  |                                  |        |      |
| Hand threshing             | 40.7                             | } 60.0 | 5.0  |
| Threshing gin horse power) | 58.0                             |        |      |
| Tractor and combine        | 1.3                              | 40.0   | 95.0 |

Such a thoroughgoing mechanization of agriculture as exists in the U.S.S.R. cannot be duplicated in

any capitalist country in the world. The parceling of the land among numerous small tenants and its division into many scattered lots, which is the rule in the European countries, makes it mostly unprofitable for the big landed proprietors and the big peasants to acquire powerful combines which can harvest tremendous areas in a very short time. It pays them much more to employ the manual labor of thousands of poorly paid agricultural workers or poor tenants, even if they cannot achieve the tremendous crops that are attained by the rational use of combines.

In Italy alone there are no less than four million agricultural laborers who possess absolutely no land, who work for a short season for the big landowners and peasant proprietors and are condemned to go idle and starve for the greater part of the year. Karl Marx wrote in his analysis of the capitalist economic system that "a rational agriculture is irreconcilable with the capitalist system." (Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 144.)

While today there are approximately 180,000 combines in the U.S.S.R., two years ago their number was 153,800; the United States, although it was the foremost capitalist state in the sphere of agriculture, had at that time only 75,000 combines and their number may be taken to have undergone no substantial increase since. In the capitalist countries of Europe the number of combines is so ridiculously low that it only emphasizes the paramount position of Soviet agriculture in the entire world. For in

1938 there were only 100 combines in all of France, 60 in Great Britain and actually only 15 or 20 in Germany.

The Soviet Government has been assisting agriculture not only by the mass provision of modern farm machinery but also by the installation of tremendous new irrigation and melioration systems. In tsarist Russia irrigation was at the lowest conceivable technical level. The system was small in extent and covered none of the arid land of the Volga and Central Asiatic steppes which were visited time and again by famine on account of drought. In the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republics alone half a million hectares of land were provided with irrigation or drained, as the case may be, during the course of the last ten years. The construction of large canals for the irrigation of Kirghiz and Uzbek cotton fields was commenced as early as 1932.

During the Third Five-Year Plan period the irrigation and melioration systems occupy a prominent place among agricultural undertakings; no less than 1,300,000,000 rubles have been appropriated for this purpose. The erection of the greatest dam in the world, at Kuibyshev, with a hydroelectric power station designed for a capacity of 3,400,000 kilowatts, has already been commenced. This dam will be the basis for an irrigation system which will free the entire Volga region, a territory comprising 12,000,000 hectares, from the drought danger and will increase crop yields enormously. Through the instru-

mentality of these gigantic enterprises the Soviet Government gives not only direct aid to the collective farmers but also galvanizes their own initiative and creative ability into action. Thus, 150,000 collective farmers participated in the building of the 270-kilometer Ferghana Canal in Uzbekistan, commenced in 1939 and completed in the spring of 1940. Amidst tremendous enthusiasm a means was here created of supplying 24 districts, the most important cotton regions of the Uzbek republic, with an adequate water supply. This example stimulated scores of similar movements in other parts of the Soviet Union. Among these is the movement of the West Byelorussian and West Ukrainian peasants for the building of a Dnieper-Bug-Nemen Canal, for the drying of the Wolhynian bogs, for the building of big canals in Tajikistan and Kirghizia, and for the carrying out of other projects of great proportions and many of local importance.

\* \* \*

Excessive taxation, usurious practices and dictated prices convert increasing masses of the peasantry in the capitalist countries into paupers and reduce agriculture to ruin.

In a monograph published by the Italian Agrarian Institute on conditions in the Osola Valley, the author, an engineer named Broccher, quotes a conversation he had with grape-growing peasants. He asked them why their vineyards were so neglected and why they didn't put them in order. In reply the peasants

pulled out their tax bills and said: "Formerly we used to pay 50 lira each in taxes for our vineyards and today they expect us to pay 500 lira. Where shall we get the money to fix up our vineyards?"

Another Italian publication on small-scale farming, the *Inchiesta sulla piccola proprieta' coltrivace*, supplies figures on the households of five middle and small families in the district of Venice. The figures show that the per capita incomes of families have dropped during the last eight years in the case of the "most well-to-do" from a daily average of 14.54 lira to 3.83 lira and in case of the poorest families from 3.84 lira to 55 centesimos! According to data supplied by Dr. Francesca Platzer, an Italian agronomist, about 80 per cent of Italian farms are deeply in debt and about 50 per cent are no longer in a position to pay interest on their mortgages and other loans.

According to information supplied by the Chamber of Agriculture of Japan, 44 per cent of the property of the peasants is covered by mortgages given to credit institutions and mutual aid societies; this is of course exclusive of judicial attachments for the non-payment of taxes. In order to obtain additional credits, the peasants are compelled to resort to usurers. Thus, the governor of the province of Fukusima reports that of new indebtedness in 22 villages totalling 22,111,191 yen, only 125,221 yen, or 5.7 per cent of the total, was borrowed from credit institutions, and that all the other creditors were usurers. While the rate of interest



at the banks varies from 10 to 15 per cent, the usurers charge from 24 to 50 per cent. Japanese peasants pay annually 275,000 tons of rice, amounting to about half of the total rice crop, in the form of the so-called *arenda*. This is a feudal impost exacted from those peasants whose land adjoins the estate of the landed proprietor to whom their land formerly belonged and to whom this payment is due.

As characteristic of the mass poverty in the Rumanian villages we may take the figures quoted by the *Zarya*, a Rumanian paper, in its issue of July 25, 1939. According to this publication, of the 3,280,000 farms in Rumania, 610,000, that is,

18.6 per cent, possess less than one hectare of land, and 1,100,000 farms, or 33.5 per cent of the total, possess less than three but more than one hectare. Thus more than half of the Rumanian peasants have less than three hectares of land.

For the millions who have to live under such dismal conditions the Soviet Union is a real lodestar.

The experience of the Soviet Union and the results it has achieved demonstrate clearly that socialism is the only order of society in which the peasantry together with the working class can achieve a high standard of living, lead a prosperous and cultured life, and become the real masters of the land.



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