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Special Issue

An Extremely Timely Marxian
Analysis of French Politics

Whither France?

Towards Murderous Fascism—
or the Workers Revolution?

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Inside Front Cover: All Eyes on France!

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ALL EYES ON FRANCE

What is happening in France? For months the capitalist press has been carrying only the most meager and superficial reports from their French correspondents. Almost anything—one would judge from their surface—in the way of foreign news, from the animal party at Ambassador Bullitt's to sextuplets in South Africa, is more significant than France.

And so, likewise, in the Socialist and Stalinist press. The *Daily Worker* tells us plenty about the knighting of shock-troop factory workers and the mosaic in the new Moscow subway; but it steadily avoids any analysis or even account of the policies and practices of the French United Front. Unfortunately, this is not a journalistic accident. From the point of view of the Communist International, Litvinoff's military pact with the French bourgeoisie is far more important than the fate of the French proletariat.

It is for these reasons that we have

given over the greater part of the present issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL to a detailed analysis of the present situation in France, an article translated from *La Verité*, the organ of the Bolshevik-Leninist faction of the French Socialist Party, (March 15, 1935).

* * *

The curve of the world revolutionary movement does not move evenly from one level to the next. We find it rising to the mighty crisis of insurrection, or falling to a proletarian defeat at given and irregularly intervalled moments of time. Thus, in 1917, it was the events in Russia that determined the general character of the world movement. Again, in 1930-33, Germany was the spatial focus; and Hitler's victory meant not merely defeat for the German workers, but an appalling drop in the whole broad curve of the world movement.

Herein, of course, is the answer to the short-sighted "realists" who believe inter-

nationalism to be a fetishistic abstraction, and argue that we have enough trouble at home without mixing ourselves up in what happens elsewhere. However desirable it might be, however much easier it might make our local tasks, we cannot avoid being affected, directly and concretely affected, by what happens "elsewhere".

There is grave reason to believe that the spatial focus of the world movement now centers in France. If so, the outcome in France during the next period will decide the immediate course of the movement not merely in France, but throughout the world.

Defeat in France, following the defeats in Germany, Austria and Spain, means the decisive triumph of reaction on the entire European continent. Victory for the working class in France will, at long last, once more turn the curve of the world movement upward, and will open the road to the international revolution.

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Where Is France Going?

THE FRENCH people have arrived at the crossroads: one way leads to the socialist revolution; the other to Fascist catastrophe. The choice depends on the working class. At its head is the organized vanguard. We put the question: "Where will the proletarian vanguard lead France?"

The Diagnosis of the Communist International is False and Disastrous

In January, the C.E.C. of the Socialist Party launched a program of *struggle for power, the destruction of the mechanism of the bourgeois state, the setting up of the workers' and peasants' democracy, the expropriation of banks and heavy industry*. However, up to the present, the party has not made the slightest attempt to bring this program before the masses. The Communist Party, in turn, has absolutely refused to come out for the struggle for power. The reason? "The situation is not revolutionary."

The proletarian militia? The arming of the workers? Workers' control? A plan of nationalization? Impossible. "The situation is not revolutionary." What, then, can we do? Launch weighty petitions with the clergy, compete in empty eloquence with the Radical Socialists, and wait. Wait how long? Until the situation becomes revolutionary of its own accord. The scholarly doctors of the Communist International have a thermometer which they place under the tongue of old lady History, and by this means they infallibly determine the revolutionary temperature. But they don't show anyone their thermometer.

We submit: the diagnosis of the Comintern is entirely false. The situation is revolutionary, as revolutionary as it can be, *granted the non-revolutionary policies of the working-class parties*. More exactly, the situation is pre-revolutionary. In order to bring the situation to its full maturity, there must be an immediate,

vigorous, unremitting mobilization of the masses, under the slogan of the conquest of power in the name of socialism. This is the only way through which the pre-revolutionary situation will be changed into a revolutionary situation. On the other hand, if we continue to mark time, the pre-revolutionary situation will inevitably be changed into one of counter-revolution, and will bring on the victory of Fascism.

At the present time, all that the pious mouthings of the phrase "non-revolutionary situation" can do is to crush the minds of the workers, paralyze their will, and hand them over to the class enemy. Under the cover of such phrases, conservatism, indolence, stupidity and cowardice take possession of the leadership of the proletariat, and the ground is laid, as it was in Germany, for catastrophe.

The Task and Aim of this Article

In the pages which follow, we, the Bolshevik-Leninists, will submit the analyses and predictions of the Communist International to a detailed, Marxist criticism. At times we will touch on the points of view of various Socialist leaders, to the extent that this is needed for our fundamental purpose: namely, to show the radical falsity of the policies of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party. To the shouts and insults of the Stalinists we oppose facts and arguments.

We shall not, of course, stop with a merely negative criticism. To the false points of view and false slogans we shall oppose the creative ideas and methods of Marx and Lenin.

We ask the reader to pay close attention. We are concerned here in the most immediate and literal sense with the lives of the French workers. No class conscious worker has the right to be passive in the face of these problems, upon whose solution depends the fate of his class.

1. How a Revolutionary Situation Comes About

The Economic Premise of the Socialist Revolution

The first and most important premise of a revolutionary situation is the most intense sharpening of the contradictions between the productive forces and the property relations. *The nation stops going forward*. The arrest in the economic development and, even more, its regression signify that the capitalist system of production is definitely worn out and must give way to the socialist system.

The present crisis, which encompasses all countries and thrusts economy back dozens of years, has definitely pushed the bourgeois system to absurdity. If, in the beginning of capitalism, ignorant and starving workers broke machines, today it is the capitalists themselves who destroy machines and factories. The further maintenance of the private ownership of the means of production threatens humanity with degeneration and barbarism.

The basis of society is economic. That basis is ripe for socialism in a double sense: modern technology has advanced to a point where it can assure a high standard of living to all mankind; but the capitalist property system, which has outlived itself, dooms

the masses to ever-increasing poverty and suffering.

The fundamental premise of socialism—that is, the economic premise—has already been present for some time. But capitalism will not disappear from the scene *automatically*. Only the working class can seize the forces of production from the stranglehold of the exploiters. History places this task squarely before us. If the proletariat is, for one reason or another, incapable of routing the bourgeoisie and of seizing power, if it is, for example, paralyzed by its own parties and trade unions, the continued decay of the economy of civilization will follow, calamities will pile up, despair and prostration will engulf the masses, and capitalism—decrepit, decayed, rotting—will strangle the people with increasing strength, and will thrust them into the abyss of a new war.

Other than the socialist revolution, there is no way out.

Is This the Last Crisis of Capitalism?

At first the Praesidium of the Comintern tried to explain that the crisis which started in 1929 was the last crisis of capitalism. Two years afterward, Stalin declared that the present crisis, "truly understood," was not yet the last. We also meet the same manner

of prophecy in the socialist camp: "Is it the final crisis, or is it not?"

"It is imprudent to say," wrote Blum in *Populaire*, February 23, "that the present crisis is the final spasm of capitalism, the last death throes before agony and decay." Grumbach had the same point of view when he said at Mulhausen on February 26: "Some say that this crisis is a passing phase, others see it as the final crisis of capitalism. We do not yet dare to make a definite decision."

In this manner of putting the question there are two cardinal errors: first, it confuses the *cyclical crisis* with the *historical crisis of the whole capitalist system*; second, it suggests that independently of the conscious activity of social classes, a crisis can be by itself the "last" crisis.

Under the domination of industrial capital, in the era of free trade, the cyclical booms progressively exceeded the crisis: the first were the "rule", the second the "exception". Capitalism in its entirety was advancing. Since the war, with the domination of monopoly finance-capital, the cyclical crises far exceed the up-swings. We may say that the crises have become the "rule" and the booms, the "exceptions"; economic development in its entirety has been going down and not up.

However, the cyclical oscillations are inevitable, and, with capitalism in decline, they will continue as long as capitalism exists. And capitalism will continue until the proletarian revolution is achieved. This is the only correct answer to the question: "Is this the final crisis of capitalism?"

Fatalism and Marxism

The revolutionary worker must, before all else, understand that Marxism, the only scientific theory of the proletarian revolution, has nothing in common with the fatalistic hope for the "final" crisis. Marxism is, in its very essence, a set of directives for revolutionary action. Marxism does not overlook will and courage, but rather aids them to find the right road.

There is no crisis which can be, by itself, fatal to capitalism. The oscillations of the business cycle only create a situation in which it will be easier, or more difficult, for the proletariat to overthrow capitalism. The transition from a bourgeois society to a socialist society presupposes the activity of living men who are the makers of their own history. They do not make history by accident, or according to their caprice, but under the influence of objectively determined causes. However, their own actions—their initiative, audacity, devotion, and likewise their stupidity and cowardice—are necessary links in the chain of historical development.

The crises of capitalism are not numbered, nor is it indicated in advance which one of these will be the "last". But our entire epoch, and above all, the present crisis imperiously command the proletariat: "Seize Power!" If, however, the party of the working class, in spite of favorable conditions, reveals itself incapable of leading the proletariat to the seizure of power, the life of society will continue necessarily upon a capitalist foundation—until a new crisis, a new war, perhaps until the complete disintegration of European civilization.

The "Last" Crisis and the "Last" War

The imperialist war of 1914-1918 was also a "crisis" in the career of capitalism, and, indeed, the most terrible of all possible crises. No book carried the prediction whether the war would be the last *bloody* folly of capitalism. The experience of Russia showed that the war *might* have been the end of capitalism. In Germany and Austria the fate of bourgeois society in 1918 depended entirely upon the Social-Democracy, but the Social-Democracy revealed itself as the handmaiden of capitalism. In Italy and France, the proletariat might have seized power at the end of

the war, but it did not have a revolutionary party at its head. In a word, if the Second International had not, at the time of the war, betrayed the cause of socialism to bourgeois patriotism, the whole history of Europe and of mankind might today be entirely different. Assuredly, the past is irrevocable. But one can, and one ought to learn the lessons of the past.

The development of Fascism is, in itself, irrefutable witness to the fact that the working class has been tragically late in fulfilling the task imposed upon it a long time ago by the decline of capitalism.

The phrase "this crisis is not yet the 'last'" can have only one meaning: In spite of the lessons of the war and the convulsions of the post-war period, the working-class parties are not yet able to prepare either themselves or the proletariat for the seizure of power; still worse, the leaders of these parties do not yet understand the task confronting them—they reject it for themselves, their party and their class, and hand it over to "the process of historical development". Their fatalism is a betrayal of the theory of Marxism, and a justification for a political betrayal of the proletariat, that is, the preparation for a new capitulation to a new "last" war.

The Comintern has gone over to the Theory of Social-Democratic Fatalism

The fatalism of the Social-Democracy is a heritage of the pre-war period, when capitalism was advancing almost without interruption, when the number of workers was increasing, and when the number of party members, votes at elections and parliamentary representatives was growing. From this automatic rise was born little by little the reformist illusion that it was enough to continue along the old road (propaganda, elections, organization) and victory would come of itself.

The war, no doubt, interfered with this automatic development. But the war was an exceptional phenomenon. With the help of Geneva there would be no new war, everything would return to normal, and the automatic development would be reestablished.

In the light of this perspective, the words "This is not yet the 'last' crisis" meant: "In five years, in ten years, or in twenty years, we will have more votes, more representatives, and then, let us hope, we shall take power. (See the articles and lectures of Paul Faure.) This optimistic fatalism, which seemed convincing for a quarter of a century, today resounds like a voice from the grave. It is a radically false idea that in going towards the future crisis the proletariat will inevitably become more powerful than at present. With the further inevitable decay of capitalism, the proletariat will not grow and reinforce itself but will decompose, constantly increasing the army of the unemployed and slum-proletariat. The petty-bourgeoisie, meanwhile, will be declassed and sink into despair. Loss of time holds out the perspective of Fascism, and not of proletarian revolution.

It is worth remarking that the Comintern, bureaucratized to the marrow, has replaced the theory of revolutionary action with a religion of fatalism. It is impossible to fight because there is no "revolutionary situation". But a revolutionary situation does not fall down from the sky. It comes about in the class struggle. The party of the working class is the most important political factor in the development of a revolutionary situation. If this party turns its back on its revolutionary tasks, lulling the workers to sleep and deceiving them into playing with petitions and fraternizing with Radical Socialists, the situation that comes about will be not revolutionary, but counter-revolutionary.

How the Bourgeoisie Sizes up the Situation

The *decline of capitalism*, together with the extraordinarily high

level of the productive forces, is the economic premise of the socialist revolution. On this foundation the *class struggle* takes place. A *revolutionary situation* develops and matures in the living struggle of the classes.

How does the big bourgeoisie, master of modern society, size up the present situation? And what is it doing? The 6th of February, 1934, was unexpected only by the organizations of the working class and the petty-bourgeoisie. The leading bodies of finance-capital prepared the plot over a long period of time, intending, by violence, to substitute Bonapartism ("personal" rule) for parliamentarism. That is to say, the banks, the trusts, the ruling class, the capitalist press believed the danger of revolution to be so close, so immediate, that they hastened to prepare for it by a "little" *coup d'état*.

Two important conclusions follow from this fact: 1) the capitalists, at the beginning of 1934, believed the situation to be revolutionary; 2) they were not content to await passively the development of events, to resort to "legalistic" defense at the last minute, but they took the initiative themselves by sending their gangs into the streets. The big bourgeoisie taught the workers an inestimable lesson in the strategy of class warfare.

L'Humanité maintains that the "United Front" drove Doumergue out of office. But that is hollow bombast, to say the least. On the contrary, if finance-capital believed it possible and feasible to replace Doumergue by Flandin, it is precisely because the United Front, as experience proved to the bourgeoisie, does not yet represent an immediate revolutionary danger. "Since the formidable leaders of the Comintern, in spite of the situation in France, did not prepare for struggle, but trembled with fear, that means that we can wait a while before making use of Fascism. It is useless to force events and compromise the Radical Socialists prematurely, since we may still have need of them." This is what the true masters of the situation said. They upheld the Cabinet of the National Union and its Bonapartist decrees, they terrorized parliament, but they allowed Doumergue to go back to sleep. Thus the leaders of the bourgeoisie introduced a certain correction into their first analysis, recognizing that the situation was not so much immediately revolutionary as pre-revolutionary.

A second remarkable lesson in class strategy! It shows that even finance-capital, with the levers of the whole social machine under its control, cannot infallibly estimate, at a single *a priori* glance, the full reality of a political situation. It enters into the struggle, and in the development of the struggle, on the basis of experience gained in the struggle, it corrects and makes more precise its analysis. This in general is the only possible method in political questions of being oriented correctly and at the same time actively.

And the leaders of the Communist International? In Moscow, away from the French working class, a few badly informed, mediocre bureaucrats—the majority of them even unable to read French—pronounced an infallible diagnosis, with the aid of their thermometer: "The situation is not revolutionary." The Central Committee of the French Communist Party is obliged to close its eyes and ears and repeat this hollow phrase. The road of the Communist International is a short cut to the abyss.

The Meaning of the Capitulation of the Radical-Socialists

The Radical-Socialist Party represents that political instrument of the big bourgeoisie which is the best adapted to the traditions and prejudices of the petty-bourgeoisie. In spite of this, the most responsible leaders of Radical-Socialism, under the whip of finance-capital, bowed humbly before the *coup d'état* of February 6th, though it was directed in the first instance against them. For they recognized that the development of the class struggle threatened

the fundamental interests of the "nation", that is to say, of the bourgeoisie, and they felt obliged to sacrifice the parliamentary interests of their party. The capitulation of the most powerful parliamentary party before the guns and knives of the fascists is an external expression of the complete upset in the political equilibrium of the country. But to say this—is to say that the situation is revolutionary, or, more exactly, pre-revolutionary.*

The Petty-Bourgeoisie and the Pre-Revolutionary Situation

The development which is taking place among the masses of the petty-bourgeoisie has exceptional importance for an understanding of the political situation. The political crisis of the country is above all a collapse of the confidence of the petty-bourgeois masses in their traditional parties and leaders. The discontent, the nervousness, the instability, the fluidity of the petty-bourgeoisie are extremely important characteristics of a pre-revolutionary situation. As a sick man, burning with fever, tosses from right side to left, so the feverish petty-bourgeoisie can turn to the right or to the left. In the coming period, the side towards which millions of peasants, artisans, small merchants and minor officials turn will determine whether the present pre-revolutionary situation will develop into a revolutionary or a counter-revolutionary situation.

The alleviation of the economic crisis might—though not for long—retard, but not stop, the shifting of the petty-bourgeoisie to the right or the left. On the other hand, if the crisis becomes intensified, the bankruptcy of Radical-Socialism and of all the parliamentary groupings around it will proceed with redoubled speed.

How Might a Fascist Coup d'Etat be Carried out in France?

It must not be thought that Fascism has to become a strong parliamentary party before it can take over power. This was the case in Germany, but not in Italy. In order that Fascism should succeed, it is not necessary that the petty-bourgeoisie should break *beforehand* with the old "democratic" parties. It is enough if the petty-bourgeoisie has lost its confidence in these parties, and looks uneasily about it for new roads.

In the next municipal elections the petty-bourgeoisie may still give a large number of votes to the Radicals and similar groupings, in the absence of a new political party which could succeed in gaining the confidence of the peasants and the urban middle classes. And, nevertheless, a Fascist military *coup*, with the aid of the big bourgeoisie, might take place a few months after the elections; and by its influence attract the sympathies of the most desperate layers of the petty-bourgeoisie.

That is why it would be a serious illusion to take consolation in the thought that the Fascist banner has not yet become popular in the provinces and the villages. The anti-parliamentary tendencies of the petty-bourgeoisie, after breaking away from the channel of the official parliamentary politics of the old parties, may directly and immediately support a military *coup d'état*, when that becomes necessary for the safety of finance-capital. Such a method of

*It is extremely characteristic of the frightened, petty-bourgeois working-class bureaucracy, especially the Stalinists, that it entered into an alliance with the Radical-Socialists to "struggle against Fascism" after the Radicals had shown their complete inability to struggle against Fascism. The parliamentary bloc with the Radicals, which was a crime from the point of view of the historical interests of the proletariat, had at least a certain practical value in the restricted domain of parliamentarism. The extra-parliamentary alliance with the Radicals against Fascism is not merely a crime, but an idiocy.

action is most closely adapted to the traditions and temperament of France.**

The outcome of elections has, of course, a symptomatic importance. But to rely on this index *alone* would be to fall victim to parliamentary cretinism. We are dealing with much more profound processes which, one fine day, will catch our friends, the parliamentarians, off-guard. Here, as in other matters, the question is settled not by arithmetic, but by the dynamics of the struggle. The big bourgeoisie does not register passively the evolution of the middle classes, but rather, prepares tentacles of steel, with which to seize these tortured and despairing masses at the opportune moment.

Dialectics and Metaphysics

Marxist thought is *dialectical*; it considers all phenomena in their development, in their transition from one state to another. The thought of the conservative petty-bourgeois is *metaphysical*; its conceptions are fixed and immovable, and between phenomena it supposes that there are unbridgeable gaps. The absolute opposition of a revolutionary situation to a non-revolutionary situation is a classic example of metaphysical thought, according to the axiom: whatever is, is; whatever is not, is not; and anything else can go to the devil.

In the processes of history we find stable situations which are altogether non-revolutionary. We find likewise situations which

are obviously revolutionary. And again, there are counter-revolutionary situations (we had better not forget them!). But the most striking features of our epoch of capitalism in decay are *intermediate* and *transitional*: situations between the non-revolutionary and the pre-revolutionary, between the pre-revolutionary and the revolutionary or . . . the counter-revolutionary. It is precisely these transitional stages which have a decisive importance from the point of view of political strategy.

What would we say about an artist who could distinguish only between the two opposite colors in the spectrum? That he had no sense of color or was half-blind, and that he ought to give up the easel. What will we say about a political strategist who can distinguish only between the two states: "revolutionary" and "non-revolutionary"? That he is not a Marxist, but a Stalinist, who might make a good functionary but never a proletarian leader.

A revolutionary situation develops out of the reciprocal action of objective and subjective factors. If the party of the proletariat is incapable of analyzing in time the tendencies of a pre-revolutionary situation and of intervening actively in its development, then instead of a revolutionary situation we shall inevitably have a counter-revolutionary situation. *The French proletariat now faces this danger.* The shortsighted, passive, opportunist policies of the United Front—above all of the Stalinists, who have become its right wing—are the chief obstacle in the path of the proletarian revolution in France.

2. Immediate Demands and the Struggle for Power

The Stagnation of the United Front

The Central Committee of the Communist Party rejects the struggle for the nationalization of the means of production as a demand incompatible in the face of the existence of the bourgeois state. But the Central Committee likewise rejects the struggle for power in order to create the workers' state. To these tasks it opposes a program of "immediate demands".

As a matter of fact the United Front now has no program at all. At the same time, the efforts of the Communist Party in the struggle for "immediate demands" have an extremely unfortunate character. All the speeches, articles and resolutions on the necessity of combatting capitalism by strikes have up to now resulted in nothing, or almost nothing. In spite of the situation in the country, which is becoming more and more acute, the working class is in a state of *dangerous stagnation*.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party accuses everybody except itself of being guilty of this stagnation. We do not want to whitewash anybody. Our point of view is well known. But we believe that the *chief obstacle* on the path to the development of the revolutionary struggle right now is the one-sided, almost maniacal program of "immediate demands", which contradicts the whole situation. We wish now, at sufficient length, to throw some light on the considerations and the arguments of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Not that these arguments are either serious or profound: on the contrary, they are miserable. But we are dealing with the question upon which the fate of the French proletariat depends.

The Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on "Immediate Demands"

The most authoritative document on the question of "immediate demands" is the programmatic resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (see *l'Humanite*, Feb. 24). Let us examine this document.

The outline of the immediate demands is given in vague general terms: against wage cuts, for increased social insurance, for collective bargaining, "against inflation", etc. Nothing is said about the character that the struggle for these demands can and must have under the conditions of the present social crisis. However, every worker knows that with two millions of partially or wholly unemployed, the ordinary trade union struggle for collective bargaining is utopian. Under present conditions, in order to force the capitalists to make important concessions, we must *break their wills*; this can be done only by a revolutionary offensive. But a revolutionary offensive, which opposes one class to another, cannot be developed solely under slogans of partial economic demands. We have here a vicious circle. This is the principal reason for the stagnation of the United Front.

The general Marxist thesis, "Social reforms are only the by-products of the revolutionary struggle," has in the epoch of the decline of capitalism the most immediate and burning importance. The capitalists are able to cede *something* to the workers only if they are threatened with the danger of losing *everything*.

However, even the greatest "concessions" of which contemporary capitalism—itsself in a blind alley—is capable are completely insignificant in comparison with the misery of the masses and the depth of the social crisis. This is why the most immediate of all demands must be for the *expropriation of the capitalists and the nationalization (socialization) of the means of production*. But this demand is unrealizable under the rule of the bourgeoisie? Quite so! That is why we must seize power.

**Marxism in no way ignores (let us remark in passing) such factors as tradition and national temperament. The fundamental direction of historical development, is, of course, determined by the progress of the class struggle; but the *forms* of

this development, its *rhythm*, etc., can vary a great deal under the influence of temperament and national tradition, which, themselves, have been formed in the past under the influence of the progress of the class struggle.

Why Is It that the Masses Do Not Respond to the Appeals of the Communist Party?

The resolution of the Central Committee recognizes in passing that "the party has not yet succeeded in organizing and extending the resistance to the offensive of capitalism", but the resolution does not stop at all to consider the question why, in spite of the efforts of the Communist Party and the C.G.T.U., the successes in the defensive economic struggles are completely insignificant. Millions of workers and wage earners participated in the general strike of February 12, which did not make any "immediate demands". However, up to the present, only a small fraction of this number has participated in the defense against the offensive of capitalism. Does not this astonishingly clear fact lead the "leaders" of the Communist Party to draw any conclusion? Why is it that millions of workers risked participation in a general strike, in violent demonstrations in the streets, in battles with the Fascist gangs, but refuse to participate in strikes of a purely economic character?

"We must understand," says the resolution, "the feelings which agitate the workers, who want to proceed to action." We must understand . . . but the misfortune is that the authors of the resolution themselves understand nothing. Whoever goes to workers' meetings knows as well as we that general talk about immediate demands usually leaves the audience in a state of complete indifference; on the other hand, clear and precise revolutionary slogans get a sympathetic response. This difference in the reaction of the masses characterizes the political situation in our country in the clearest possible manner.

"In the present period," the resolution unexpectedly states, "the economic struggle requires *heavy sacrifices* on the part of the workers." It ought to have added further: and it is only in exceptional cases that the sacrifices promise any positive results. However, the struggle for immediate demands has for its task the *alleviation* of the condition of the workers. By putting this economic struggle at the head of the list and by renouncing revolutionary slogans for its sake, the Stalinists no doubt believe that it is precisely the partial economic struggle which can best arouse large masses. The truth is just the opposite: the masses make hardly any response to appeals for strikes on a purely economic plane. In politics, how can anyone avoid facing the facts?

The masses understand or feel that, under the conditions of the crisis and of unemployment, partial economic conflicts require unheard of sacrifices which will never be justified in any case by the results obtained. The masses wait for and welcome other and more efficacious methods. Strategists, learn from the masses: they are guided by a sure revolutionary instinct.

The Economic Crisis and Strike Struggles

Basing themselves on badly assimilated citations from Lenin, the Stalinists repeat: "Strike struggles are possible even in times of crisis." They do not understand that there are crises and crises. In the epoch when capitalism was on the ascendant, both industrialists and workers, even during an acute crisis, looked forward toward the next boom period. *But the present crisis is the rule, not the exception.* On the purely economic level, the working class is thrown into a disorderly retreat by the terrific pressure of the economic catastrophe. On the other hand, the decline of capitalism, with all its weight, pushes the proletariat on the road toward the revolutionary mass struggle for *political* power. However, the leadership of the Communist Party tries with all its force to bar this road. Thus in the hands of the Stalinists the program of "immediate demands" becomes an instrument for the disorientation and disorganization of the proletariat. But a *political offensive* (a

struggle for power) with an active defense army (militia) would at once alter the relationship of class forces and would at the same time, even for the most backward layers of the working class, open up the possibility for a victorious *economic struggle*.

The Possibility of an Upturn in the Business Cycle

Capitalism in its death-throes, as we know, also has its cycles, but these cycles are declining and diseased. Only the proletarian revolution can put an end to the crisis of the *capitalist system*. The *cyclical* crisis will inevitably give way to a new and brief upturn, if neither war nor revolution intervenes.

In case of an upturn in the business cycle, the strike struggles no doubt will have more extensive possibilities. This is why it is necessary to follow closely the movement of trade and industry, particularly the changes in employment, without capitulating to the meteorologists of the school of Jouhaux and all the while giving practical help to the workers in applying pressure to the capitalists at the necessary moment. But even in the case of extensive strike struggles it would be criminal to have them limited to partial economic demands. The upturn in the business cycle can be neither considerable nor of long duration, for we now are confronted with the cycle of a capitalism which is irremediably diseased. The new crisis, after a brief upturn, will be found to be more devastating than the present. All the fundamental problems will rise up anew with redoubled force and sharpness. If we lose time, the growth of Fascism will be found irresistible.

But today the economic upturn is no more than a hypothesis. The actuality is a deepening of the crisis, the two-year term of military service, the rearmament of Germany, the danger of war. This actuality must be our point of departure.

The Refuse of Reformism in Place of a Revolutionary Program

The last idea in the programmatic resolution of the Central Committee worthily crowns the whole structure. Let us quote literally: "While fighting every day in order to relieve the working masses from the misery which the capitalist regime imposes upon them, the communists *emphasize* that final emancipation can be gained only by the abolition of the capitalist régime and the setting up of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." This formula did not sound so bad at the dawn of Social-Democracy half a century or more ago. At that time, and not without success, the Social-Democracy guided the struggle of the workers for immediate demands and isolated reforms, for what they called the "minimum program", all the time emphasizing that the *final* emancipation of the proletariat could be realized only by the revolution. The "final goal" of Socialism was at that time seen across the cloudy distance of the years. It is this conception, which was completely outworn already at the beginning of the war, that the Central Committee of the Communist Party has unexpectedly transported into our epoch, repeating it word for word to the last comma. And these people invoke the names of Marx and Lenin!

When they "emphasize" that "the final emancipation" can be obtained only by the abolition of the capitalist régime, they manipulate this elementary truth in order to deceive the workers. For they give the workers the idea that a certain alleviation, even an important alleviation in their condition can be obtained within the framework of the present régime. They picture rotting and declining capitalism in the same way that their fathers and grandfathers pictured robust and ascending capitalism. The fact is indisputable: the Stalinists have taken over the refuse of reformism.

The Marxist political thesis must be the following: "While explaining constantly to the masses that rotting capitalism has no

place either for the alleviation of their situation or even for the maintenance of their customary level of misery, while putting openly before the masses the tasks of the socialist revolution as the task of our day, while mobilizing the workers for the conquest of power, while defending the workers' organizations with the help of the workers' militia,—the communists (or the socialists) will at the same time lose no opportunity to snatch this or that partial concession from the enemy, or at least to prevent the further lowering of the living standard of the workers."

Compare this thesis carefully with the lines cited above from the resolution of the Central Committee. The difference, we hope, is clear. In one instance, *Stalinism*; in the other *Leninism*. Between them lies an abyss.

A Sure Cure for Unemployment

Higher wages, collective bargaining, against inflation. . . . But what about unemployment? The resolution of the Central Committee will come to our help here also. Let us quote:

"They (the Communists) demand public works. To this end, they have elaborated specific proposals adapted to each local and regional situation, and have prescribed the means for financing them (a capital levy, government loans, etc. . . .)"

Isn't this astonishing? This charlatan's recipe is copied almost word for word from Jouhaux: the Stalinists reject the progressive demands of his "Plan", and adopt the most fantastic and utopian parts.

The principal productive forces of society are paralyzed or half-paralyzed by the crisis. The workers are in a stupor before the machines which they have created. Our savior, the Central Committee, proposes: outside of the real capitalist economy, alongside it, we shall create another capitalist economy on the basis of "public works".

Don't let anyone tell us that we are dealing here with temporary undertakings: present unemployment does not have a temporary character; it is not merely cyclical unemployment, but structural unemployment, the most deadly expression of the decline of capitalism. To do away with it, the Central Committee proposes to create a system of public works, adapted to each region of the country, with the help of a special system of financing, alongside of the disarranged finances of capitalism. In a word, the Central Committee of the Communist Party proposes quite simply that capitalism change its residence. And it is this "plan" that is counterposed to the struggle for power and a program of nationalization! *There are no worse opportunists than frightened adventurers.*

On the problem of how to get public works, a capital levy, government loans, etc., the resolution says not a word. No doubt, with the help of . . . petitions. This is the most opportune and the most efficacious method of action. Neither crises, nor Fascism, nor militarism, can put up a fight against petitions. Moreover, petitions will revive the paper industry, and thus relieve unemployment. Let us take note: the organization of petitions is a fundamental part of the system of public works, according to the plan of Thorez and company.

Whom are these people making fun of? Of themselves, or of the working class?

The Communist Party Is a Brake!

"It is astonishing that the proletariat endures passively such privations and such terror after a class struggle of more than a century." On every occasion we hear this lofty phrase from the mouth of a socialist or a communist in his study. Is there insufficient resistance? We put the blame on the backs of the working masses. As if the parties and the unions stood apart from the proletariat, and were not its organs of struggle! It is precisely

because the proletariat, as the result of its more than a century old struggles, has created its political and trade union organizations, that it is difficult and almost impossible for it to carry on the struggle against capitalism *without them* and *against them*. What was built as the main spring of action has become a dead weight, a brake.

The whole situation imbues the workers with the idea that revolutionary actions are necessary to change all the conditions of existence. But precisely because it is a question of a decisive struggle, which must include millions of men, the initiative naturally rests with the *directing organizations*, with the working class parties, with the United Front. From them must come a clear program, slogans, the mobilization for battle. In order to rouse the masses, the parties must themselves be aroused, and must open up a strenuous revolutionary campaign throughout the country. But the directing organizations, the Communist Party included, haven't the courage. The Communist Party tosses its tasks and its responsibilities on to the masses. It wants millions of men, left by it without revolutionary leadership, to engage in isolated struggles for partial demands and to show skeptical bureaucrats that they are ready to do battle. Perhaps after that the big chiefs will consent to command an offensive. In place of *directing* the masses, the bureaucratic Central Committee *examines* the masses, flunks them, and thus justifies its own opportunism and cowardice.

Recipes Cooked up "According to Lenin"

During the time of relative economic and political stability in France (1929-1933), the Central Committee of the Communist Party proclaimed the "Third Period", and would not be satisfied with anything less than the conquest of the streets at the barricades. Now, at the time of the economic, social, and political crisis, the same Central Committee is satisfied with a modest program of "immediate demands". This absurd contradiction is the complex product of many factors: fright at former errors, inability to understand the masses, the bureaucratic habit of laying down a blue print for the proletariat,—and, finally, intellectual anarchy, the result of zigzags, falsifications, lies, and repressions without number.

The first author of the new program is, no doubt, the present "leader" of the Comintern, Bela Kun, who goes day by day further on the road from adventurism to opportunism. After reading in Lenin that the Bolsheviks were for strikes *under certain conditions*, and the Mensheviks against them, in the wink of an eye Bela Kun founded his "realistic" policies on this discovery. But to his misfortune, Bela Kun had not opened Lenin . . . at the right page.

During certain periods, purely economic strike struggles did in fact play an enormous role in the revolutionary movement of the Russian proletariat. Now, Russian capitalism was not rotting at that time, but was growing and advancing rapidly. The Russian proletariat was a virgin class, and the strikes were for it the first form of awakening and activity. Finally, the extensive spread of the strikes coincided each time with a rise in the business cycle.

None of these conditions exists in France. Our proletariat has behind it a mighty schooling in revolution, of trade union and parliamentary struggle, with the whole positive and negative heritage of this rich past. It would be hard to expect a spontaneous strike wave in France, even in a period of a rise in the business cycle, and still more so while the cyclical crisis deepens the misery of declining capitalism.

The other side of the question is not less important. At the time of the first impetuous strike wave in Russia, there was only a single fraction of the Russian Social-Democracy which tried to restrict it to partial economic demands: this was the group called the "Economists". In their opinion, it was necessary to reject the

slogan, "Down with Autocracy!" until the appearance of a "revolutionary situation". Lenin thought that the "Economists" were miserable opportunists. He showed that a *revolutionary situation must be actively prepared*, even during a strike movement.

In general, it is absurd to try to carry over mechanically into France the various stages and episodes of the Russian revolutionary movement. But it is even more absurd to do it after the manner of Bela Kun, who understands neither Russia, nor France, nor Marxism. In the school of Lenin, we must learn *the method of action*, and not try to change Leninism into citations and recipes, good for every occasion in life.

"Peace, Bread and Freedom!"

Thus, the situation in France, in the opinion of the Stalinists, is not revolutionary; revolutionary slogans, on this analysis, are out of place; we must concentrate all attention on economic strikes and on partial demands. This is the program. It is an opportunist and a lifeless program, but still, it's a program.

Alongside it there is, however, another. *L'Humanité* repeats every day the triple slogan: "Peace, Bread, Freedom." It was under this slogan, *L'Humanité* explains, that the Bolsheviks conquered in 1917. Following the example of the Stalinists, Just repeats the same idea. Very good. But in 1917, in Russia, there was a situation notoriously revolutionary. How then can this slogan, which assured the success of the proletarian revolution, be any good along with "immediate demands" in a non-revolutionary situation? Let the seers of *L'Humanité* explain this mystery to us simple mortals.

On our part, we recall that "immediate demands" reinforced the triple slogan of the Bolsheviks.

"For Peace." That meant in 1917, under the war conditions, struggle against all the patriotic parties from the monarchists to the Mensheviks, the demand for the publication of the secret treaties, the revolutionary mobilization of the soldiers against the General Staff, and fraternization at the front. "For Peace!" That meant defiance of the militarism of Austria and Germany on one side, and of the Allies on the other. The slogan of the Bolsheviks thus meant the most daring and revolutionary policy ever known in the history of mankind.

"To struggle" for peace in 1935, in alliance with Herriot and the bourgeois "pacifists" (that is to say, the hypocritical imperialists), means simply to uphold the *status quo*, which is satisfactory at the present moment to the French bourgeoisie. It means to put

3. The Struggle Against Fascism and the General Strike

The Program of the Communist International, and Fascism

The program of the Communist International, written in 1928, during the period of the theoretical decline of the C.I., states, "The epoch of imperialism is the epoch of capitalism in its death-throes." By itself, this statement, which was formulated by Lenin a long time ago, is absolutely incontestable, and is of decisive importance for the policies of the proletariat in our epoch. But the authors of the program of the Communist International failed utterly to understand the thesis on capitalism in its *death throes* or *in decay*, which they had mechanically adopted. This lack of comprehension stands revealed with especial clarity in respect to what is to us the most burning question, namely, Fascism.

The program of the Communist International has the following to say on this subject: "*Side by side* with the Social-Democracy which assists the bourgeoisie to stifle the proletariat and to lull its vigilance Fascism appears." The Communist International failed

the workers to sleep, and to demoralize them with illusions about "disarmament" and "non-aggression pacts", with the lie of the League of Nations, while preparing a new capitulation of the working-class parties at the moment when the French bourgeoisie or its rivals choose to upset the *status quo*.

"For Bread!" That meant for the Bolsheviks in 1917 the *expropriation of the land and of the grain reserves belonging to the landlords and the speculators, and the monopoly of the grain trade in the hands of the workers and peasants government*. What does "For Bread!" mean to the Stalinists in 1935? A mere verbal formula!

"For Freedom!" The Bolsheviks showed the masses that freedom was an illusion while schools, press, and meeting halls remained in the hands of the bourgeoisie. "For Freedom!" meant: the seizure of power by the Soviets, the expropriation of the landlords, workers' control of production.

"For Freedom!" in alliance with Herriot and the old ladies of both sexes in the League for the Rights of Man means to uphold the semi-Bonapartist, semi-parliamentarian government, and that is all it can mean. The bourgeoisie needs right now not only the gangs of la Rocque, but likewise the "left" reputation of Herriot. Finance-capital is busy arming the Fascists. The Stalinists are restoring the left reputation of Herriot with the help of the masquerading "Peoples' Front". This is what the slogans of the October Revolution are used for in 1935!

Dragons and Fleas

As the single example of the new style "realistic" policies, the resolution of the Central Committee tells how the unemployed of Villejuif are eating the Croix de Feu's soup, and yelling: "To the stake with La Rocque!" How many are eating soup and how many yelling, they don't tell us: the Stalinists are never able to endure figures. But that is not the question. . . . To what point has a "revolutionary" party fallen when, in a programmatic resolution, it can find no other example of proletarian policies than the impotent yells of harrassed and starving workers, forced to nourish themselves on the crumbs of Fascist philanthropy? And these leaders feel neither humiliated nor ashamed!

Once, while talking about certain of his disciples, Marx quoted the words of Heine: "I have sown dragons, and I have harvested fleas." We are very much afraid that the founders of the Third International will have to repeat these same words. . . . However, our epoch needs not fleas, but dragons.

to understand that it is not the mission of Fascism to function *side by side* with the Social-Democracy, but to destroy all the existing workers' organizations, including the reformist. The task of Fascism, in the words of the program, is to "annihilate the *communist* strata of the proletariat, and their leading cadres". Fascism, then, does not at all threaten the social democracy and the reformist trade-unions; on the contrary, the social-democracy itself plays a "fascist" role to an ever increasing degree. Fascism achieves nothing more than the consummation of the labors of reformism, by functioning "*side by side* with the social democracy".

We are quoting not from an article by some Thorez or Duclos who contradicts himself at every step, but from the basic document of the Communist International, its program. (See Chapter II, paragraph 3: "The Crisis of Capitalism and Fascism.") We have here before us all the basic elements of the theory of *social fascism*. The leaders of the Communist International failed to understand that capitalism in decay is no longer able to come to terms with

the most moderate and most servile social democracy, either as a party in power, or as a party in opposition. It is the mission of Fascism to take its place not "side by side with the social democracy", but on its bones. Precisely from this there flows the possibility, the need, and the urgency for the united front. But the miserable leadership of the Communist International made no attempt to apply the policy of the united front except during the period when it could not be forced upon the social democracy. As soon as the position of reformism was shaken, and when the social democracy began to fall under blows, the Communist International rejected the united front. These people have the grievous habit of wearing their overcoats in the summer, and of venturing out in the winter without so much as a fig-leaf!

Despite the instructive experience of Italy, the Communist International inscribed on its banner the genial aphorism of Stalin, "Social democracy and Fascism are not opposites, they are twins." Herein lies the main cause for the defeat of the German proletariat. True, the C.I. has made a sharp turn on the question of the united front: facts proved themselves more potent than the program. But the program of the Communist International has been neither suppressed, nor modified. Its fundamental mistakes have not been explained to the workers. The leaders of the Communist International, who have lost confidence in themselves, are preserving *against possible eventualities* an avenue of retreat towards the positions of "social fascism". This has invested the policy of the united front with its unprincipled, diplomatic, and unstable character.

The Reformist Illusions of the Stalinists

The inability to understand the meaning of Lenin's thesis on "capitalism in its death-throes" has invested the present policies of the French Communist party with its character of noisy impotence, supplemented by reformist illusions. Although Fascism represents the organic product of capitalist decay, the Stalinists have suddenly become convinced of the possibility of putting an end to Fascism without touching the foundations of bourgeois society.

On March 6, Thorez wrote for the one hundredth time in *l'Humanité*:

"In order to assure the *decisive* defeat of Fascism, we again propose to the Socialist Party joint action in defence of immediate demands. . . ."

Every class conscious worker must ponder well this "programmatic" phrase. Fascism, as we know, is born out of the union between the despair of the middle classes and the terrorist policy of big capital. The "immediate demands" are those demands which do not transcend the framework of capitalism. How, then, by remaining upon the arena of capitalism in decay, is it possible to "assure the decisive (!) defeat" of Fascism?

When Jouhaux says that by putting an end to the crisis (easier said than done!) we shall by this very thing vanquish Fascism, Jouhaux, at least, remains faithful to himself: he is again as always the watchdog of the hopes in the regeneration and rejuvenation of capitalism. But the Stalinists recognize, verbally, the inevitability of the progressive degeneration of capitalism. How then, can they promise to render the political superstructure healthy, by assuring the decisive defeat of Fascism, and at the same time leave intact the decaying economic base of society?

Do they suppose that big capital is capable of turning the wheels of history back, at its whim, and once again resuming the road of concessions and "reforms"? Do they think that the petty bourgeoisie can be saved by means of "immediate demands" from growing ruin, from being declassed, and from despair? And how then to reconcile these trade union and reformist illusions with

the thesis on capitalism in its death throes?

Taken on the theoretical plane, the position of the Communist Party sums up, as we have seen, to a most complete absurdity. Let us see how this position appears in the light of the actual struggle.

The Struggle for Immediate Demands and Fascism

On February 28, Thorez expressed in the following words this very same central and radically false idea of the present policies of the Communist Party:

"To beat down Fascism decisively, it is necessary to put a halt, in no uncertain terms, to the economic offensive of capital against the living standards of the toiling masses."

Why then the workers' militia? What need of a direct struggle against Fascism? We must strive to raise the living standards of the masses, and Fascism will disappear, as if by magic.

Alas, along these lines, the entire perspective of the struggle immediately ahead is completely distorted, and the actual relationships are stood on their heads. The capitalists arrive at Fascism not at their own pleasure, but through necessity: they cannot any longer preserve the private ownership of the means of production save by directing an offensive against the workers, save by strengthening the oppression, by sowing misery and despair around them. At the same time, fearing the inevitable resistance on the part of the workers, the capitalists, through the medium of their agents, arouse the petty bourgeoisie against the proletariat and while accusing the latter of prolonging and aggravating the crisis, they finance Fascist gangs to annihilate the workers. Should the resistance of the workers to the offensive of capital increase on the morrow, should the strikes become more frequent and important, Fascism, despite what Thorez says, will not evaporate but instead grow with redoubled force. The growth of the strike movement will impell the mobilization of strike-breakers. All the "patriotic" thugs will participate in the movement. Daily attacks against the workers will be put on the order of the day. To close our eyes to this is to walk toward certain defeat.

Do you mean to say, Thorez and his colleagues will demand, that there must be no resistance? (And they will append the customary insults addressed to us, which we pass by as we would a cess-pool.) No. It is necessary to resist.

We are no adherents of that school which thinks that the best means of safety lies in silence, retreat, and capitulation. "Don't provoke the enemy!" "Do not defend yourselves!" "Don't arm yourselves!" "Roll over on your backs, and play dead!" Theoreticians from among this school of strategy should be sought not among ourselves but among the editors of *l'Humanité*! It is necessary for the workers to resist, if they do not wish to be annihilated. But in that case no reformist and pacifist illusion is permissible. The struggle will be ferocious. It is necessary to foresee beforehand the inevitable consequences of resistance and to prepare for them.

By its present offensive the bourgeoisie invests with a *new* and incommensurably more acute character the relation between the economic conditions and the social situation of capitalism in decay. Just so, the workers must invest *their defense with a new character which corresponds to the methods of the class enemy*. In defending ourselves against the economic blows of capital, we must know how to defend at the same time our organizations against the mercenary gangs of capital. It is impossible to do this save by means of the *workers' militia*. No verbal assertions, no shrieks, no insult on the part of *l'Humanité* can invalidate this conclusion.

In particular we must say to the trade unions: comrades, your locals and your publications will be pillaged, your organizations reduced to dust, if you do not immediately proceed to the formation of *trade union defense squads* ("trade union militia"), if you

do not demonstrate by actions that you will not surrender a single inch to Fascism without a struggle.

The General Strike Is Not a Game of Hide and Seek

In the same article (Feb. 28) Thorez laments:

"The Socialist Party has not accepted our proposals for wide scale action, including the *strike*, against the decree-laws which are being ever more enforced."

Including the strike? What strike? Since the abolition of the decree-laws is involved here, what Thorez apparently has in view are not partial economic strikes but a general strike, that is to say, a political strike. He does not utter the words "general strike" in order not to make it obvious that he is repeating our long-standing proposal. To what humiliating subterfuges must these poor people resort in order to mask their vacillations and contradictions!

This procedure has become, it seems, a method. In the open letter of March 12, the Central Committee of the Communist Party proposed to the Socialist Party to inaugurate a decisive campaign against the two-year term of military service, "through all methods available, including the *strike*". Once again the same mystic formula! The Central Committee has in mind evidently the strike as an instrument of political struggle, that is to say, as a revolutionary weapon. But why then does it fear to utter aloud the word general strike and simply speak of "a strike?" With whom is the Central Committee playing hide and seek? Is it with the proletariat, or no?

The Preparation for the General Strike

But putting aside these unbecoming maneuvers to maintain "prestige", there remains the fact that the Central Committee of the Communist Party proposes the general strike for the struggle against the Bonapartist legislation of Doumergue-Flandin. With this we are in full accord. But we demand that the leaders of working-class organizations themselves understand and explain to the masses the meaning of the general strike under the present conditions, as well as how it must be prepared.

Even an ordinary economic strike requires as a rule a militant organization, specifically, *pickets*. Under the present aggravated conditions of the class struggle, faced with the Fascist provocation and terror, a real organization of pickets is the essential prerequisite for all important economic struggles. Let us imagine, however, that some trade union leader would assert, "*Pickets* are not necessary, that would be a provocation—*self-defense* will suffice the strikers!" Isn't it obvious that the workers would amiably advise such a "leader" to go to a hospital; if not directly to an insane asylum? The fact is that pickets are precisely the most important organ of self-defense of the strikers!

Let us view more closely the line of reasoning relating to the general strike. We have in mind not an ordinary demonstration, nor a symbolic strike of an hour's or even 24 hours' duration, but a war maneuver, with the aim of forcing the enemy to submit. It is not difficult to understand what a terrific aggravation of the class struggle the general strike would imply under the present conditions! The Fascist groups would sprout on all sides like mushrooms after a rain and they would attempt with all their might to bring confusion, provocation and demoralization among the ranks of the strikers. How else can we guard the general strike against needless sacrifices and even against complete annihilation if not by means of military and strictly disciplined workers' detachments? *The general strike is the generalization of partial strike. The workers' militia is the generalization of the picket squads.* Only windbags and pathetic braggards can play with the idea of the general strike under the present conditions, and refuse

at the same time to carry on the stubborn work for the creation of the workers' militia!

A General Strike In a "Non-Revolutionary Situation"?

But the wretched members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party do not stop with this.

The general strike, as every Marxist knows, is one of the most revolutionary methods of struggle. The general strike is not possible except at a time when the class struggle rises above particular and craft demands, and extends over all occupational and district divisions, and wipes away the frontiers between the trade unions and the parties, between legality and illegality, and mobilizes the majority of the proletariat in an active opposition to the bourgeoisie and the state. Nothing can be on a higher plane than the general strike, except the armed insurrection. The entire history of the working class movement proves that every general strike, whatever may be the slogans under which it occurs, has an internal tendency to transform itself into an open revolutionary clash, into a direct struggle for power. In other words: the general strike is not possible except under the conditions of extreme political tension, and that is why it is always the incontestable expression of the revolutionary character of the situation. How then can the Central Committee propose a general strike in this case? "The situation is not a revolutionary one"!

Might not Thorez perhaps retort that he had in mind not a real general strike, but a little strike, quite peaceful, just exactly suited to the personal requirements of the editors of *l'Humanite*? Or perhaps may he not add discretely that, foreseeing the refusal of the leaders of the S.F.I.O., he risks nothing by proposing a general strike to them? But most probably Thorez, in refutation, will merely accuse us of entering into a conspiracy with Chiappe, ex-Alphonso XIII and the Pope: this is the sort of rejoinder that suits Thorez best!

But every communist worker, who has a head on his shoulders, must ponder over the crying contradictions of his hapless leaders: it is impossible, you see, to build workers' militias because the situation is not revolutionary, it is impossible even to carry on propaganda in favor of the arming of the proletariat, that is to say, of preparing the workers for a revolutionary situation in the future; but it is possible, it appears, even today to call the workers to a general strike despite the absence of a revolutionary situation. In truth, we find transcended here all the boundaries of thoughtlessness and absurdity!

"Soviets Everywhere!"

At all meetings we hear the Communists repeating the slogan which they have inherited from the "Third Period"—"Soviets Everywhere!" It is absolutely clear that this slogan, if one takes it seriously, bears a profoundly revolutionary character: it is impossible to establish the Soviet régime otherwise than by means of an armed insurrection against the bourgeoisie. But an *armed* insurrection presupposes *arms* in the hands of the proletariat. Thus the slogan of "Soviets everywhere" and the slogan of "arming the workers" are intimately and indissolubly bound with one another. Why then is the former slogan being incessantly reiterated by the Stalinists while the latter is proclaimed a "Trotskyist provocation"?

Our bewilderment is all the more legitimate since the slogan of arming the workers most closely corresponds to the present political situation and the state of mind of the proletariat. The slogan of "Soviets" is, by its very essence, offensive in character and presupposes a victorious revolution. The proletariat, however, finds itself today in a defensive situation. Fascism threatens it directly with physical annihilation. The necessity for defense,

even with arms in hand is actually more comprehensive and more within the grasp of the widest strata of the masses than the idea of a revolutionary offensive. Thus the slogan of arming could at the present stage count upon a response much greater and much more active than the slogan of Soviets. How then could a working-class party, unless it has really betrayed the interests of the revolution, let slip so exceptional an opportunity and so dishonestly compromise the idea of arming instead of ardently popularizing it?

We are ready to allow that our question is prompted by our "counter-revolutionary" nature, in particular, by our hopes of provoking military intervention; everyone knows that as soon as the Mikado and Hitler will become convinced by our question that air currents whistle through the heads of Bela Kun and Thorez, they will declare war against the U.S.S.R.

But Is the General Strike Possible in the Immediate Future?

To a question of this sort there is no *a priori* answer possible, that is to say, none ready made. To obtain an answer it is necessary to know how to question. Whom? The masses. How question them? By means of agitation.

Agitation is not only the means of communicating to the masses this or that slogan, calling the masses to action, etc. For a party, agitation is also a means of lending an ear to the masses, of sounding out its moods and thoughts, and reaching this or another decision in accordance with the results. Only the Stalinists have transformed agitation into a noisy monologue. For the Marxists, the Leninists, *agitation is always a dialogue with the masses.*

But in order that this dialogue give the necessary results, the party must estimate correctly the general situation within the country and outline the general course of the immediate struggle. By means of agitation and probing of the masses, the party must bring into its concepts the necessary corrections and exactitude particularly in everything relating to the *rhythm of the movement and the dates for major actions.*

The situation in the country has been described above; it bears a pre-revolutionary character along with the non-revolutionary character of the leadership of the proletariat. And since the policy of the proletariat is the principal factor in the development of a revolutionary situation, the non-revolutionary character of the proletarian leadership checks the transformation of the pre-revolutionary situation into an open revolutionary situation and by this very thing contributes toward transforming it into a counter-revolutionary situation.

In objective reality there are, of course, no sharp boundaries between the different stages of the political process. One stage interpenetrates with another, and as a result of this the situation reveals various contradictions. These contradictions certainly make diagnosis and prognosis more difficult but they do not at all make it impossible.

The forces of the French proletariat remain not only unexhausted, but are indeed still intact. Fascism as a political factor among the petty bourgeois masses is relatively feeble as yet (much more powerful, nevertheless, than it seems to the parliamentarians). These two very important political facts allow us to say with firm conviction: nothing has been lost as yet, the possibility for transforming the pre-revolutionary situation into a revolutionary situation is still entirely open.

But in a capitalist country such as ours there can be no revolutionary struggles without the general strike: if working men and women remain in the factories during the decisive days, who then will do the fighting? Thus, the general strike is on the order of the day.

But the question of the *moment* for the general strike is the question of knowing whether the masses are prepared to struggle and whether the workers' organizations are ready to lead them to battle.

Do the Masses Want to Struggle?

Is it true, however, that the only thing lacking is the revolutionary leadership? Does not there exist a great force for conservatism within the masses themselves, within the proletariat? Such voices are raised from different sides. And there is nothing astonishing about it! When a revolutionary crisis approaches, many leaders, fearful of the responsibilities, hide themselves behind the pseudo-conservatism of the masses. History has taught us how a few weeks, even a few days prior to the October insurrection, such distinguished Bolsheviks as Zinoviev, Kamenev and Rykov (it is needless to mention such people as Losovsky, Manuilsky, etc.) asserted that the masses were worn out, and did not want to fight. And yet as revolutionists, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Rykov tower in stature far above the Cachins, Thorezes and Monmousseaus.

Whoever declares that our proletariat does not want to wage or is incapable of waging a revolutionary struggle, himself spreads calumny by ascribing his own feebleness and his own cowardice to the toiling masses. *Up to the present moment there has not been a single case either in Paris or the provinces where the masses remained deaf to a call from above.*

The greatest example in point is the General Strike of Feb. 12, 1934. Despite the complete division of the leadership, the lack of any serious preparation, the tenacious efforts of the leaders of the C.G.T. to reduce the movement to a minimum, since they could not evade it altogether, the general strike achieved the greatest success possible under the given conditions. It is clear that the masses want to struggle. Every class conscious worker must say to himself that the pressure from below must have been extremely powerful if Jouhaux himself had to bestir for a moment out of his immobility. True, involved here was not a general strike in the proper meaning of the term, but only a 24 hour demonstration. But this restriction was *not* put by the masses; it was dictated from above.

The demonstration of Feb. 10 of this year in the Place de la Republique confirms the very same conclusion. The only weapon which the leading centers utilized to prepare for it was the cold water bucket. The only slogan which the masses heard was, "Hush! Hush!" And nevertheless the number of demonstrators surpassed all expectations. In the provinces things have been and remain during the past year in exactly the same state. It is impossible to adduce a single serious fact that would prove that the leaders wanted to struggle and the masses refused to follow them. Always and everywhere just the reverse relationship is to be observed. It preserves its full force even today. The rank and file want to fight, the tops apply the brake. It is here that the chief danger lies and it *may* end in a real catastrophe.

The Rank and File and the Upper Crust Within the Party

The same relationship is to be found not only between the parties (or the trade unions) and the proletariat but also within each of the parties. This *Brossard* has not the least support among the rank and file in the S.F.I.O.; the only ones who support him are the deputies and the mayors who want everything to remain as in the past. On the other hand, *Marceau Pivert*, thanks to his stand which is becoming more and more clear and resolute, has become one of the most popular figures with the rank and file. We recognize this all the more readily since we have never renounced in the past, as we shall not refrain in the future, from speaking out openly when we are not in agreement with Pivert.

Taken as a political symptom this fact by its importance far transcends the question of personalities of Frossard and Pivert: it indicates the general tendency of the development. *The rank and file of the Socialist Party, as of the Communist Party, is more to the left, more revolutionary, more audacious than the upper crust:* this is precisely why it is ready to place confidence only in the left wing leaders. Still more: it is pushing the sincere Socialist always further to the left. Why does the rank and file itself become radicalized? Because it finds itself in direct contact with the masses of the population, with their misery, their revolt and their hatred. This is an infallible symptom. We can rely on it.

The "Immediate Demands" and the Radicalization of the Masses

The leaders of the Communist Party can, indeed, cite the fact that the masses failed to respond to their appeals. But this fact does not invalidate, instead it confirms our analysis. The working masses understand what the "leaders" do not understand, that is to say, that under the conditions of a very great social crisis, a partial economic struggle alone, which requires enormous efforts and enormous sacrifices, can not achieve any serious results. Worse yet, it can weaken and exhaust the proletariat. The workers are ready to participate in fighting demonstrations and even in a general strike but not in petty, exhausting strikes, without any perspective. Despite the appeals, manifestoes, and articles in *l'Humanité* the communist agitators hardly appear at all before the masses to preach strikes in the name of "partial immediate demands". They sense that the bureaucratic plans of their leaders do not correspond at all either to the objective situation or the mood of the masses. Without a broad perspective, the masses cannot and will not begin to struggle. The policy of *l'Humanité* is the policy of an artificial and false pseudo-"realism". The failure of the C.G.T.U. in calling partial strikes is the indirect but very actual confirmation of the profundity of the crisis and of the moral tension in the workers' districts.

One should not think, however, that the radicalization of the masses will proceed by itself, automatically. The working class awaits for initiative on the part of its organizations. When it arrives at the conclusion that its expectations have been false—and this moment is, perhaps, not so very distant—the process of radicalization will break off and be transformed into manifestations of discouragement, apathy, and isolated explosions of despair. At the periphery of the proletariat, anarchist tendencies impinge upon Fascist tendencies. The wine will turn to vinegar.

The shifts in the political mood of the masses demand the greatest attention possible. To probe this living dialectic at every stage—that is the task of agitation. So far, the United Front criminally continues to lag behind the development of the social crisis and the mood of the masses. It is still possible to make up for lost time. But we must not lose any more time. Today history is to be reckoned not in terms of years, but in months and weeks.

The Program of the General Strike

To determine to what degree the masses are ripe for the general strike and at the same time to strengthen the militant mood of the masses, it is necessary to place before them a program of revolutionary action. Partial slogans such as the abolition of the Bonapartist decree-laws and of the two year term of military service will find, of course, an important place in such a program. But these two episodic slogans are entirely inadequate.

Above all the tasks and partial demands of our epoch there stands the *QUESTION OF POWER*. Since February 6, 1934 the question of power has been openly posed as the question of armed force. The municipal and parliamentary elections can be

of importance insofar as the evaluation of forces is concerned—but nothing more. The question will be settled by the open conflict between the two camps. Governments of the Doumergue-Flandin, etc. type occupy the forefront only up to the day of the decisive climax. On the morrow, either Fascism or the proletariat will govern France.

It is precisely because the present intermediate state régime is extremely unstable, that the general strike *can* achieve very great partial successes by forcing the government to take to the road of concessions on the question of the Bonapartist decree-laws, the two year term of military service, etc. But such a success, extremely valuable and important in itself, will not reestablish the equilibrium of the "democracy": finance capital will redouble its subsidies to Fascism, and the question of power, perhaps after a brief interlude, will be posed with redoubled force.

The fundamental importance of the General Strike, independently of the partial successes which it may and then again may not provide, lies in the fact that it poses the question of power in a revolutionary manner. By shutting down the factories, transport, generally all the means of communication, power stations, etc. the proletariat by this very thing paralyzes not only production but also the government. The state power remains suspended in mid-air. It must either subjugate the proletariat by famine and force and constrain it to set the apparatus of the bourgeois state once again in motion, or retreat before the proletariat.

Whatever may be the slogans, and the motive for which the general strike is initiated, if it includes the genuine masses, and if these masses are quite resolved to struggle, the general strike inevitably poses before all the classes in the nation the question: *Who will be the master of the house?*

The leaders of the proletariat must understand this internal logic of the general strike, unless they are no leaders but dilettantes and adventurers. Politically this implies that from now on the leaders will continue to pose before the proletariat the task of the revolutionary conquest of power. If not, they must not venture to speak of the general strike. But by renouncing the general strike, they renounce thereby all revolutionary struggle, that is to say, they betray the proletariat to Fascism.

Either complete capitulation or revolutionary struggle for power—such is the alternative which flows from all the conditions of the present crisis. Whoever has not understood this alternative, has no business in the camp of the proletariat.

The General Strike and the C.G.T.

The question of the general strike is complicated by the fact that the C.G.T. proclaims that it has a monopoly on declaring and conducting the general strike. From this it follows that this question does not at all concern the working-class parties. And at first sight, what is most astonishing, is that there are to be found socialist parliamentarians who consider this claim to be quite in order: in reality, they merely wish to rid themselves of this responsibility.

The general strike, as the name itself already indicates, has for its goal the inclusion, in so far as it is possible, of the entire proletariat. The C.G.T. includes in its ranks probably not more than 5 to 8% of the proletariat. The influence of the C.G.T. itself outside the confines of the trade unions is absolutely insignificant to the extent that, upon this or another question, it does not equal the influence of the working-class parties. Is it possible, for example, to compare the influence of *Le Peuple* to the influence of *Le Populaire* or *l'Humanité*?

The leadership of the C.G.T., in its conceptions and methods, is incomparably still further away from the tasks of the present epoch than the leadership of the working-class parties. The lower

one passes from the upper crust of the apparatus to the rank and file of the trade unions, the less confidence one finds in Jouhaux and his group. The lack of confidence changes more and more into open distrust. The present conservative apparatus of the C.G.T. will be inevitably swept away by the subsequent development of the revolutionary crisis.

The general strike is, by its very essence, a political act. It opposes the working class, as a whole, to the bourgeois state. It assembles together union and non-union workers, socialists, communists, and non-party men. It requires an apparatus with a press and agitators such as the C.G.T. alone does not have at its disposal.

The general strike poses directly the question of the conquest of power by the proletariat. The C.G.T. has turned and is turning its back on this task (the leaders of the C.G.T. turn their faces towards the bourgeois power). The leaders of the C.G.T. themselves know that the leadership of the general strike is beyond their forces. If they, nevertheless, proclaim their monopoly to direct it, it is solely because they hope in this way to stifle the general strike even before its birth.

And what about the general strike of February 12, 1934? It was only only a brief and peaceful demonstration imposed upon the C.G.T. by the socialist and communist workers. Jouhaux and his colleagues themselves took over the nominal leadership of the

resistance precisely in order to prevent it from transforming itself into a revolutionary general strike.

In its instructions to its propagandists, the C.G.T. said, "On the morrow after February 6th, the laboring population and *all the democratic elements*, at the appeal of the C.G.T. demonstrated their firm will to bar the road to the *factionalists*. On its own part, the C.G.T. took note neither of the socialists nor of the communists — only of the "democrats." In this single phrase, Jouhaux is summed up. That is precisely why it would be criminal to place confidence in Jouhaux to decide the question of knowing whether it should or should not be a revolutionary struggle.

Of course in the preparation and conduct of the general strike, the trade unions will play a very influential role; yet not by virtue of a monopoly, but side by side with the working class parties. From the revolutionary standpoint it is particularly important to collaborate intimately with *local* trade union organizations without the slightest injury, of course, to their autonomy. As regards the C.G.T., it will either take its place in the common proletarian front by cutting away from the "democrats," or remain on the sidelines. Shall we co-operate loyally with equal rights? Yes. Shall we decide jointly the time and the methods of conducting the general strike? Yes! Shall we recognize Jouhaux's monopoly to stifle the revolutionary movement? Never!

4. Socialism and Armed Struggle

The Great Lesson of February 6, 1935

Upon this day — Feb. 6, 1935—the Fascist League prepared to demonstrate on the Place de la Concorde. And what did the United Front and, in particular, the Central Committee of the Communist party do? It called the workers of Paris to demonstrate at the Place de la Concorde at the same time as the Fascists. Were the Fascists perhaps to be without arms? No. After a year's time they were armed twofold. Did the Central Committee of the Communist Party propose to adequately arm the defense squads? Oh, no. The Central Committee is against "putschism" and "physical struggle." How, then, is it possible to throw tens of thousands of workers without arms, without preparation, without defense against Fascist gangs excellently drilled and armed who bear a bloody hatred towards the revolutionary proletariat?

Let no malicious people tell us that the Central Committee of the Communist Party did not want to place the workers under the guns of the Fascists; that its sole desire was to give Flandin a convenient pretext to prohibit the Fascist demonstration. For that is worse yet. The Central Committee of the Communist Party, it then appears, gambled with the heads of the workers, and the outcome of this gamble depended entirely upon Flandin, more exactly upon the chiefs of police from the school of Chiappe. And what would have been the outcome had the police prefecture decided to profit by the excellent occasion and teach the revolutionary workers a lesson through the medium of the Fascists, moreover making responsibility for the butchery fall upon the leaders of the United Front? It is not difficult to imagine the consequences! While no bloody massacre resulted this particular time, in the event of the continuation of the same policy, it will result inevitably and infallibly, upon the next similar occasion.

"Putschism" and Adventurism

The conduct of the Central Committee was the purest form of bureaucratic adventurism. Marxists have always taught that *opportunism and adventurism are two sides of one and the same coin*. February 6, 1935 has shown us with remarkable clarity

how easily the coin may be reversed.

"We are against putschism, against insurrectionalism!" Otto Bauer repeated year after year and spared no effort to rid himself of the *Schutzbund* (Workers' Militia) which was left as a heritage by the 1918 revolution. The powerful Austrian social democracy retreated in a cowardly manner, it adapted itself to the bourgeoisie, it retreated again, issued foolish "petitions," created a false appearance of struggle, placed its hopes upon its own Flandin (his name was Dollfuss), surrendered position after position, and when it saw itself at the bottom of the abyss it began to shriek hysterically "Workers, to the rescue!" The best militants, without any contact with the masses who were disoriented, overwhelmed and duped, threw themselves into the struggle and suffered an inevitable defeat. After which, Otto Bauer and Julius Deutsch declared, "We behaved like revolutionaries but the *proletariat* did not support us!"

The events in Spain unfolded after a similar pattern. The social democratic leaders called the workers to an insurrection after they had surrendered to the bourgeoisie all the conquered revolutionary positions, and after they had exhausted the popular masses by their policy of retreat. The professional "anti-putschists" found themselves compelled to call for armed defense under such conditions as invested it to a large degree with the character of a "putsch".

February 6, 1935 was a minor repetition in France of the events in Austria and Spain. During the course of several months the Stalinists lulled and demoralized the workers, they ridiculed the slogan for the militia, and "rejected" the physical struggle. Then all of a sudden, without the slightest preparation they commanded the proletariat, "To the Place de la Concorde. Forward, march!" This time, the good Langeron saved them. But if on the morrow, when the atmosphere will become hotter still, the Fascist thugs should assassinate scores of workers' leaders or set fire to *l'Humanité*—who will declare that this is improbable?—the wise Central Committee will infallibly shriek out, "Workers, to arms!" And then, either when committed to a concentration camp, or while promenading along the streets of London, if they get that far, the

same leaders will haughtily declare, "We called for the insurrection, but the workers did not support us!"

We Must Foresee and Prepare

The secret of success, obviously, is not in the "physical struggle" itself but in correct policies. But we call correct that policy which meets the conditions of the time and place. *By itself*, the workers' militia does not solve the problem. But the workers' militia is an *integrally necessary part* of the policy which meets the conditions of the time and place. It would be absurd to shoot guns over a ballot box. But it would be still more absurd to defend oneself against Fascist gangs with a ballot.

The initial nuclei of the workers' militia will inevitably be weak, isolated, and inexperienced. Pedants and skeptics shake their heads with scorn. There will be found cynics who will not be ashamed to poke fun at the idea of workers' militia in a conversation with the journalists of the Comité des Forges. If they think thus to insure themselves against concentration camps they are fooling themselves. Imperialism has no use for the grovelling of this or that leader; it must annihilate the class.

When Guesde and Lafargue, as youths, began to agitate for Marxism they appeared in the eyes of sage philistines to be impotent solitaires and naive utopians. Nevertheless it was they who **excavated the channel** for that movement which carried along so many parliamentary fogies. Within the literary, trade union, and coöperative spheres the first steps of the working class movement were feeble, tottering, very uncertain. But despite its poverty, the proletariat, thanks to its numbers and its spirit of self-sacrifice, has created mighty organizations.

The armed organization of the proletariat, which at the present moment coincides almost entirely with the *defense against Fascism*, is a new branch of the class struggle. The first steps here too will be inexperienced and maladroit. We must expect mistakes. It is even impossible to escape completely from provocation. The selection of the cadres will be achieved little by little and this all the more surely, all the more solidly as the militia is closer to the factories where the workers know one another well. But the initiative must necessarily come from above. *The party can and must provide the initial cadres*. The trade unions must also take to this same road—and they will inevitably take it. The cadres will become fused and strengthened all the more rapidly as they meet with an increasing sympathy and an increasing support within the workers' organizations, and afterwards within the masses of the toilers.

What are we to say about those gentlemen who in the guise of sympathy and support villify and poke fun at, or worse yet, depict to the class enemy the detachments of working class self-defense as detachments of "insurrection" and of "putsch"? See in particular the "Combat (?) Marxiste (!)" The witty and half-witted pedants, the theoretical lieutenants of Jouhaux, led by the Russian Mensheviks, ridicule maliciously the first steps of the workers' militia. It is impossible to give these gentlemen any other name save that of direct enemies of the proletarian revolution.

The Workers' Militia and the Army

But here the conservative fogies interject their final argument, "Do you think that by means of squads of poorly armed militia of the proletariat you can conquer power, that is to say, win a victory over the army with its modern technique (with its tanks; aeroplanes! poison gases!!)"? It is difficult to conceive of an argument more hollow and trite, which, moreover, has been a hundred times refuted by theory and by history. Nevertheless it is served up each time as the last word of "realistic" thought.

Even if we allow for a moment that the detachments of the

militia will tomorrow turn out to be inept in the struggle for power, they are none the less necessary *today*, for the defense of the workers' organizations. The leaders of the C.G.T. reject, as every one knows, all struggle for power. This does not at all hinder the Fascists from annihilating the C.G.T. The trade unionists who do not take timely defense measures, commit a crime against the trade unions, regardless of their political orientation.

Let us inspect more closely, however, the chief argument of the pacifists, "The armed detachments of workers are powerless against a contemporary army." This "argument" is aimed fundamentally, not against the militia but *against the very idea of proletarian revolution*. Should one allow for a moment that the army equipped to its teeth will *under all conditions* be found on the side of big capital, then one must renounce not only the workers' militia but socialism in general. Then capitalism is eternal.

Fortunately, this is not so. The proletarian revolution presupposes the extreme aggravation of the class struggle in city and village, and consequently also within the army. The revolution will not gain victory until it has won over to its side or has at least neutralized the basic nucleus of the army. This victory, however, cannot be improvised: it must be systematically prepared.

At this point the pacifist doctrinaire will interrupt us in order to express agreement (in words). "Obviously," he will say, "it is necessary to win over the army by means of sustained propaganda. But that is what we are doing. The struggle against the high death rate in the barracks, against the two year term, against war—the success of this struggle makes needless the arming of the workers."

Is this true? No, it is fundamentally false. A peaceful placid manner of winning over the army is even less possible than the peaceful winning of a parliamentary majority. Already the very moderate campaigns against the death rate in the barracks and against the two year term are leading without any question to an understanding between the patriotic leagues and the reactionary officers, to a direct conspiracy on their part, and also to a redoubled payment of the subsidies which finance capital gives to the Fascists. *The more successful the anti-militarist agitation becomes, the more rapid will be the growth of the Fascist danger*. Such is the actual and not fanciful dialectic of the struggle. The conclusion is that in the very process of the propaganda and of the preparation, we must know how to defend ourselves arms in hand, and more and more vigorously.

During the Revolution

During the revolution, inevitable oscillations will occur in the army, an internal struggle will take place. Even the most advanced sections will not go over openly and actively to the side of the proletariat unless they see with their own eyes that the *workers want to fight and are able to win*. The task of the Fascist detachments will be to prevent the rapprochement between the revolutionary proletariat and the army. The Fascists will strive to annihilate the workers' insurrection at its outset in order to destroy among the best sections of the army any idea of the possibility of supporting the insurgents. At the same time the Fascists will come to the aid of reactionary detachments of the army to disarm the most revolutionary regiments.

What will be our task in this case?

It is impossible to tell in advance the concrete course of the revolution in any given country. But we can, on the basis of the entire experience of history, assert with certainty that the insurrection in no case and in no country will assume the character of a mere duel between the workers' militia and the army. The relationship of forces will be much more complex and immeasurably more favorable to the proletariat. *The workers' militia*—not by its

armaments but by its class consciousness and heroism—*will be the vanguard of the revolution. Fascism will be the vanguard of the counter-revolution.* The workers' militia with the support of the entire class, with the sympathy of all the toilers will have to smash, disarm and terrorize the bandit gangs of reaction and thus open up the avenue to the workers for *revolutionary fraternalization with the army.* The alliance of workers and soldiers will be vic-

torious over the counter-revolutionary section. Thus victory will be assured.

The skeptics shrug their shoulders with scorn. But the skeptics have made the same gestures in the past on the eve of all victorious revolutions. The proletariat would do well to invite the skeptics to run away before things start. Time is too precious to explain music to the deaf, colors to the blind, and the socialist revolution to skeptics.

5. *The Proletariat, the Peasantry, the Army, the Women, the Youth*

The Plan of the C.G.T. and the United Front

Jouhaux has borrowed the idea of the Plan from de Man. Both of them have the very same goal in mind; to mask the final *collapse of reformism* and to instill new hopes in the proletariat, in order to sidetrack it away from revolution.

Neither de Man nor Jouhaux are the inventors of their "plans". They merely took fundamental demands from the *Marxist program of the transition period*—the nationalization of banks and key industries—threw overboard the class struggle, and in place of the revolutionary expropriation of the expropriators substituted the financial operation of *purchasing*.

The power must remain, as previously, in the hands of the "people", that is to say, of the bourgeoisie. But the state purchases the most important branches of industry (we are not told which ones precisely) from their present proprietors, who become parasitic bond-holders for two or three generations: the pure and simple private capitalist exploitation is replaced by an indirect exploitation through the medium of state capitalism.

Since Jouhaux understands very well that even this emasculated program of nationalization is absolutely unfeasible without a revolutionary struggle, he announces in advance that he is ready to *change his "plan" into the small change of parliamentary reforms*, after the manner of planned economy now in fashion. The ideal of Jouhaux would be to scale down the entire operation, by means of arrangements made behind the scenes, to the seating of the trade union bureaucrats in the different economic and industrial boards, without power and without authority, but with suitable fees.

It is not without good cause that Jouhaux's plan—his actual plan, which he hides behind the paper "Plan"—has received the support of the Neo-Socialists and even the approval of Herriot! However, the sober ideal of "independent" trade unionism cannot be materialized unless capitalism advances once again, and unless the working masses submit to bondage. But what if the capitalist decline continues? Then the plan, which was projected to sidetrack the workers away from "evil thoughts", can become the banner of a revolutionary movement.

Obviously frightened by the Belgian example, Jouhaux made haste to retreat. The most important point on the agenda of the National Committee of the C.G.T., in the middle of March—propaganda for the plan—was unexpectedly shuffled away. If this maneuver proved more or less successful, the blame for it falls entirely upon the leadership of the united front.

The leaders of the C.G.T. projected their "plan" in order to obtain the possibility for competing with the parties of the revolution. Thereby, Jouhaux has demonstrated that, following in the wake of his bourgeois inspirers, he estimates the situation as revolutionary (in the wide sense of the word). *But the revolutionary adversary has not appeared upon the arena.* Jouhaux decided not to involve himself further on a course which is full of risks. He retreated, and today he is biding his time.

In January, the Central Committee of the Socialist Party proposed to the Communist Party a joint struggle for power under the slogan of the socialization of banks and heavy industry. Had there been revolutionists seated in the Central Committee of the Communist Party, they would have grabbed this proposal with both hands. By opening a large scale campaign for power, they would have accelerated the revolutionary mobilization within the S.F.I.O., and at the same time they would have compelled Jouhaux to carry on an agitation for his "Plan". By following this course, the C.G.T. could have been forced to take its place in the United Front. The specific weight of the French proletariat would have increased greatly.

But within the Central Committee of the Communist Party preside not revolutionists but mandarins. "There is no revolutionary situation," they responded, contemplating their navels. The reformists of the S.F.I.O. sighed with relief—the danger was over. Jouhaux made haste to withdraw from the agenda the question of propaganda for the Plan. The proletariat remains in a great social crisis *without any program.* The Communist International has played a reactionary role once again.

The Revolutionary Alliance with the Peasantry

The crisis of agriculture provides today the principal reservoir for the Bonapartist and Fascist tendencies. When misery seizes the peasant by the throat he is capable of turning the most unexpected somersaults. He views democracy with a growing distrust.

"The slogan of the defense of democratic liberties," wrote Monmousseau (*Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, September 1, 1934, page 1017), "perfectly suits the spirit of the peasantry." This remarkable assertion demonstrates that Monmousseau understands as little concerning the peasant question as he does concerning the trade union question. The peasants are beginning to turn their backs to the parties of the "left" precisely because the latter are incapable of proposing anything to them except frothy phrases about "the defense of democracy".

No program of "immediate demands" can give any serious results to the village. The proletariat must speak the *language of the revolution to the peasants*: it will not find another language in common. The workers must draw up a program of *revolutionary measures for the salvation of agriculture jointly with the peasants.*

The peasants dread war above all. Should we, perhaps, together with Laval and Litvinov delude them with hopes in a League of Nations and in "disarmament"? The only way to escape war is by overthrowing one's own bourgeoisie and by sounding the signal for the transformation of Europe into the *United States of Workers' and Peasants' Republics.* Outside of revolution, there is no safety from war.

The toiling peasants are overwhelmed by the usurious terms of credit. There is only one way to change these conditions: expropriate the banks, concentrate them in the hands of the workers'

state and, at the expense of the financial sharks provide *credit* to small peasants, and to peasant coöperatives, in particular. *Peasant control* must be established over agricultural banks of credit.

The peasants are subjected to the exploitation of the fertilizer and grain trusts. There is no way out other than the *nationalization* of fertilizer trusts and the big flour mills, and of subordinating them completely to the interests of peasants and consumers.

The various strata of the peasantry (the tenant farmers and the sharecroppers) are crushed beneath the exploitation of the great landed proprietors. There is no method of struggle against *landed usury* other than the expropriation of the landed usurers by *peasants' committees* under the control of the workers' and peasants' state.

None of these measures is realizable under the rule of the bourgeoisie. Meagre charity will not save the peasant, he has no use for palliatives. He needs bold revolutionary measures. The peasant will understand them, approve them and support them, if the worker makes him a serious proposal to *struggle jointly* for power.

[We must not wait for the petty bourgeoisie to decide for itself but we must *mould its opinions, strengthen its will*—that is the task of the working-class party. It is solely in this that the union of workers and peasants can be achieved.

The Army

The mood of the majority of the army officers reflects the reactionary mood of the ruling classes of the country, but in a much more concentrated form. The mood of the mass of the soldiery reflects the mood of the workers and peasants, but in a much weaker form: the bourgeoisie knows much better how to maintain contact with the officers than the proletariat with the soldiers.

Fascism impresses the officers very much, because its slogans are resolute and because it is prepared to settle difficult questions by means of pistols and machine guns. We possess quite a few disjointed reports regarding the tie-up between the Fascist leagues and the army through the medium of reserve as well as active officers, yet we obtain knowledge only of a minute portion of what is going on in reality. Today the rule of re-enlisted men in the army is growing. In them the reaction will find quite a number of supplementary agents. *The Fascist nucleus of the army under the protection of the General Staff is marching ahead.*

The young class-conscious workers in the barracks could put up a successful resistance to the demoralizing Fascist influence. But the great misfortune is that they are themselves politically disarmed: they have no program. The unemployed youth, the son of a small peasant, of a small trader or of a petty functionary carry into the army the discontent of the social strata from which they come. What will the Communist in the barracks say to them—"the situation is not revolutionary"? The Fascists pillage the Marxist program, successfully transforming certain of its sections into an instrument of social demagogy. The "communists" (?) as a matter of fact, disown their program, substituting for it the rotten refuse of reformism. Can one conceive of a more fraudulent bankruptcy?

L'Humanité concentrates upon "the immediate demands" of the soldiers: that is necessary but that is only one one hundredth of

the program. Today more than ever before the army lives a political life. Every social crisis is necessarily a crisis in the army. *The French soldier is awaiting and seeking for clear answers. There is not and there cannot be a better answer to the questions of the social crisis and a better rejoinder to the demagogy of the Fascists than the program of Socialism.* It is necessary to spread it boldly throughout the country, and it will penetrate through a thousand channels into the army!

The Women

The social crisis, with its train of calamities, weighs most heavily upon the toiling women. They are doubly oppressed: by the possessing class and by their own families.

There are to be found "socialists" who dread giving the women the right to vote, in view of the influence which the church has upon them. As if the fate of the people depended upon a lesser or greater number of municipalities of the "left" in 1935, and not upon the moral, social and political position of millions of workers and peasants during the next period!

Every revolutionary crisis is characterized by the awakening of the best qualities in the women of the toiling classes: their passion, their heroism, their devotion. The influence of the Church will be swept away not by the impotent rationalism of the "free thinkers", not by the insipid bigotry of the free masons, but by the revolutionary struggle for the emancipation of humanity, and consequently, and first of all, of the working woman.

The program of the socialist revolution must resound in our time as the tocsin for the women of the working class!

The Youth

The most terrible condemnation of the leadership of the political and trade union working class organizations is the weakness of the youth organizations. In the sphere of *philanthropy, amusement and sport*, the bourgeoisie and the Church are incomparably stronger than we are. We cannot tear away the working class youth from them except by means of the socialist program and revolutionary action.

The young generation of the proletariat needs a political leadership but not irksome guardians. The conservative bureaucratism stifles and repels the youth. Had the regime of the Young Communist League existed in 1848, we would not have had the Gavroche (the nickname for the independent impetuous youngsters of revolutionary Paris). The policies of passivity and adaptation reflect in a particularly unhappy fashion upon the *cadres* of the youth. The young bureaucrats grow old before their time: they master all sorts of behind-the-scenes manoeuvres, but they do not know the A B C of Marxism. They embrace "convictions" upon this or another occasion, depending upon the exigencies of the manoeuvre. Those among us who participated in the last congress of the Seine Alliance have seen plenty of this type.

It is necessary to pose the problem of the revolution in its full scope before the working class youth. In addressing ourselves to the younger generation, we must know how to appeal to its audacity and its courage without which nothing great has ever been achieved in history. The revolution will open the gates wide for the youth. The youth cannot fail to be for the revolution!

6. Why the Fourth International?

The Failure of the Communist International

In its letter to the National Council of the Socialist Party, the Central Committee of the Communist Party proposed as the basis for unification "the program of the Communist International, which has led to the victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R., whereas

the program of the Second International was unable to stand up to the tragic test of the War and resulted in the disastrous balance-sheet of Germany and Austria." Revolutionary Marxists announced in August, 1914, that the Second International had failed. All subsequent events have only confirmed this estimate. But in

showing the incontestable bankruptcy of the social-democracy in Germany and Austria, the Stalinists forgot to reply to one question: What became of the German and Austrian sections of the Communist International? The German Communist Party fell before the test of history as ignominiously as the German social-democracy. Why? The German workers wanted to struggle, and believed that "Moscow" would lead them to battle; they were moving steadily to the left. The German Communist Party was growing rapidly; in Berlin it was larger than the Social Democratic Party. But, when the hour of test came, it was ravaged from within. The stifling of the interior life of the Party, the wish to order about instead of to convince, the zigzag policies, the appointment of leaders from the top, the system of lies and deception for the masses—all this demoralized the Party to its marrow. When danger approached, the Party was found to be a corpse. It is impossible to erase this fact from history.

After the shameful capitulation of the Communist International in Germany, the Bolshevik-Leninists, without hesitating a moment, proclaimed: the Third International is dead! There is no need to recall the insults that were thrown at us by the Stalinists in all countries. *L'Humanité*, even after Hitler's definitive victory, kept saying in issue after issue: "There has been no defeat in Germany;" "Only renegades will talk about defeat;" "The German Communist Party is growing by the hour;" "The Party of Thaelman is getting ready for the seizure of power." There is nothing surprising in the fact that this criminal bombast in the face of the greatest of historical catastrophes has still further demoralized the other sections of the Communist International: an organization which has lost the capacity of learning from its own defeats is irrevocably condemned.

The Lesson of the Saar

Proof was not long in coming. The Saar Plebiscite was, we might say, an experiment expressly designed to show how much confidence the German proletariat had left in the Second and Third Internationals. The results are known: Facing the necessity of choosing between the triumphant violence of Hitler and the rotten impotence of the bankrupt working-class parties, the masses gave Hitler 90% of their votes, and (if we leave out the Jewish bourgeoisie, certain interested business men, the pacifists, etc.) probably no more than 7% to the united front of the Second and Third Internationals. This is the combined balance sheet of reformism and Stalinism. Alas for those who have not understood this lesson!

The working masses voted for Hitler because they saw no other road. The parties which for decades had aroused and organized them in the name of Socialism, deceived and betrayed them. That is the general conclusion that the workers came to. If the flag of the socialist revolution had been raised higher in France, the Saar proletariat would have turned its eyes to the west, and would have put class solidarity above national solidarity. But, unfortunately, the crow of the French cock did not announce a revolutionary dawn to the people of the Saar. Under cover of the United Front, in France, there reigned the same policy of feebleness, of indecision, of marking time, of lack of confidence that lost the cause of the German proletariat. That is why the Saar plebiscite is not merely a test of the results of the German catastrophe, but a formidable warning for the French proletariat. Disaster awaits the parties which slide over the surface of events, cradle themselves in words, hope in miracles, and allow the mortal enemy to organize without hindrance, to arm, to hold the advantageous positions, and to choose the most favorable moment for launching the decisive blow!

This is the lesson of the Saar.

The Program of the Communist International

Many reformists and centrists (that is, those who hesitate between reformism and a revolutionary position) in turning to the left are now trying to move toward the Communist International: some of them, especially the workers, sincerely hope to find the reflection of the October Revolution in Moscow's program; others, especially bureaucrats, are merely trying to get friendly with the powerful Soviet bureaucracy. Let us leave the careerists to their own fate. But we say to those socialists who sincerely hope to find a revolutionary force in the Communist International: You are cruelly deceived. You do not understand the history of the Communist International, which for the past ten years has been a history of errors, catastrophes, capitulations, and bureaucratic degeneration.

The present program of the Communist International was adopted at the Sixth Congress, in 1928, after the crushing of the Leninist wing. There is an abyss between the present program and that with which Bolshevism achieved victory in 1917. The program of Bolshevism started with the point of view that the fate of the October Revolution is inseparable from the fate of the international revolution. The program of 1928, in spite of all its "internationalist" phrases, starts with the perspective of the *independent building of socialism in the U.S.S.R.* The program of Lenin declares: "Without revolution in the West and in the Orient, we are lost." This program, *by its very essence*, precludes the possibility of sacrificing the interests of the world wide workers' movement for the interests of the U.S.S.R. The program of the Communist International means in practice: the interests of the proletarian revolution in France can and ought to be sacrificed to the interests of the U.S.S.R. (more strictly, to the interests of the diplomatic deals of the Soviet bureaucracy). The program of Lenin warns: Soviet bureaucratism is the worst enemy of socialism; bureaucratism, which reflects the pressure of bourgeois forces and tendencies, can lead to a revival of the bourgeoisie; the success of the struggle against the scourge of bureaucratism can be assured only by the victory of the European and the world proletariat. Contrary to this, the present program of the Communist International states: socialism can be built independently of the successes or failures of the world proletarian movement, under the guidance of the infallible and all-powerful Soviet bureaucracy; anything directed against the infallibility of the bureaucracy is counter-revolutionary and should be exterminated.

In the present program of the Communist International, there are, of course, plenty of expressions, formulas, phrases, etc. borrowed from the program of Lenin (the reactionary bureaucracy of Thermidor and the Consulate in France used Jacobin terminology in the same way) but at bottom the two programs are mutually exclusive. In practice, indeed, the Stalinist bureaucracy long ago replaced the program of the international proletarian revolution with a program of Soviet national reforms. Disorienting and enfeebling the world proletariat by its policies, which are a mixture of opportunism and adventurism, the Communist International thereby likewise undermines the fundamental interests of the U.S.S.R. We are *for* the U.S.S.R., but *against* the usurping bureaucracy and its blind instrument, the Communist International.

Organic Unity

We grant that the Communist Party even now is growing. This is not thanks to its policies, but in spite of them. Events push the workers to the left, the Communist Party, in spite of its present opportunist turn, represents in their eyes the "extreme left". The numerical growth of the Communist Party carries with it no guaranty whatever for the future: the German Communist Party,

as we said before, grew up to the moment of its capitulation, and even more rapidly.

In any case, the fact of the existence of two working-class parties, which makes a policy of united front in the face of the common danger absolutely necessary, likewise suffices to explain the aspirations of the workers for organic unity. If there were a genuine revolutionary party in France, we should be firm opponents of fusion with an opportunist party. Under the conditions of the sharpened social crisis, the revolutionary party, in a struggle against reformism, would unquestionably rally under its banner the overwhelming majority of the workers. The historical problem is not to unite mechanically all the organizations, which continue to exist as representatives of different stages of the class struggle, but to rally the proletariat in struggle and for struggle. These are two absolutely different and even contradictory problems.

But it is a fact that in France there is no revolutionary party. The ease with which the Communist Party—without the least internal discussion—went over from the theory and practise of “social-fascism” to a bloc with the Radical Socialists and the repudiation of revolutionary tasks for the sake of “immediate demands” demonstrates that the apparatus of the Party is completely shot through with cynicism, and its membership disoriented and unaccustomed to thinking. It is a *diseased party*.

We have criticized the position of the S.F.I.O. openly enough not to need a repetition of what we have already said more than once. But it is nevertheless unquestionable that the revolutionary left wing of the S.F.I.O. little by little is becoming the laboratory in which the slogans and methods of proletarian struggle are forming. If this wing fortifies itself and becomes hardened, it can become the decisive factor in arousing the communist workers. It is along this road alone that salvation is possible. On the other hand, the situation will be irrevocably lost if the revolutionary wing of the Socialist Party falls into the meshes of the apparatus of the Communist International, which smashes backbones and characters, destroys the power of thinking, and teaches blind obedience; this system is frankly disastrous as a means of making revolutionaries.

Some comrades will ask us, not without indignation, “Would you be against organic unity?”

No, we are not against unity. But we are against fetishism, superstition, and blindness. Unity in itself solves nothing. The Austrian Social Democracy rallied almost the entire proletariat, but only to lead it to ruin. The Belgian Labor Party has the right to call itself the sole party of the proletariat, but that does not prevent it from going from capitulation to capitulation. Only people hopelessly naive can hope that the Labour Party, which completely dominates the British proletariat, is capable of achieving victory. What decides the issue is not unity in itself but its actual political content.

If the S.F.I.O. should unite this very day with the Communist Party, that would not guarantee victory any more than the United Front guarantees it: only correct revolutionary policies can bring victory. But we are ready to grant that unification, under present conditions, would facilitate the regrouping and reorganization of the genuinely revolutionary elements now scattered throughout the two parties. It is in this sense, and in this sense only, that unification would be a step forward.

But unification—let us be clear about this point—would be a step backward, even a step toward the abyss, if in the new party the struggle against opportunism were directed in the channels of the Communist International. The Stalinist apparatus is capable of exploiting a victorious revolution, but it is organically incapable of assuring the victory of a new revolution. It is conservative to its marrow. Let us repeat once again: the Soviet bureaucracy has

no more connection with the old Bolshevik party than the bureaucracy of the Directory and of the Consulate had with Jacobinism.

The unification of the two parties would not lead us forward unless there is a break with illusions, blindness, and outright deception. The left Socialists must have a heavy inoculation of Leninism in order not to fall victim of the disease of the Communist International. This, among other reasons, is precisely why we are following the evolution of the left groupings so attentively and so critically. Some feel offended by our attitude. But we believe that in revolutionary matters the rules of responsibility are incomparably more important than the rules of courtesy. Likewise, we accept criticism, directed against us, from a revolutionary and not from a sentimental point of view.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

In a series of articles, Zyromski has tried to indicate the fundamental principles of the future unified party. This is a much more serious matter than repeating general phrases about unity, in the manner of Lebas. Unfortunately, Zyromski, in his articles, has a reformist centrist tendency whose direction is not towards Leninism but towards bureaucratic centrism (Stalinism). This comes out clearly, as we shall show, in the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

For some reason or other, Zyromski, in a whole series of articles, repeats with especial insistence the idea (moreover pointing to Stalin as original source) that “the dictatorship of the proletariat can never be considered as an end in itself.” As if there were somewhere in the world insane theoreticians who thought that the dictatorship of the proletariat was an “end in itself”! But in these odd repetitions there lurks an idea: Zyromski is making his excuses to the workers in advance for wanting a dictatorship. Unfortunately, it is difficult to establish the dictatorship if we begin by apologizing for it.

Much worse, however, is the following idea: “This dictatorship of the proletariat . . . must be relaxed and progressively transformed into workers’ democracy in proportion to the extent of the development of socialist construction.” In these few lines there are two profound errors in principle. The dictatorship of the proletariat is *opposed to* workers’ democracy. However, the dictatorship of the proletariat by its very essence can and should be the supreme expression of workers’ democracy. In order to bring about a great social revolution, there must be for the proletariat a supreme manifestation of all its forces and all its capacities: The proletariat is organized democratically precisely in order to put an end to its enemies. The dictatorship, according to Lenin, should “teach every cook to direct the State.” The heavy hand of the dictatorship is directed against the class enemies; *the foundation of the dictatorship is constituted by the workers’ democracy*.

According to Zyromski, workers’ democracy will replace the dictatorship “in proportion to the extent of the development of socialist construction”. This is an absolutely false perspective. In proportion to the extent that bourgeois society is transformed into socialist society, the workers’ democracy will dispense with the dictatorship, for the State itself will wither away. In a socialist society, there will be no place for “workers’ democracy”, first of all, because there will be no working class; and secondly because there will be no need for State repression. This is why the development of socialist society must mean not the transformation of the dictatorship into a democracy, but their common dissolution into the economic and cultural organization of the socialist society.

Adaptation to the Stalinist Bureaucracy

We should not have spent time on this error if it had a purely theoretic character. As a matter of fact there hides behind it a

whole political scheme. Zyromski tries to adapt the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat (which, according to his own admission, he has borrowed from Dan) to the present régime of the Soviet bureaucracy. Moreover, he conscientiously shuts his eyes to the following question: Why is it that, in spite of the enormous economic successes of the U.S.S.R., the proletarian dictatorship has developed not toward democracy but toward a monstrous bureaucracy which definitely is taking on the character of a personal régime? Why is it that, "in proportion to the extent of the development of socialist construction", the Party, the Soviets, and the Unions are strangled? It is impossible to answer this question without a decisive criticism of Stalinism. But this is exactly what Zyromski wishes to avoid at all costs.

However, the fact that an independent and uncontrolled bureaucracy has usurped the defense of the socialist conquests of the proletarian revolution testifies that we are confronted with a diseased and degenerate dictatorship which, if left to itself, will end not in "workers' democracy", but in the complete suppression of the Soviet régime.

Only revolution in the West can save the October Revolution from defeat. The theory of "socialism in one country" is false in every root and branch. The whole program of the Communist International is just as false. To adopt this program would be to throw the train of the revolution off the tracks. The first condition for the success of the French proletariat is the complete independence of its vanguard from the nationalist and conservative Soviet bureaucracy. Naturally, the Communist Party has a right to propose the program of the Communist International as the basis for unification: it could hardly offer any other. But revolutionary Marxists, who understand their responsibilities for the fate of the proletariat, must submit the program of Bukharin-Stalin to pitiless criticism. Unity is a magnificent thing, but not on a rotted foundation. The progressive task is to rally the socialist and communist workers on the foundation of the international program of Marx and Lenin. The interests of the world proletariat as well as the interests of the U.S.S.R. (they are not different) demands the same struggle against Stalinism as against reformism.

The Fourth International

The two Internationals, not merely the Second but also the Third, are tainted to the marrow. The proofs of history do not deceive. Great events (China, England, Germany, Austria, Spain) have given their verdict. From this verdict, confirmed in the Saar, no further appeal is possible. The preparation for a new International, resting on the tragic lessons of the last ten years, is on the order of the day. This mighty task is closely bound up with the whole progress of the proletarian class struggle, above all with the struggle against Fascism in France. To conquer the enemy, the vanguard of the proletariat must assimilate the methods of revolutionary Marxism, methods incompatible both with opportunism and with Stalinism. Will we succeed in fulfilling this task? Engels once wrote: "The French always take on new life at the approach of battle." Let us hope that this time we shall fully justify the estimate of our great teacher. But the victory of the French proletariat is conceivable only if from the fire of struggle there emerges a truly revolutionary party, which will become the keystone of the new International. This road will be the shortest, the most advantageous, and the most favorable for the international revolution.

It would be stupid to say that success is assured. If victory is possible, defeat too, unfortunately, is not excluded. *The present policies of the United Front like those of the two Trade Union organizations do not facilitate but jeopardize victory.* It is completely clear that in the event of the crushing of the French prole-

ariat its two parties will definitely disappear from the scene. The necessity for a new International, on new foundations, would then become evident to every worker. But it is likewise completely clear in advance that, in the event of the triumph of Fascism in France, the building of the Fourth International would encounter a thousand obstacles and would proceed with extreme slowness; and that the center of the entire revolutionary movement, from every indication, would be transferred to America.

Thus both the historical alternative—victory or defeat for the French proletariat—lead equally, though with different rhythms, toward the road of the Fourth International. It is precisely this historical direction that the Bolshevik-Leninists express. We are strangers to adventurism in any form. We are not talking about "proclaiming" in an artificial manner the existence of the Fourth International, but of preparing for it systematically. By the test of events, we must show and demonstrate to the advanced workers that the programs and methods of the two existing Internationals are in insurmountable contradiction to the requirements of the proletarian revolution, and that the contradictions will not grow less but will on the contrary continually increase. From this analysis flows the only possible general line: we must, theoretically and practically, prepare for the Fourth International.

Jacques Doriot, or the Knife without a Blade

In February there took place an international conference of several organizations belonging neither to the Second nor to the Third Internationals (two Dutch parties, the German S.A.P., the British I.L.P., etc. Except for the Dutch, who have a revolutionary Marxist position, all the other participants represent different varieties—on the whole, conservative varieties—of centrism. J. Doriot, who attended the conference, wrote in his account of it: "At the time when the crisis of capitalism offers startling verification of the Marxist theses . . . the parties created in the name of Marxism, whether by the Second or by the Third Internationals, *have all failed in their mission.*" We will not linger over the fact that Doriot himself, in the course of a ten year struggle against the Left Opposition, helped to disintegrate the Communist International. In particular, we will not stop to recall the sad role played by Doriot in the matter of the Chinese revolution. Let us concern ourselves merely with the fact that in February, 1935, Doriot understood and recognized the failure of the Second and Third Internationals. Does he conclude from this failure the necessity for preparing the New International? To suppose so would be failing entirely to understand centrism. Doriot writes on the question of the New International: "This Trotskyist idea was formally condemned by the conference." Doriot lets himself be carried away when he talks about "formal condemnation", but it is true that, against the two Dutch delegates, the conference *rejected* the idea of the Fourth International. In this case, what then is the real program of the conference? It is to have no program. In its daily work the participants in the conference put aside the international tasks of the proletarian revolution and thinks about them very little. But every year or so they hold a congress to soothe their hearts and to say: "The Second and the Third Internationals have failed." After having nodded their heads sadly, they break up. We had better call this "organization" a "Bureau for the annual celebration of a funeral service for the Second and Third Internationals".

These venerable people believe themselves to be "realists", "tacticians", even "Marxists". They do no more than to scatter around aphorisms: "We must not anticipate events. . . ." "The masses do not yet understand. . . ." etc. But why then do you anticipate events yourselves by declaring the bankruptcy of the two Internationals: the "masses" have not yet understood it? And

the masses who have understood it—without your help—they . . . they vote for Hitler in the Saar. You subordinate the preparation of the Fourth International to a "historical process". But are you not yourselves part of this process? Marxists must always be at the head of the historical process. What part of the process do you represent?

"The masses do not yet understand." But the masses are not homogeneous. New ideas are first assimilated by the advanced elements, and, through them, penetrate the masses. If you yourselves, lofty wise men that you are, understand the inescapable necessity for the Fourth International, what right would you have to hide this from the masses? Worse still: after having recognized the failure of the existing Internationals, Doriot "condemns" (!!!) the idea of the new International. What concrete perspective, then, does he give to the revolutionary vanguard? None! But this means to sow confusion, trouble, and demoralization.

Such is the nature of centrism. We must understand its nature

7. Conclusion

The Relationship of Forces

"Wait," "Endure," "Gain Time,"—these are the slogans of the reformists, the pacifists, the trade unionists and the Stalinists. This policy thrives upon the idea that *time works in our favor*. Is this true? This is fundamentally false. If in a pre-revolutionary situation, we do not carry out a revolutionary policy, then time works *against us*.

Despite the hollow hymn sung in honor of the *United Front*, the relationship of forces has changed during the last year to the detriment of the proletariat. Why? Marceau Pivert has given a correct answer to this question in his article "All Things Wait" (*Populaire*, March 18, 1935.) Directed behind the scenes by finance capital, all the forces and all the detachments of reaction are carrying out an unceasing policy of offense, capturing new positions, strengthening them, and marching forward (industry, agriculture, the schools, the press, the courts, the army.) On the part of the proletariat there are only phrases heard about taking the offensive; as a matter of fact, there is not even a defense put up. The positions are not being strengthened, but being surrendered without a battle, or are being prepared for surrender.

The political relationship of forces is determined not solely by the objective factors (the role in the productive process, numerical strength, etc.) but by subjective factors: the *consciousness of strength* is the most important element of *actual strength*. While from one day to the next Fascism raises the self-confidence of the declassed petty-bourgeoisie, the leading groups of the United Front weaken the will of the proletariat. Pacifists, disciples of Buddha and of Gandhi, but not of Marx and Lenin, exercise themselves in preaching against violence, against arming, against physical struggle. The Stalinists preach basically the very same thing, invoking solely the "non-revolutionary situation." Between the Fascists and the pacifists of all shades, a division of labor has

to its roots. Under the pressure of circumstances, centrism can go far in analysis, appreciation, criticism: in this realm, the leaders of the S.A.P., who led the conference about which we have been speaking, repeated scrupulously much of what the Bolshevik-Leninists said two, three, or ten years ago. But the centrist stops short fearfully when faced with revolutionary conclusions. A family celebration of a funeral service for the Communist International? Why not! But preparation for the New International? No, indeed. . . much better to "condemn" Trotskyism.

Doriot has no position.. And he doesn't want to have any. After his break with the bureaucracy of the Communist International, he might have played a progressive and weighty role. But up to now he has not even approached it. He casts off revolutionary tasks. He has chosen for his teacher the leaders of the S.A.P. Does he want to be enrolled permanently in the corporation of centrists? Let him understand that a centrist is a knife without a blade!

become established: the former strengthen the camp of reaction, the latter debilitate the camp of revolution. Such is the naked truth!

Does this mean that the situation is hopeless? . . . Not at all!

Two important factors militate against the reformists and the Stalinists. First: the fresh lessons of Germany, Austria, and Spain are before the eyes of everybody; the working class masses are alarmed, the reformists and the Stalinists are embarrassed. Secondly: the Marxists have succeeded in posing in time the problems of the revolution before the proletarian vanguard.

We, Bolshevik-Leninists, are far removed from the desire to exaggerate our numbers. But the power of our slogans flows from the fact that they reflect the logic of the development of the present pre-revolutionary situation. At each stage events confirm our analysis and our criticism. The left wing of the Socialist party is growing. In the Communist Party criticism is stifled, as hitherto. But the growth of the revolutionary wing in the S.F.I.O. will inevitably open a breach in the deadly bureaucratic discipline of the Stalinists: the revolutionists of the two parties will extend their hands to one another in joint activities. Our rule remains what it always was: *to say what is*. That is the greatest service that one can now perform for the revolutionary cause. The forces of the proletariat have not been expended. The petty bourgeoisie has not made its choice as yet. We have lost a good deal of time, but the last extensions of time have not yet been exhausted.

Victory is possible! Even more: Victory is certain—in so far as victory can be made certain in advance—upon the one and only condition: *we must will victory, we must aspire to victory, we must surmount the obstacles, we must overwhelm the enemy, knock him down, and put our knee on his chest.*

Comrades, friends, brothers and sisters! The Bolshevik-Leninists summon you to struggle and to victory!

A New Nerve Center of Imperialist Lust

WILL WAR, retarded in Europe, flare up in Eastern Africa? It is around Ethiopia that the great game is now being played, and by this fact, the empire of the Negus finds itself the nerve center of world imperialist lusts.

Only last year, on the heels of the so-called internal disturbances provoked, as will be recalled, by the flight of the ex-emperor Ligi-

Yasu, a press campaign of the kind customary to the "civilizing" powers was launched to justify the eventuality of an action in Abyssinia, or more exactly, as we shall see, in Ethiopia.

The present pretext for putting into effect the plans for expansion in Ethiopia (to win over the last corners of the Black Continent to the "civilization" of the imperialist powers), is taken from the

series of incidents which recently came to light on the frontier between Abyssinia and *Italian* and *French* Somaliland. Before examining the real causes at the root of these frontier incidents, we deem it worth while and necessary first of all to locate the position of Ethiopia in Eastern Africa.

The imperialist press—particularly the Fascist Italian press—speaks of Ethiopia as a country of brigands and “savages”, and consequently unworthy of belonging to the honorable League of Nations, within which, nevertheless, Ethiopia has sat since 1923 on the same plane as the “civilized” powers. In a word, the aim is to deny the Abyssinian empire any political or physical individuality.

At the same time that the government of Addis Ababa is accused of an inability to establish order in the country, the Abyssinian emperor is reproached for having subjected other Ethiopian peoples by force of arms. Reason enough, therefore, why the European imperialist powers, in starting to execute their plan for conquest, should present themselves both as the defenders of the oppressed native peoples and the bearers of the benefits of “civilization” in Ethiopia.

I. The Ethiopian Empire: Its Economic and Social Position. What actually is this empire of eastern Africa which is surrounded by so many legends and mysteries?

Ethiopia is a continental state, without a waterway to the sea, and whose center—a virtual fortress—is constituted by an overhanging plateau, with an altitude of a mile and a quarter, with deserts separating it on the East from the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, and on the South and the West from Kenya and the Sudan Plains.

The economico-social situation of this country would recall, according to some French colonizers, that of Morocco and Tunis before the French occupation; according to the Italian Fascists, that of a mediæval country of the time of Charlemagne. It seems to us right to assert that Ethiopia, like many other countries, is traversing a phase similar to that experienced by the capitalist states at the dawn of modern times. In this resides the most important oddity of the internal evolution gone through by this country, one which makes it possible to explain the “modernism” with which the present government of the Emperor Haile Selassie is inspired.

From the geographic, natural point of view, Ethiopia makes one think either of the position of Mexico, or of that of an “African Switzerland”. Ethiopia’s position is that of a tropical country (actually, considerably closer to the Equator than to the Tropics). But by its mountainous structure, it offers us the singularity of the cultures of all climates. Near the sea, in the torrid zone, there are the lowlands, warm and humid, unhealthful, not greatly cultivated or inhabited, the *kolla* almost a desert where the thermometer rises to 114° and even higher. In coming towards the interior, the climate becomes softer; one arrives at the lands of the *voina dega* (a mile to a mile and a half in altitude), an agricultural zone in which vineyards grow and the earth is fertile with leguminous and cereal plants. It is also the coffee zone, the land of origin of that product which has rightly taken its name from the “Kaffa” country.

From the *voina dega*, which is the most populated region for the reasons just mentioned, one passes finally to the cold lands of the *dega*, mountains with rich pasturage where cattle, sheep and horses graze. Breeding is actually the second occupation of Abyssinia, following agriculture. Animal products of any value include: ivory, wax, wild animal skins, which are the most important articles of export. In the line of imports, cotton, sugar, oil, etc., figure principally.

If it is true that communications and transportation represent

the most important index of the degree of development of a country, it must be avowed that Abyssinia is truly still backward. The only railway (486 miles) is the trunk line which unites Djibouti, a French possession, with Addis Ababa, the capital of the empire. Seventy-five percent of Ethiopian traffic flows over this line which is administered by a French corporation and has a stretch of 56 miles running over French territory. An automobile road (suitable for trucking) had been planned and agreed to by the Italo-Abyssinian friendship pact of 1928; but this road, aimed to connect Assab (where port concessions had been granted Abyssinia by Italy) with Dessje, has not yet had the work begun on it. The same fate has been reserved for another project for a railway agreed to between Italy and England, and aimed at connecting the North country with the South, from Massawa, through Addis Ababa, down to Mogdichu. As to roads, in the ordinary sense in which we understand the term, with the exception of a few miles around the capital, Addis Ababa, they simply do not exist. The Abyssinian mule remains the commonest and most practical means of locomotion of the Abyssinian plateau.

But it would be wrong to ignore, in face of this indubitably backward state of affairs, the steps forward taken by Ethiopia especially in the course of the last thirty years.

To the economico-social evolution of the country, corresponds a political evolution of the Abyssinian state, a new stage in which has just been marked by Haile Selassie, the present emperor, by virtue of his essay at a “constitution”.

II. The Constitution of Haile Selassie I. Ethiopia is the only native state of Africa, except for Egypt and Liberia. Some 350,000 square miles in area, it is populated by eleven million inhabitants who belong to 20 different races, speaking at least 16 languages, and having three religions. The most blended, yet most refined and most intelligent of all these tribes are the Abyssinians, who have given the Ethiopian geographical complex its unity and its political organization. Thence the current usage of calling the whole of Ethiopia Abyssinia. But the Ethiopian empire is not merely composed of the Abyssinians; there are the Gallas, cultivators of the South; the Somalis, towards the coast of the Red sea; the Dancalis, etc. The human origin of this whole mixture of tribes remains Hamitic, almost always without any Negroid character, and particularly pure among the Gallas.

Another singularity of Ethiopia: isolated in its mountains, it has remained a Christian country in the midst of Islam, having a native ecclesiastical hierarchy, one of the pillars of the empire. Slavery has been spoken of a good deal; but what remains of the régime of slavery today is quite different from the past: the slave is a part of the family of the master, on the same basis as the latter’s children. Upon the death of the master, he inherits a bit of ground and a part of the natural goods, and he is emancipated. The Arabian servants in the French colonies hardly have better conditions. The contingents of slaves who traverse Ethiopia to gain the coast, are, generally, Sudanese Negroes “picked up” in the Sudan and in English Uganda by European “whites”, by *civilizers*.

After the death on April 2, 1930, of Zauditu, daughter of Menelik II, the supreme power passed into the hands of Ras Tafari, now emperor under the name of Haile Selassie I. With the advent to power of Ras Tafari, everything changes in Ethiopia. To unify his kingdom; to exploit the country on the European style—that is the program which the new chieftain has assigned himself. All the “civilized” powers sent representatives and gifts to his coronation (November 2, 1930). Mussolini sent an airplane, *Breda 15*. A propaganda brochure announces: “Let Negus Tafari do his work: he will make another Japan out of Ethiopia.”

On July 16, 1931, Haile Selassie gave the country a constitution

which caused the "civilizers" to smile. Indeed, just as the moment when there is a mounting fury against Parliaments in Europe, Ras Tafari thought of creating an Ethiopian Parliament! The new constitution decreed the formation of two chambers: of deputies and of senators. The former, provisionally, "and until the people are qualified to elect them themselves", are selected by the local chieftains. The senators are designated by the emperor from the ranks of the dignitaries.

Haile Selassie bought back the old English bank that controlled Ethiopian finances and founded the National Bank of Ethiopia. At the same time, work went on to effect the reorganization of the army. The military organ of the Rome government gives the following data on the military capacity of Ethiopia: in case of war, there not existing any age limits, 30% of the population could be mobilized, so that two million soldiers might be put into the field. But the armament is still primitive: 500,000 rifles, a million side-arms, about 250 machine guns and 180 cannon. Further, the renowned horsemen of the Gallas. In addition, 5 or 6 armored cars. The only cartridge factory is at Addis Ababa, established in 1908 with French machinery. The air force is made up of a collection of the most diverse planes." In brief, the Ethiopian army, according to the Rome paper, is not a regularly organized complex, but an assemblage of armed men, of differing value and effectiveness, held together by personal ties and bonds of dependence.

Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that it was these poorly armed and poorly equipped troops who inflicted such severe defeats upon Italian troops at the end of the last century! Will the troops of Mussolini encounter the same fate found by Crispi's troops in the Abyssinian mountains, and is the dictator of Rome heading towards the fate of his Sicilian predecessor? The game is pregnant with consequences. There has been talk of a Belgian mission and of French and Japanese instructors in the army and air force of Ethiopia. One fact is beyond discussion: that the Ethiopia of today is no longer the Ethiopia of 60 years ago. Great steps forward have been taken by this people.

III. The Question of the Frontiers. Surrounded by European possessions, Ethiopia has more than half of its frontiers in common with the British empire, about a third with Italy, and the rest with France. For the Anglo-Egyptian countries, Abyssinia is the source (Upper Nile) upon which depends British cotton-raising. England seeks to have the trade of Northern Ethiopia flow through the Sudan to Port Sudan, which is equipped for the purpose. France holds Djihouti and the only railway that connects Addis Ababa with the outside world. Italy is installed in Massawa and Assab.

Just as an outlet to the sea is an elementary necessity for Ethiopia, so is the latter a necessity for the states holding the coast (France, England, Italy), because the occupation of the hinterland would multiply tenfold the value of the unproductive colonies which now extend along the sterile coast. For the last thirty years, conventions have been concluded among France, England and Italy seeking to partition the Ethiopian plateau into zones of influence. America too has intervened, and more recently Japan has manifested a special interest in it.

It is not, therefore, in the fixing of the frontiers that the nub of the present conflict must be sought, but in the competition of these various powers in assuring themselves the seizure of Ethiopian resources. Moreover, so far as the question of frontiers alone is concerned, the right is with Ethiopia, which efforts are being made to depict as the aggressor. The accord established between Menelik and the government of Rome on May 16, 1908 with regard to the

frontier between Italian Somaliland and the Ethiopian province of Ogaden, says in Art. 4, to which Italian Fascism is appealing for justification of its military action: "From Uwebi-Sabeli, the frontier continues in the northwestern direction along the line adopted by the Italian government in 1897; all the territory along the seaboard belongs to Italy; the territory situated on the other side, towards the interior, remains with Abyssinia." The wells of Wal-Wal and of Wader, by the terms of this article belong to Addis Ababa. Thus, if it is a question of aggression, then it is being openly mediated by the government of Rome which aims to annex the wells in question which are indispensable to the Ethiopian frontier tribes for the watering of their stocks. But as usual, it is only a matter of finding a pretext.

IV. Japan's Activity in Ethiopia. Japanese activity in Ethiopia is above all the fact that disturbs the European powers. Recent conventions between the Tokyo and Addis Ababa governments grant important advantages to the interests of Nipponese trade. But much more disquieting is the fact that the period of experimentation in cotton culture, conducted under the direction of Japanese experts, has just been terminated. Measures have been taken to promote Japanese immigration in order to develop this new activity. Installing themselves in Abyssinia, thanks to the exceptional conditions accorded them by the government of that country, the Japanese would be able to develop the cultures indispensable to their cotton industry, and would thereby be able to free themselves in part from the customs threat with which they collide on the part of British trade in India, as well as in England and the Dominions. At the same time, the import of cotton fabrics like *abudjedid*, utilized for the manufacture of the Abyssinian toga (*shanmas*), would be replaced by the home production of this same fabric.

Thus it is that around Ethiopia is unfolding a new phase of the Anglo-Nipponese commercial struggle on the world market. The Japanese seizure of those sources, rich in promise and possibility, represented by the Abyssinian lands, halfway between the Orient and the Occident—there is the fact that disturbs above all else the three powers, France, England and Italy, which, as far back as 1906, sought by their accord the partition of Ethiopia. Have they returned today, in face of the Japanese menace, to a new tripartite accord? And is Italian Fascism merely operating as the instrument to execute these tacit agreements?

Ethiopia is acquiring the importance of a new "Eastern question". The operations of Italian Fascism which, with the complicity of France and of England, has undertaken the task of the armed conquest of the Abyssinian lands, will be neither simple nor easy. These operations may arouse the entire Black Continent, especially Egyptian nationalism, which is striving to give leadership to the vast emancipation movement of all the Islamic peoples of Asia and Africa, from the Atlantic to the Indies. The Coptic nationalism of Abyssinia, despite its Christianity, might find powerful allies in this movement, which, moreover, Japan is seeking to convert, as in the Far East, into its own rampart against its European rivals.

The Ethiopian game is pregnant with consequences for the African map and the map of the entire world. Let us recall that the Italo-Turkish war of 1911 was the precursive signal of the world massacre of 1914. Are we now face to face with a similar danger in the Ethiopian conflict? Today, as yesterday, everything will depend upon the strength of the international proletariat.

J. T. MARTIN

PARIS, February 17, 1935

Labor in 1935 — Panorama & Prognoses

RECENT weeks witnessed some amazing manœuvres in the trade union field. The chief actors were the American Federation of Labor officials and the Roosevelt administration. The chief victims to date are the workers in the basic industries. There will be other rounds in the battle. These the workers will win.

The beginning of 1935 found the workers in what may be described as a state of suspense. A period had come to an end. They needed to adjust themselves to new conditions before entering fresh struggles. Employers were on the aggressive. The Federal administration was turning to the Right and abandoning any appearance of "friendliness" to labor. The A. F. of L. leaders had sabotaged the struggles of 1934 in steel, automobiles and rubber, but no alternative leadership was in sight.

But "beware the Ides of March". Fundamental causes of unrest had not been removed. The relief rolls were growing bigger. Prices were going up. Work was mercilessly speeded. Anti-labor sentiments coming from higher-ups in Washington created bitterness among trade union leaders and rank and file alike. June and the expiration of NRA were approaching, with the employers seemingly intent on wiping out even such meager protection as section 7a had seemed to afford. The automobile code had been reversed and the Automobile Labor Board was holding "collective bargaining" elections against labor's protest and chiefly in plants which were notorious company union strongholds.

Toward the end of March the electricity thus generated seemed about to discharge itself. The bituminous coal agreement was about to expire. The United Mine Workers of America demanded a thirty-four week and a six dollars per day minimum wage. John L. Lewis, the U.M.W. of A. head, of whom it has been said that he can strut sitting down, threatened a complete shut-down of the industry on April 1 if the demands were not granted.

A strike in coal would affect the "captive mines" of the U. S. Steel Corporation, would presently tie up steel, automobiles and rubber plants. The progressives in the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers announced that the steel workers would walk out with the miners. In Akron the rubber workers who had several times been on the verge of striking but were "dissuaded" by the A. F. of L. leaders, grew restive again and strike polls were started in their Federal locals. A spark, so it seemed, and the strike conflagration of 1935 would burst forth.

But the hour for the decisive battle in the basic industries has not yet struck. There is still room for trade union bureaucrats and capitalist politicians to manœuvre. The workers still have lessons to learn.

On March 31, John L. Lewis announced that the U.M.W. of A. had agreed to a truce with the coal operators until June 16, the date when the present National Recovery Act expires. At about the same time spokesmen for Roosevelt, away on a cruise off the balmy coast of Florida in Vincent Astor's yacht, let it be known that in some way—a little vague to be sure—the administration would support Senator Wagner's bill to "outlaw company unions". Also, Senator Harrison pulled out of his pocket a bill which had evidently reposed there since the President's departure from Washington, providing for a renewal of N.R.A. for two years. The number and scope of the codes is to be greatly reduced, but section 7a is to be retained.

How stands the balance sheet after these swift manœuvres?

1. The threat of big strikes in the big industries was used by Roosevelt to club the employers into accepting a modified N.R.A. and to prevent them from trying to abrogate every vestige of such

protection as had been given to collaborationist trade unionism as a "balance" to the vast impetus given to monopoly and to employer organizations under the New Deal. They have had to moderate for the moment their truculency toward both Roosevelt and the unions. They have, however, gained much. By June 16 the slack season in coal will be well under way, the peak of production in steel, autos, etc. will be past, unless an entirely unforeseen business spurt develops. The threat of strike in the heavy industries has been put off, perhaps for many months. As for a renewed section 7a or even the Wagnerian "outlawing" of company unions, the employers doubtless believe they can find ways to evade serious consequences from them, especially with Roosevelt and the A. F. of L. leaders to be counted on to check the workers' militancy. Such of the restraints under the codes as they disliked will be eliminated.

2. The great performer himself, Franklin Delano, retains his footing on the tight rope and bows graciously in all directions. He is still performing his rôle of keeping capitalism going, preventing the class conflict from breaking out nakedly, that is, saving the employing class from a gigantic assault by labor. The "friendship" with the A. F. of L. leaders which seemed to have been irremediably ruptured is renewed. The act in which "tough" John L. Lewis denounces suave Donald Richberg, Roosevelt's spokesman, as a traitor to labor is followed by an act in which John and Don have their pictures taken together.

3. On the side of labor, the dominant figure in the recent events, in addition to Lewis, was Sidney Hillman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and most active of trade union bureaucrats in the N.R.A. The Hillman-Lewis strategy is now clear. Since it will exercise a preponderant influence in the next period it is very essential to understand it.

They would like to see industrial unions built in the basic industries. They are astute enough to see that the day when the A. F. of L. can exist as a force on the ever narrowing base of craft unions of the skilled, is finally gone. They know that unless "safe" leaders do something about unionism in heavy industry, the radicals will gain the leadership. They believe that unions can be built only with government support. Another way of putting it would be that they understand that unions based on workers' struggles would have no place for them.

They hold, therefore, that for a successful organizing campaign in steel, autos, etc., some such psychology must be created among the workers in these industries as existed in the honeymoon days of the New Deal in 1933 when tens and hundreds of thousands of workers were enrolled in the Hillman and Lewis unions. The renewal of section 7a, the enactment of the Wagner bill, the abolition of the present Auto Labor Board, will, they expect, do the trick. To secure these they used labor unrest and militancy to produce the threat of big strikes. Having gotten satisfactory assurances, as they believed, they put the brakes on the strikes.

It is common knowledge that some weeks ago Lewis submitted to the A. F. of L. Executive Council a proposal to organize steel and was voted down by the die-hards. But the A. F. of L. will be forced under such leadership as that of Hillman and Lewis to make a spurious attempt at organization in such industries, or the present leaders will be forced to surrender either to the company unions or to a radical leadership.

Any such attempt on the part of the A. F. of L. will furnish a golden opportunity to a realistic revolutionary leadership. The workers in these industries feel that they need the support of the entire labor movement if they are to achieve organization. If the

A. F. of L. actually puts forces to work, they will respond. A merely negative attitude on the part of revolutionists to an organizing campaign, will not be understood by the workers, will isolate the revolutionists from them. In fact the latter must take the initiative, and that vigorously, in union organizing work in this period. This City a Union City, this State a Union State, this Industry a Union Industry, this Country a Union Country—these are the slogans today.

It is very doubtful whether the A. F. of L. leadership will carry an organizing campaign through effectively to the finish, even assuming that it will launch one. That is why the honest, fighting elements in the unions must be organized as an independent force to put vigor into the campaign and to carry it to completion.

It is certain that the A. F. of L. leadership will not carry out effectively the large scale, militant strike action without which no

union which is more than a puppet of the government will be established in the basic industries. If the progressive-Left elements do make themselves an independent and powerful force in the unions, and they will have only themselves to blame if they do not, then when favorable conditions again develop and the workers under the lash of the crisis are once more brought to the point of striking, a terrific battle for leadership will be fought.

Then Lewis, Hillman and Green will not be the only ones claiming to represent the workers in Washington, and in any case the decisive events will not then occur in the White House with the smiling Roosevelt presiding as the cigars are passed, but on the picket lines in the steel, coal and automobile towns, as the gas bombs and the bullets fly about.

A. J. MUSTE

The Long and Coughlin Movements

THE RECENT battle of vituperation between General Hugh S. Johnson, Senator Huey P. Long and Father Coughlin brought the latter two into particular public prominence. Apparently the choice gibes flung across the field attracted the most immediate attention and aroused the celebrated sporting instinct of the average American citizen. Johnson pictured the two reading a lurid story of an American Hitler riding into Washington at the head of troops and exclaimed: "That would be definite enough for Huey because he knows what part of the horse he can be." Long came back pronouncing his contempt for the "lately lamented, pampered ex-Crown Prince, General Hugh S. Johnson, one of those satellites loaned by Wall Street to run the Government". "What do you call it [the New Deal]?" he demanded. "Is it government? It looks more like the St. Vitus dance to me." The political padre rolled up the sleeves on his priestly robe and called the General the "New Deal's greatest casualty, who never faced an enemy nor successfully faced an issue."

In official bourgeois political circles the Kingfish had previously been looked upon as a bumptious clown, seeking mainly personal attention. Apparently he had not made up his mind whether to confine himself in politics to his personal domain, the State of Louisiana, where he rules supreme in the style of the late Tammany boss Tweed over what he calls "the finest collection of law-makers money can buy," or to aim for a broader national career. Little attention was paid in these official circles to Father Coughlin or to the pompous messages issuing from the Shrine of the Little Flower in the Detroit suburb of Royal Oak. Now they are taken seriously. It should not surprise anybody if the politicians of the New Deal already anticipate the cold shivers when contemplating the next presidential elections. Huey Long has announced that there will be a third party candidate in the field. While Father Coughlin still insists it is "Roosevelt or ruin", there are certain signs of a political affinity between these two master demagogues.

Revolutionists also face the necessity of turning their attention in all seriousness to Long and Coughlin. We cannot be concerned merely with their personal attributes and their demagoguery. More than that is needed, for they represent a specific phenomenon of the epoch of capitalist decline and decay. They have become originators of movements of a specific kind, corresponding to the conditions created by the appearance of certain elements of capitalist decay in the United States. What is the rôle of these movements represented by Long and Coughlin? What constitutes their class basis? In which direction are they headed? Do they represent Leftward movements—that is, Leftward of the traditional

capitalist parties—or are they Fascist movements, actual or potential? These are some of the most important questions that will have to be answered. It is quite possible to speak of both the Share-the-Wealth Clubs of Huey Long and the National Union for Social Justice of Father Coughlin in similar terms because in so far as their rôle, their class basis and their general direction are concerned, they have much in common. However, both are today still in the making and it is hardly possible to make a final analysis regarding their prospects and perspectives. It is therefore necessary at the present time to limit ourselves to a preliminary examination of their general background, their main trend and more particularly of the historical setting out of which they have emerged.

It would be false to set out with a preconceived notion that for reasons of certain similarity in demagoguery with the early Nazi movement, or for reasons of the distinct pro-capitalist and anti-revolutionary utterances of both Long and Coughlin, or because of their large middle class following, that they are Fascists or their organizations the beginnings of a Fascist movement in the United States. To the ruling bourgeoisie they unquestionably appear as dangerous radicals. It may be assumed with equal certainty that their present large radio following sees in them a hope of a radical remedying of what they call the social injustices and the economic maladjustments. And it is well to remember that the class struggle does create "circumstances and relationships that enable a grotesque mediocrity to strut about in a hero's garb". Under special distress the quack appears as the healer for the despairing. Economic distress helps to provide an audience also for the political quack.

The small business man has watched his shrinking volume of business with dreadful forebodings and he has seen many of his fellow victims swallowed up by the chain stores or squeezed out by the advancing monopoly concerns. The once better situated white collared worker has witnessed his life savings swept away by bank failures or has lost his home by bank foreclosures. Those still among the fortunate are fearful of the job which exists today and may be gone tomorrow. Of the general working class conditions during the crisis, it is needless to remind ourselves. Living in the shadows of economic insecurity it was easy to lose faith in the promises of a chicken in every pot and the great mass of the middle class and the workers plumped for Roosevelt in 1932. Now they are not so sure that Roosevelt remembers the forgotten man; nor are they so sure of his promises of a "more equitable opportunity to share in the distribution of national wealth". That wealth is available in abundance, they know. That the country can pro-

do. Their appeal is addressed essentially to the middle class, to the battered, smarting small business men, farmers and petty bosses; but their appeal is also designed to rope in the working class. And despite all that can very correctly be said about their directly anti-labor and anti-trade union record—which, by the way, in times of economic distress is easily overshadowed by the glamor of a panacea—there need be no doubt that at this particular stage they rally considerable support from working class layers. The Chicago Federation of Labor has indorsed the Huey Long program. Wm. Green gives his legislative labor record a clean bill of health. Coughlin claims a membership for his National Union of Social Justice of upward of 7,000,000. Huey Long claims a total of 27,431 Share-the-Wealth Clubs organized with a membership of 4,684,000.

Huey Long's program can be summed up in his proclamations for the redistribution of wealth. He proposes to reduce the big fortunes by a capital levy tax to a point where no one person may own more than from three to four million dollars and have a yearly income of not more than one million dollars. The surplus is to be distributed so that every family may have at least \$5,000. From his paper calculations he already sees \$165,000,000,000 available to be thus distributed with something to spare for a college education for all youth, for old age pensions, for reduction of the hours of labor to do away with unemployment and to guarantee a minimum yearly earning of \$5,000 per family. The agricultural problem he proposes to take care of in the manner specified by the Bible. It is all very grandiose.

Father Coughlin is more careful in his paper calculations of wealth. He distinguishes between money in its accepted currency form and pen-and-ink-plus-check-book money. Among the planks in his platform he emphasizes: Liberty of conscience and liberty of education; a just and living wage for all citizens willing and able to work—whatever that means. He proposes nationalization—that is, government ownership—of banking, credit and currency, power, light, oil and natural gas and the "God-given" natural resources. He stands for: Private ownership of all other property, in the sense of "upholding the right to private property, yet controlling it for the public good". Abolition of tax-exempt bonds, broadening of the base of taxation founded upon the ownership of wealth and the capacity to pay, together with alleviation of taxation. He asserts the rights of labor to organize in unions and insists it is the duty of the government to protect these organizations against the vested interests of wealth. In his radio addresses he adds that strikes and lockouts are absolutely unnecessary, which would strongly suggest that by his demand for government "protection" of unions, he means an actual form of state control, including compulsory arbitration. His program is quite vague and contradictory but this allows him to play on feelings and emotions and to appeal to all classes. It is particularly noteworthy that this self-styled champion of the common people maintains intimate contacts with Wall Street bankers in the promotion of inflationary schemes under the innocuous title of monetary reforms which have already netted him handsome profits in margin speculations in silver. But his bourgeois patriotism cannot be questioned. He broadcasts: "Let us build ten thousand airplanes to guard our coasts . . . to keep America safe for Americans."

"I believe in capitalism," exclaims Huey Long, "but you cannot stimulate it unless there is buying power. You've got to have a foundation under the house and that is a more even distribution of wealth." Yes, there could hardly be any doubt as to where the Louisiana Kingfish stands politically. He knows the power of the catch-phrase: "Share-the-Wealth"; but when he began in his own state and imposed a five cent a gallon tax on gasoline, there followed some conferences between Long and President Hilton of

Louisiana Standard Oil and after that the Legislature was summoned in a special session and rebated four to the five cents. On the other hand, in his own state, where he rules supreme, he has made no move to ratify the child labor amendment, or to enact old age pensions, or minimum wages, or unemployment insurance. Thus the demand to "Share-the-Wealth" is not meant to include everybody. Moreover, from his labor record the following facts stand out. The courts and the civil authorities of his state were used to break the strike of the longshoremens and to defeat the efforts of the textile workers' union to end conditions of virtual peonage in the Lane Cotton Mills. Huey Long is a staunch supporter of Governor Talmadge of Georgia who declared martial law during the national textile strike and put the strikers wholesale into concentration camps.

In this respect Father Coughlin's position is equally clear. He declares: "While I am most interested in the recovery of our nation, I eschew all radicalism, and desire only one thing—that we will restore the principles of Jesus Christ into practise." For years he thundered against the "red serpent" and later proceeded to build his church of the Little Flower with non-union labor, paying wages 20 to 40 percent below the union scale and flatly refused to deal with the unions. The San Francisco A. F. of L. convention unanimously adopted a resolution condemning Father Coughlin for his anti-labor stand.

The Long-Coughlin programs propose to redistribute wealth, to increase earnings so that higher prices can be paid, so that interests can be paid on inflated bond issues, so that dividends can be paid on watered stocks and the flow of profits continue, which is the same thing as to stabilize exploitation. But their programs also assume the continuation of capitalism, the continuation of large unearned incomes and of corporate profits taken out of the exploitation of labor, as there is no other source from which it can be taken. The profit system presupposes a return for the laborer in form of wages merely sufficient to reproduce his labor power and it would make the boasted of \$2,500 yearly income per family impossible. Their programs further assume the continuation of the bourgeois ownership of the means of production, i.e., the means of exploitation of labor. And it is this economic relationship that governs political action, which is another way of saying that those who own and control the means of production are those who rule. By virtue of their economic power they decide the elections in their bourgeois democracy. They furnish the campaign contributions and use their ownership of the means of production to control the machinery of the political state and to dictate the programs for those who are placed in its executive positions, thereby clearly determining whose government it is. Their power rests on their legal right to exploitation and their legal right to appropriate the surplus value produced by labor. These rulers are to be counted upon, according to the Louisiana Kingfish, to reduce and split up the large holdings of accumulated capital and to redistribute the wealth acquired by the exploitation of labor; in other words, they are to be counted upon to give up the basis upon which their economic power rests! They will not yield this power or yield any part of their privilege without a fierce struggle. However, to take up such a struggle is furthest from the intentions of the Long and Coughlin demagogues. It could not be expected of them. They have cast their lot with the system of privilege to exploit labor and they are a part of it. For themselves they have accepted a task which they proclaim to be the restoration of certain liberties and conditions existing before monopoly capital was known but which means in reality the perpetration of a huge fraud. Their self-accepted task is to buttress and fortify American capitalism for continuation of its ruthless exploitation while swerving the working class off from its path to revolution which alone can guarantee a redistribution of wealth

and social security.

With the world war American capitalism extended its economic structure to a world-wide base and became an integral part of the system of world capitalism. But its highly advanced technological development and the enormous overproduction of capital in the means of production serving for the exploitation of labor, subordinated it more directly to the destructive influence of the decay of the world capitalist system. The crisis struck here with greater swiftness and force and became more deep-going than elsewhere. And yet, while European countries have experienced revolutionary situations and Fascism, in the United States we have moved on a "normal" plane toward greater state intervention to strengthen monopoly capital. In the make-up of the large mass of the population there is no lack of ready material for explosive actions or dynamic mass movements. We need remind ourselves in this respect on the one hand only of the various essentially middle class and reactionary lynch mobs and vigilante bands. On the other hand we have seen the American working class, not yet conscious of its class rôle, but displaying in brilliant fashion its rebellious calibre and militant qualities in powerful strikes. But the actually revolutionary forces still lack development. We do not even have a mass social reform movement of the kind known in Europe for decades. Is it likely that such a movement in its specific social democratic form will become a decisive factor in the United States? Hardly. The accelerated contradictions of capitalism and the swiftly developing class antagonisms unfolding in a condition of retarded consciousness are much more likely to produce a special American phenomena of hybrid social reform movements. In the United States the capitalist equilibrium is not upset but it has been shaken by the crisis and the contradictions of the present economic reorganization. Elements of capitalist decay have produced their special American conditions and the movements holding out various illusory panaceas are thrust forward and thrive on the existing uncertainty and social insecurity. It seems that the Huey Long and Father Coughlin movements are destined to become the most important phenomena of this kind. Both of these representatives are playing with the idea of a third party formation—a third capitalist party with a perverted social reform program. Both appear to be its loudest and most spectacular spokesmen.

Other forces are heading in a third party direction. The alleged Roosevelt betrayal of his promises to the people may serve as their battlecry. In Wisconsin the La Follette Progressive Party is endeavoring to establish an independent state-wide base. The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party leaders, who are concerned about the farmer and labor substance only in so far as it means support on election day, appear to lend a sympathetic ear to the third party idea. It is quite possible that some such manifestations may also come from the farmer movements in the various middle western states and from the EPICs in California. Even the navericks in Congress are straws in the wind. Of course, it is to be expected that there will be more mutual dislikes than unity of purpose in such a motley combination. Most certainly that is today the attitude to the blatant showman style of both Long and Coughlin. But Huey Long, especially, is edging into a leading position and will surely be willing to trim down on the most jarring notes in his program to suit the more cautious among the petty bourgeois champions.

In this whole trend of development there is to be found in its outward appearance much in common with the old Populist movement and with later Populist revivals such as the La Follette trust-busting and government ownership movement of 1924. Although it calls upon the shades of this dead past to embellish the present endeavors we have here in the main an up-to-date edition of an essentially petty bourgeois movement of the lower middle classes for the separation of the liberal from the Tory. However,

in the process of historical development the progressive features of such a movement under conditions of capitalist growth and expansion turn into their opposite under conditions of capitalist decline and decay.

In a society where capitalist relations predominate there are only two decisive forces—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Politically the petty bourgeoisie vacillates between these two forces and is unable to play an independent rôle. So long as the bourgeoisie, under its "normal" and stable "equilibrium" and its uncontested leadership, can guarantee the limited economic rations and the limited privileges to the petty bourgeois forces these will support the traditional capitalist political parties. They will defend the capitalist régime and the conditions it imposes and often be ready to take part in vigilante expeditions against the workers in strikes. But at the time when this equilibrium is shaken, when their economic ration as a result diminishes and when a working class movement, able to give firm revolutionary leadership, has not yet developed, the petty bourgeois classes dream of turning the march of society backward to the orbit of small scale production. They will then listen most readily to the demagogue and rally to the movement that promises to reduce the big fortunes, to split up the big holdings, to bust the trusts and promise panaceas of social security that are unrealizable while the conditions of capitalism remain. Hopes arise that out of this they may restore their economic base. Futile hopes, empty dreams! In a society built around the axis of mass production, the only progressive feature of capitalism, there is no possibility of turning the clock of history backward and dismantling the technological advance. At best the petty bourgeoisie will in this manner find itself led by these demagogues through new and devious ways into a greater subordination to capitalism as its more pliant tool. If this lower middle class movement for a third party, if this American phenomenon of a hybrid social reform movement crystallizes and succeeds for a time in elevating itself into a commanding political position, it will be because the big bourgeoisie feels itself forced to utilize it as its Left wing to pacify, to deceive and to disintegrate the advancing working class movement before this movement can seriously threaten its power—before a civil war. This would not necessarily mean the strengthening of the bourgeoisie. Nor would it justify an estimate that would make the third party movement, or its specific Huey Long or Coughlin brand, identical with Fascism.

Actual Fascism signifies a condition of civil war on the part of the capitalist society facing the rebelling proletariat. However, out of the conditions of anarchy and subsequent decay of the capitalist system of mass production the working class revolutionary movement grows with greater speed and it is precisely in the dialectic relationship to this development that the formerly progressive features of a third party hybrid reformist movement becomes today a reactionary fetter. It will attempt to march ahead on the backs of the workers, attempt to corral them to its support by means of deception and thus function as a brake to arrest the revolutionary growth and advance of the working class movement. In this there need be no doubt that it will also furnish a breeding ground for Fascism. By its deceptive aims it will appeal mainly to the politically most unconscious, most backward, most indifferent and to the layers among the masses of the population that are most demoralized by the weight of capitalist corruption. In this sense its direction can be only anti-proletarian and anti-revolutionary and a preparation of the road for Fascism.

But, from this point on, it is necessary to make a clear and definite distinction. Actual Fascism will be clearly recognizable from its inception, if and when it does emerge. It was so in Italy and Germany. In each instance the Fascist movement was violent from the start and intensely nationalist; it militarized its followers and aimed openly at a national dictatorship. Terrorization of the

workers' political parties, socialist and communist alike, as well as the trade unions, break-up of their meetings and destruction of their headquarters with fire and sword, together with assassination of their leaders, marked the bloody trail of these Fascist hordes from the beginning. While the German Nazis campaigned violently against usurers and profiteers they shouted with equal ferocity for "the heads of the November criminals". Of course, they conducted skillful propaganda in the working class ranks against the wealthy, the usurers and the profiteers, built around demagogic promises of sharing the wealth, but there could be no mistake about their clear and outspoken Fascist character and aims. If and when it emerges in the United States we shall not need be mistaken either about an actual and serious Fascist movement. For, owing to our truly American tempo and proportions it will stand out here as a terrific monster compared to which its kind in Italy and Germany will appear tame and dwarfish.

It would be premature to attempt to make any estimates about the success a third party movement may have. Suffice to say that it appears at this moment more definitely on the horizon than the labor party movement that the Stalinists are trying to create out of nothing except their own tricky reformist concoctions to serve the foreign policy of the Soviet bureaucracy. Should certain successes of localized labor parties follow from these endeavors, could it not be expected that we would witness a repetition of the 1924 experience when the farmer-labor party forces went to the La

Follette third party movement? What the Stalinists would have aroused today in favor of a labor party would then be swallowed up by the Huey Long third party movement. But what would happen to the honest revolutionists who are clubbed into acceptance of the idea of creating a reformist labor party; moreover, what would happen to the Stalinist party itself? However, this question is beyond the scope of this article as is any estimate of what effect an actual war situation may have on all of these prospective developments.

One thing, nevertheless, we can affirm as an absolute certainty. The American working class will meet with new disillusionments through an actual third party experience and will have learned one more valuable lesson. Today the American worker still lacks political consciousness and he still moves in an ideologically backward atmosphere—an atmosphere of middle class ideology. But he is trying to extricate himself through militant struggle from his politically illiterate past and is learning to stand erect as a class fighter. Should we then try to outdo Long and Coughlin, and appeal to him in middle class terms? No, he will learn to turn with fury against those who try to hold him to his past hangovers. That can not be our method. Marxism must remain our weapon and our task must be to translate it into the everyday American language and root it in the American soil. Our task is to build the revolutionary movement.

Arne SWABECK

Marxism: Science or Method?

The Historical Limits of the Materialist Conception of History

II

IF CONTROL, then, does not rob historical materialism of its scientific applicability to any society, can the same be said for the second argument? Can one maintain that historical materialism necessarily limits the application of the term "productive relations" to the private ownership of the means of production? Or has it a wider periphery of meaning? The answer to this question is largely confined to the discussion of what Marx and Engels meant by the term, but, at the same time, we shall have to concern ourselves with certain important aspects of the materialist conception which Hook does not either consider at all or without proper theoretical emphasis. Without such additional discussion, it will be impossible to make clear the reasons why Marx and Engels used the term, productive relations, in a wider sense than Hook.

Engels gave a very clear formulation of the materialist conception in his *Die Ursprung der Familie*. He said: "According to the materialist conception, the determining impulse in history is, in the last instance, the production and reproduction directly of life. Both manifest themselves, however, in two ways: on the one side, the production of the means of life, of the objects of nourishment, clothing, shelter, and tools required to produce these; and, on the other, the production of people themselves, the propagation of the species." Up to this point, Engels defines what Hook calls the dynamic factors in society. But there is here a significant improvement over Hook's own interpretation. Hook relies only upon the productive forces, or rather, the "instruments of production", as the producer of changes;* Engels, more wisely, includes as well the reproduction of life. Both together act as conditioning factors, responsible for revolutionary changes in society.

The mere development of productive forces would not of itself be sufficient, as Hook admits (vide, chap. 12, sec. 1, on technique and economics) to explain the appearance of contradictions in society between the productive forces and the productive relations,

since the productive relations may be sufficiently elastic to adapt themselves to the changes produced by science and technology. Nor can the development of the productive forces be understood without the conditioning factor of the reproduction of life. It is obvious that in a society where the population merely reproduces itself from generation to generation, there is little or no change in the productive forces, nor is there, other factors being equal, any stimulus to make such changes. On the other hand, in a society which is constantly increasing in number, new methods and ways ultimately must be found to satisfy the needs of its increasing population; the mere multiplication of mouths to feed must ultimately stimulate the search for new methods of production or of improving the older methods. There is no doubt that the discovery of new ways of satisfying human needs has also the converse effect of stimulating, as a whole, an increased reproduction of the human species. Marx points out two effects of the development of capitalism upon the reproduction of the human species. In the first place, the "accumulation of capital" involves an "increase of the proletariat", for the growth of capital is impossible without at the same time an increase of the variable part of capital, i.e., labor power. (*Capital*, p. 672, Kerr ed.) In the second place, certain categories or sections of the working class, despite their "productive" superfluity, increase to a greater extent than any other section of the working class. This happens, in particular, to the partly employed. "It forms at the same time a self-reproducing and self-perpetuating element of the working class, taking a proportionally greater part in the general increase of that class than the other elements. In fact, not only the number of births and deaths, but the absolute size of the families stand in inverse proportion to the height of wages. . . . This law of capitalist society would sound absurd to savages or even civilized colonists. It calls to mind the boundless reproduction of animals individually weak and constantly hunted down." (*Capital*, p. 706.)

It is not our intention to deny this converse effect of the development of the productive forces on the reproduction of life. In fact, the reciprocal relation between both helps to explain why the latter must be taken into account in order to explain revolutionary changes.

Even the assertion by itself of the contradictions between the productive forces and the productive relations in society is inadequate to explain revolutions, unless the reproduction of the species is involved in the explanation. These contradictions, in fact, might continue forever, if it were not that the maintenance and continued reproduction of life becomes more and more impossible under existing productive relations. Marx clearly implies this in one of his letters to Kugelmann. He says, attacking Lange's *Ueber der Arbeiterfrage*:

"Herr Lange . . . has made a great discovery. The whole of history can be brought under a single great law. This natural law is the *phrase* (in this application Darwin's expression becomes nothing but a phrase) the 'struggle for life', and the content of this phrase is the Malthusian law of population, or rather, over-population. So, instead of analyzing the struggle for life as represented historically in varying and definite forms of society, all that has to be done is to translate every concrete struggle into the phrase 'struggle for life', and thus phrase itself into the Malthusian population fantasy."*

Marx here clearly asserts that there is a struggle for life in society,* or, to put it more Darwinianly, there is a struggle to reproduce and maintain the species. What he is objecting to is Lange's failure to concretize its meaning, to show the particular manner, character, and mode of operation of this law in various forms of society. With this conception, it is not a very difficult logical step to conclude that Marx, like Engels, conceived of the reproduction of life, as one of the two great agents of social change, the other being the productive forces. Under a specific mode of production, or more exactly, at a certain stage in the development or decline of a specific mode of production, the difficulty of reproducing the species, the maintenance and continuance of human life becomes so much more difficult, that those who are most adversely affected become more and more revolutionary. The specific character and form of these revolutionary struggles are naturally determined by the character of the society in which these struggles take place.

It can not be said, however, that Hook completely disregards the reproduction of life as a conditioning factor in the social order. But he mentions it, as if by accident and without the proper emphasis it deserves. He says, "At a certain point in the course of their development [of the instruments of production. R.G.] the changed relations in the forces of production come into conflict with existing property relations. At what point? At a point . . . where the great masses of human beings, out of whose labor all social value and capital have come, cannot be sustained by their own institutional handiwork." In other words, when the reproduction and maintenance of life is made more and more impossible, "it then becomes recognized that 'from forms of development of the forces of production the relations of production turn into their fetters'" (Hook, p. 137).

Engels, then, must be considered correct in adding immediately after the passage quoted above that "the social regulations under which people of a given epoch and a given country live, are conditioned by both sorts of production: on the one side, through the

development of labor, and on the other, through the development of the family".

No society, nevertheless, can be understood without considering the relations of productions through and within which the productive forces are developed and life is reproduced, since the latter can not be said to operate without restrictions, unhampered in their motion and effects. Hook, therefore, does very valuable service for Marxism in pointing out that a purely technological interpretation of history cannot explain all historical changes or deduce the "social consequences of technological invention" (Hook, p. 144). Still the very value of Hook's critical efforts leaves a mystery on our hands which he nowhere solves: to explain how it is that the productive forces come to contradict the relations of production? How is it that contradictions can develop, despite the fact that "the *selective application* of technical invention is determined by the existing relations of production and not vice versa"? (Hook, p. 143). Should it not follow from the very fact that inventions are selected in order to maintain existing productive relations that no contradictions should really appear? If historical materialism can not furnish a clue to this problem left unsolved by Hook, it is as useless as any of the other numerous interpretations of history.

No explanation, however, will be forthcoming, unless it is realized that the productive forces are often responsible for the creation of new classes as well as the disappearance of the old. It is these new classes who come into contradiction with existing productive relations. Tied by an unbreakable umbilical cord to these new productive forces which called them into existence, they come into conflict with and seek violently to overthrow the old predominating productive relations. Where they succeed a new social order comes into existence. Where they fail, the old society dies, and they, with it. Engels, for example, points out that the discovery of the arts of stock-raising, agriculture, and domestic handicrafts brought into existence the classes of slave-owners and slaves (*Origin of the Family*, p. 195). The discovery and the smelting of iron played a "revolutionary rôle in history" (p. 197) in dividing labor into two great kinds: agricultural and handicraft, which, in turn, created the two other classes of the rich and the poor, the ground for the fundamental antagonism of ancient Greece and Rome (p. 198). The development of the productive forces of feudal society, led to the appearance of town and new classes, the artisans, merchants, and usurers. The artisans underwent further subdivision of labor within their own crafts as their own productivity and the demand for their products increased; and out of this division, came modern class distinctions. The towns, in turn, made greater demands upon the country. Marx points out, in explaining the genesis of modern capitalist production in England, that the increased demand for wool by Flemish manufacturers, a demand, in other words, upon the country, led directly to the violent expropriation of the independent peasants by the feudal nobility, who sought, by turning the newly acquired land into sheepfolds and pastures, to profit by the rise in the price of wool. This mere change from the production of grain to the production of wool, turned, with one stroke, the former independent peasants into a new class, the class of free proletarians, ready to be exploited by the growing capitalists in the towns. (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 789ff.) Marx (Vol II, p. 122 to 277) also points out how the increased productivity of capital, the rapid expansion of the productive forces, the use of machinery subordinates first one section of the capitalist class to another. The agricultural capitalist becomes subordinate to the manufacturing capitalist, and the latter, because of the enormous capital needed for large scale machine production, to the financial capitalist.

The further development of the productive forces does not involve, under given social conditions, the creation of new classes.

**Briefe an Kugelmann, Elementarbücher des Kommunismus.* Letter dated June 27, 1870.

*In a letter to Lassalle dated Jan. 16, 1861, Marx declared

that "Darwin's book (*Origin of Species*) is very important and serves me as a basis in natural science for the class struggle in history".

It may only create new occupations and new strata within a given class or destroy old classes. This may happen because, under existing conditions, no new classes can be created or old classes reappear again. Modern capitalism, for example, is in such a position. All existing classes are being polarized by or forced into two crucial classes: the capitalist and the proletariat. The conflict between both, however, is not one between an emerging new class, based upon an entirely different system of production, but between two classes who emerged at the same time out of the womb of feudalism, for control of the existing productive system. The conflict grows out of the fact that the requirements, subsistent and social, of the proletariat can not be fulfilled under existing productive relations, and not out of the desire to permit new methods of production to expand. The proletariat, therefore, seeks to alter the present relations of productions which involve the fundamental question of ownership of the means of production, but not *all* relations of production following from the needs or requirements of a modern productive system—the relations of management to producers, of transportation units to factory and agricultural units, for these just mentioned are also relations of productions.

It is indubitable that later changes in the controlled society, i.e., in the proletarian state, will take place among occupations due to the changes in the productive forces of the society, changes which at times may require a complete readaptation and reorganization of the various productive relations (not propertial) and thus a temporary uprooting and permanent alteration of the customary modes of living. Without doubt, it will be at such times that the planned economy will show stresses and strains, contradictions between the relations of production and the forces of production; and temporary differences of opinion, organized into temporary groupings will make their appearance until the problem is on its way towards a solution.

With the mystery of the interconnection of the productive forces and relations solved, we can now turn to the business of explaining the meaning of productive relations, particularly with reference to the question: whether Marx and Engels ever identified productive relations with private property relations.

Earlier we quoted Engels as saying that two factors condition the "social regulations under which people of a given epoch and a given country live". Ought we to consider these "social regulations" as equivalent in intension to the "relations of production"? The only right answer is "yes", and the next section from the same passage proves this. Engels says: "the less developed labor, the smaller [*beschränkter*] the number of its products, thus, also, the wealth of that society,—the more predominantly is that social order seen to be ruled by sexual ties. Under this organization of society, grounded in sexual ties, the productivity of labor is more and more developed; along with this, private property, and exchange, distinctions in wealth, the employment of alien labor power, make their appearance. The new social elements, which are the necessary basis for class antagonisms, are forced, in the course of generations, to adapt the old forms of social organization to new circumstances. Finally, the incompatibility of both brings about a complete revolution. The old form of society founded on sexual relations is abolished in the clash with the recently developed social classes. A new society steps into being, crystallized in the state. The units are no longer sexual, but local groups; a society in which family relations are entirely subordinated to property relations, thereby freely developing these class antagonisms and class struggles that make up the contents of all written history up to the present time."

We must be forgiven for the length of the quotation, but quoting it was essential in order to show that productive relations, with

Engels, are not limited to property relations, in the sense of private property relations. The productive relations have undergone, so Engels asserts, considerable transformations in form. At the beginning of human history, the productive relations were predominantly expressed through sexual ties. Sexual ties determined the inheritance of personal property, the distribution of consumptive goods, the place and position of men and women in the social order; they determined the kind of work to be performed, and the nature and kind of punishment to be administered for breaking the social *mores*, and the manner in which decisions are reached on questions affecting the whole society. It required a considerable transformation in the productivity of labor, the discovery of new ways of satisfying wants, a revolution, in other words, of the productive forces, to destroy the old productive relations, and establish new ones based entirely on private property relations. The appearance of a new order of productive relations, expressed through the private ownership of the means of production, thus became the source for the development of class antagonism and struggle up to the present day.

Engels never identifies property relations with productive relations, for property relations are—to use Aristotelian language, one of the species of the genus productive relations; or—in Marxian terms—property relations are the form productive relations assume under a given system or mode of production.

A most interesting aspect, in a way, of this discussion is that, abstractly, Hook defines the relations of production correctly. It might appear, at first sight, amazing that he should have described them correctly and yet limited their application so narrowly, if one did not recognize that the verbal expression is often not identical with the meaning in one's mind. Hook writes, "the relations of production express the way in which productive forces and productive conditions are organized by the social activity of man" (p. 133). Thus in his own way he is saying that every social order, whether communistic or based on private property, has its own specific type of organization of the productive forces and productive conditions,—its *own relations of production*. Yet two sentences later, as if to assure the reader that that is not what he means, he adds, "Property relations are their legal expressions." It is because Hook never concretizes the meaning inherent in his own definition that he fails to see the error of his conception. And the same failure of concretization is responsible for his taking the well-known passage in the *Critique of Political Economy* as identifying productive relations with private property relations. But Marx here was obviously speaking of a society in which legal institutions, private property, existed; and for purposes of clarifying his meaning—as he so often did—he used what was nearest and most obvious at hand, the social order in which he lived.

If Hook had considered more carefully another passage from an equally well-known work of Marx, *Lohnarbeit und Kapital*, he could never insist that Marx sought to confine the meaning of the term, productive relations, to property relations. Marx says: ". . . the social relations, within which individuals produce, thus the social relations of production, are changed, transformed with the changing and developing of the material means of production, the forces of production. The *relations of production*, in their totality, constitute what one calls the social relations, society, and indeed a society of a definite level of historical development, a society with its own distinctive character." (*Gesamtausg.* Abt. I, Bd. 6, p. 483.) This passage could hardly be clearer in its implication that productive relations are not confined to property relations, than if Marx had explicitly said so. In saying that the "relations of production in their totality . . . constitute . . . a society of a definite level of historical development, a society with its own distinctive character", Marx clearly implies that the relations of production of a given society are only property relations, when

class antagonisms are well developed, or better, when that society is a class society.

If Marx and Engels, then, did not imprison productive relations within the narrow confines of Hook's conception, it must follow that they did not believe that historical materialism would be consigned to the purgatory of antiquated scientific theories when the classless society made its longed-for appearance. For them, at least, it would still continue to apply, even in that golden time, as an instrument for interpreting its past and explaining its future. All they would admit, if they were alive today, is this: that an *a priori* determination of the actual life of a classless society is impossible, apart from making the obvious truisms that it would contain no classes, that its culture would be classless. In other words, the special laws of its development could not be specified at present. But they would have one significant comment to add. That the classless society would have contradictions between the classless productive relations and the productive forces, is certain. The solution of these contradictions, however, would be found in other means than the class struggle.

Hook, strangely enough, takes the above position without, at the same time, admitting it. "The truth is," he says, "that the very possibility of human history, and the range within which human history can be made, will always be conditioned by natural necessities in whose existence man can have but a minor part." (P. 186.) This statement, as it stands, is only at best one of those trivial truths of which Engels spoke, but, at its worst, is one of those meaningless phrases which Marx denigrated so thoroughly. It seems to possess a rich kernel of meaning until examined; and then, the very breadth of its applicability reduces it to the unmeaning, since it does away with those essential distinctions necessary for any scientific understanding of the world. How does Hook's statement that man is conditioned by natural necessities help one to understand the way in which he is conditioned? Does this mean to deny that man will be conditioned in his relationship to the world of nature, in some other way than through his *social* control over the forces of nature? Shall we take his statement as meaning that man, in a classless society, will no longer be concerned with the problem of providing himself with those things which are, at that time, considered social necessities, neither with the manner of their production, nor the distribution of work and of goods produced? Does Hook mean to say that these problems will, in no way, affect his mode of thinking, that his conceptions of the world will, in no way, be the expression of the manner and means he employs to satisfy his social wants? In short, does Hook mean to deny the fundamental basis of the materialist conception, viz., that man's conception of nature is obtained, not directly through an immediate contact with Nature, but through the medium of productive society, which is the life-blood and lymph of his intellectual and moral system?

On the other hand, if Hook's statement is concretized, then it is seen to re-affirm the very conception it was intended to deny. If we ask ourselves in what way is man always conditioned by natural necessities, then the correct answer, the Marxian answer, comes easily to one's lips. Man is conditioned by natural necessities, only in so far as he is incapable of controlling and using these necessities for his own human purposes, when he is, in Spinozistic terms, the passive agent. But such control, socially speaking, is founded on man's ability to control the production and reproduction of those things necessary for the continuance of his social existence. This control, therefore, represents in concrete, material form, man's understanding of the world. The productive system mirrors, in other words, his practical success in understanding this world, and satisfying his desires.

This last statement should not be taken to mean, however, that

the productive system is not, in the last instance, the source and determining agent of his social consciousness. It only appears as the mirror of man's consciousness, when we approach the productive system from the subjective side, but it loses this appearance immediately, as soon as we consider ontogenetically the origin of man's ideas, and the methods by which they are tested and proven true.* Viewed ontogenetically, we see that the productive system, even in a classless society, is both the cause and the effect of man's conception of the world of nature and himself: the cause in that it is the source directly or indirectly of all his ideas, desires, hopes, and sufferings; the effect in that, through it, he is able to test and ascertain which of his ideas, desires, hopes can be realized; and which, if any, of his sufferings abolished or alleviated.

The failure of Hook, therefore, to concretize the meaning of "natural necessities", to ask himself in what way it would manifest itself in any social order, is the basis for his short-sighted denial of the applicability of historical materialism to the classless society.

Rubin GOTESKY

*It might be interesting to remark that one of the reasons why the subjective life of man is not a copy or mere reflection of the productive system is that it is composed not only of workable ideas, capable of application, but also of unworkable ones. Man's subjective life is an amalgamation of the true and the false, the real and the imaginary, as various, as strange, and as unexpected as the various forms of biological life. Nevertheless the external objects which have been so strangely and variously amalgamated can be selected out, even from the made dreams and phantasies of the insane and

given a location and a name. My meaning can be graphically illustrated in the following way. A good engineer could determine the general physical theories which are actually being applied in a given productive system by examining it. He could tell, with a considerable degree of accuracy, at what level of scientific consciousness it had arrived. But he would not be able to tell, merely from examining the productive system, all the physical theories held by the scientists of that epoch, for the number of erroneous theories or erroneous conceptions that might be mingled subtly with the truth are not calculable.

Gangway fo' de Lawd

AT THE Seventh Congress of the Soviets, a writer, A. Avdeyenko, delivered an extraordinary speech entitled "Why I Applauded Stalin". It was one of the highlights of the Congress. So profound an impression did Avdeyenko's speech produce that Molotov himself paused in his summary to take note of it. Said Molotov, "I do not intend to dwell upon the speeches of individual comrades. . . . I shall refer only to speech of writer Avdeyenko who . . . brilliantly underscored the great significance of our struggle for socialism, as well as the devotion to Soviet power, and the love for our party and [!] for comrade Stalin which permeates the toilers in their millioned masses." (*Applause.*)

The issue of *Pravda* (February 1, 1935) that carries Molotov's summary, also carries Avdeyenko's photograph and his remarkable speech. Exigencies of space and time forbid us to reprint more than the most exalted passages.

Immediately upon taking the platform, Avdeyenko said: "Centuries shall elapse and the communist generations of the future will deem us the happiest of all mortals that have inhabited this planet throughout the ages, because it is we who have seen Stalin the leader-genius, Stalin the sage, the smiling, the kindly, the supremely simple. . . ."

"When I met Stalin, even at a distance, I throbbed with his forcefulness, his magnetism and his greatness. I wanted to sing, to shriek, to howl from happiness and exaltation."

And so Avdeyenko sang, shrieked and howled. Said Avdeyenko

in conclusion: "Our love, our devotion, our strength, our heart, our heroism, our life—all these are thine, great Stalin! Here take them, all this is thine, chief of the great fatherland. Dispose of thy sons, capable of heroic feats in the air, under the earth, on the waters, and in the stratosphere. . . .

"Men of all time and of all nations shall call by thine name all that is beautiful, strong, wise, nad pretty. Thine name is and shall remain on every factory, every machine, every bit of land, and in the hearts of every man. . . .

"When my beloved will bear me my child, the first word I shall teach him will be—STALIN!" (*Frenzied applause.*)

The ecstasy and the feeling are unmistakable. So genuine, so deeply felt, so unlabored.

In *Pravda* of December 9, 1934 there is unfortunately printed a spech by the self-same A. Avdeyenko. In December, he spoke not in Moscow but in Sverdlovsk; not at the Congress, but at a meeting devoted to the forthcoming elections to the Soviets. He spoke on the subject of "The Intellectual". The same Avdeyenko—the same passion! We reprint here passages from both speeches.

AT SVERDLOVSK (Before)

I am an intellectual, I write books, I study, I am happy, I love a girl in a new way, I am expecting a baby, I live in a mighty, famous, gigantic land, I do not worry about tomorrow, I go to theatres, I elect my own government myself—all thanks to thee Soviet power!

Early in the morning I jump out of bed, wash under the cold faucet, perform calisthenics, and run up and down my rooms and sing and laugh from surcease of strength—all thanks to thee, Soviet power. . . .

I can be a real writer. I will I am happy, full of joy of

IN MOSCOW (After)

I am not infected with any disease, I am strong, I cherish in my bosom the very finest human feelings: love, devotion, honesty, self-sacrifice, heroism, disinterestedness—all thanks to thee, great educator Stalin!

I write books, I am a writer, I dream of creating a work which will never be forgotten, I love a girl in a new way, I procreate my kind, and it shall be a happy one—all thanks to thee, great educator Stalin. . . .

live in Socialism, all men shall be my brothers, I will live in a world eternally radiant and happy—all thanks to thee Soviet power!

I dream of creating something immortal, of flying to the moon, of circumnavigating the earth, of seeing socialism in Europe and in America. I am able to think so boldly because my creative imagination is not degraded by anybody—all thanks to thee, Soviet power. . . .

I am happy, I am bold, I am full of the joy of living, I am audacious, strong, passionate, curious, I have fallen in love with all that is beautiful, good and true. I resemble my comrades, and my comrades resemble me—all thanks to thee, Soviet power.

Etc.

Etc.

Etc.

Etc.

Etc.

Inspired to become lyrical ourselves, we can only paraphrase a second-rate English poet, and a great wit:

So, Stalinists, observe, a flea
Has smaller fleas that to him pray;
And these have smaller still to cite 'em:
And so proceed *ad infinitum*.

N.B. A. Avdeyenko's novel, *I Love* (thanks to you, O Stalin!) is the latest Soviet novel off the press of the International Publishers. The *Daily Worker* proudly quotes a reviewer in the English *Spectator* who insists that such a book "could hardly be dug out of the present-day Western society".

If Avdeyenko is half as expert at digging as he is at crawling—his novel will be hard to beat.

J. G. W.

The Native Question in South Africa

THE MOST striking feature of South African social and economic life lies in the coëxistence of, and contradictions between tribalism and bourgeois democracy.

The economy of native life is founded chiefly on the exploitation of women, who perform all the labor in the tribe and so acquire a market value as beasts of burden (under the *lobola* system a wife is bought for so many cows, etc.). All disputes that arise out of infringements of the rights of the tribal patriarchs in the ownership of women, children, cattle, etc., are brought before the chief for settlement, and the chief keeps order among the tribesmen because he possesses by native custom the right to fine any offender against the tribal laws. The cattle received as fines become the property of the chief and are the source of his wealth in the tribe. If he does sometimes give a part of the fine to the injured party, this is an act of grace; he is not compelled to do so. The wealthier tribesmen support the authority of the chief because this is the only means of preserving "law and order" in the tribe; i.e., the only means of protecting their property (women, cattle, etc.), from the tribal criminal (seducer, thief, etc.).

In this way, the chief represents the state power in the tribe, and concentrates in his own person all the functions of the state

apparatus: he is simultaneously law-giver, judge and chief of police: he is legislature, judicature and administration all rolled into one.

When the native territories in the Cape were annexed to the British Crown a century ago, the new rulers were faced with the problem of wresting the power from the chiefs and concentrating it in their own hands, and this object was peacefully achieved in a manner consistent with the cunning tactics of the Empire Builders.

The year 1851, a year of drought and famine for the Xosa tribes, was chosen as the occasion for making a most enticing offer to the native chiefs. The British government was to pay the chief a yearly income in cattle equal to the average amount he obtained from fines, and in return for this, the fines were to be paid to the government, whose representative, a magistrate, was to be present in an "advisory capacity" at all trials.

The guileless chiefs were tempted by this offer, all the more so because this year's income for them in fines was so small on account of the drought. And so they accepted. The magistrates were duly installed in the native courts. It was not long before the chiefs began to lose interest in the tribal cases, since the fines went in any case to the government and they received

their salaries whether they attended the court or not. And so gradually they ceased to attend trials and the magistrate became in all but name the chief of the tribe, concentrating in his own person the functions of the state: legislature, judiciary and administration.

In this manner in the succeeding years nearly all the tribes were brought under the control of the imperialist bourgeoisie through their magistrates, headed by the Governor-General. The native laws were codified for the guidance of the magistrates, and the chiefs, having sold their birthright for a government salary, were reduced to the mere figureheads which they are today.

There exists therefore in South Africa today a double system of government: on the one hand we have the bourgeois democratic system with its parliament elected by European voters, and on the other, the tribal system in which the magistrates have usurped the power of the chiefs and rule the native tribesmen by proclamations issued by the Governor-General, the paramount chief of the native people as well as the constitutional representative of the king—i.e., of British imperialism. The connecting link between the two systems is the Native Affairs Department.

But sharply divided though the tribal system is from the bourgeois democracy as

far as the political superstructure is concerned, the two are firmly united on the economic foundations, because it is upon the native population in the territories that both the mines and the farms draw for their "labor supplies". There is a profound and complex economic interaction between the two systems, and thus there arises the fundamental contradiction of South African life: the political division and economic unity of the two systems which in turn gives rise to the ten thousand contradictions that render the South African political and social landscape so bewilderingly complicated to all save those who have learned to employ the Marxian method in disentangling these problems.

In order to get a better understanding of the problems involved, it would be profitable to glance at the history of one of the conflicts that exist today: the Xosa-Fingo antagonism.

When Chaka was building his Zulu empire, the scattered remnants of tribes which he had broken fled southwards into the Xosa territory. The Xosas, themselves hard pressed by the European colonists, slaughtered the refugees as they came, until at last, when the fugitive tribesmen entered Xosa territory, they flung down their weapons, crying "*Siyamfengusa!*" [We come to serve!] The Xosas "took pity" on them, and they became the slaves of the Xosa patriarchs, and were known as Fingoes (slaves, servants).

In the wars that followed between colonists and Xosas, the Fingoes who naturally hated their Xosa taskmasters, became the allies of the white men, and helped them to wrest a huge stretch of territory from the Xosas. A portion of this was given to them on which to settle, partly as a reward for their services, but chiefly to erect a buffer territory between colonists and Xosas. A bitter feud arose between the two tribes, and with the passing of years the increasingly intense land hunger in the territories has not only kept the feud alive, but has added fuel to the flames.

Into these territories come the labor recruiting agents, and both Xosas and Fingoes are compelled by hunger and taxation to contact themselves to slave in the gold mines. Toiling in the narrow stopes where a man cannot stand upright, harried by kicks, blows and *sjambok* strokes; fed on a diet calculated to the fraction of a calorie; robbed by their wage being artificially kept at a fixed minimum irrespective of labor shortage; robbed again by fines, illegal deductions and recruiting charges, and robbed yet again by the concession storekeepers; deprived of the society of his women-folk, forced into sodomy and unnatural vice, with syphilis lying in wait, racked and torn by blasting accidents, miner's phthisis, entombment and sudden death—this is the life of the wage slave in the mine.

Against this background, the "treachery" of the hated Fingo is ten thousand times more abominable to the Xosa. And in spite of the mine officials keeping the two tribes in separate compounds miles apart, in spite of constant mine police watchfulness, there occasionally flares up a faction fight of incredible savagery. Home-made hand grenades are made by filling jam tins with metal punchings and stolen dynamite and fuses, and these bombs explode with devastating

effect amongst the enemy. Knives, *assegais*, bicycle chains and occasionally bullets are used. It is principally for fear of faction fights that such heavy penalties have been inflicted in the past for illicit liquor-selling to natives.

This same story, with variations, must be repeated for hundreds of tribal conflicts. "Old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago" find their echo in heavy industry, ancient tribal grudges are wiped out with modern dynamite bombs. In these contradictions we see, in fact the core of the "native problem". The imperialist bourgeoisie in this country is compelled as elsewhere to preserve the most archaic systems—in this case tribalism—in order to perpetuate its rule. The pious phrases of the bourgeois, with their "liberal" ambitions to "preserve native culture", to shield the "child races" from the baneful effects of civilization, to shoulder "the white man's burden", all this hypocritical talk means simply that the bourgeoisie is compelled through its insatiable greed for profits to hold the native peoples, deliberately and artificially, in a state of backwardness, because it is this very backwardness that enables the bourgeoisie to wring its super-profits from the toil of the native peoples. The bourgeoisie exerts the tyrannical powers of the native chiefs through its magistrates. It maintains the pre-feudal system of production for use, and prevents the development of any kind of commodity production amongst the native, for instance by refusing to issue to natives a licence to trade. The result is that the only way for them to raise the money to pay taxes is to sell their labor power to the owners of the mines and farms. But while the bourgeoisie strives to keep the territories intact and to hold back the progress of the tribesmen, at the same time it is drawing on these very territories for its labor. In this way it telescopes the development of the native people, it imports tribal problems into industry; it imports the agrarian problem into the mines, for land hunger is the root source of both recruiting and faction fights, and in the same way social problems are carried from the city to the territories on the tide of returning labor. Strive as the bourgeois will, he cannot both have his cake and eat it, he cannot preserve the tribal system and still use it as a reservoir of cheap labor. And yet in order to work the mines, he is compelled to consolidate tribalism. Capitalism has no way out of this dilemma—only the victorious workers' revolution can solve the "native problem". Only the workers' revolution can appease the land hunger of the tribes and destroy the basis of tribalism by destroying its economic roots—the primitive productive methods which the bourgeoisie deliberately fosters.

Because Russia was a backward country, because capitalism entered Russia so late, the development of Russia was telescoped. Russian capitalism began where European capitalism left off, the latest developments of mass production machinery were imported; as a result of this the Russian proletariat was more concentrated and a greater percentage of it was employed in large scale industry than in the more advanced countries. Thus the very backwardness of Russia was responsible for its achieving a

proletariat ahead of the proletariat of other countries in concentration and in class consciousness.

In South Africa, too, backwardness has occasioned a greater concentration of a larger percentage of the proletariat in heavy industry than even in Czarist Russia, more than half being employed in mining.

Bourgeois university professors in South Africa are fond of bringing new proofs that the native peoples are a child-race with many stages to pass through before they reach the level of the whites. They forget to take into consideration the fact that this "belated child-race" grows up under the influence of capitalism, that its growth is forced, that it telescopes some stages and leaps over others and so it achieves by combined development in a single generation a stage which the pioneer races took many generations to accomplish.

The same mechanical notion is put forth by the C.P.S.A. in its slogan of a "South African native republic as a stage towards the workers' and peasants' republic". The idea common to both is the scholastic notion that there is a kind of logical ladder of development which must be mounted step by step, and various nations are at different rungs, but the same intervening rungs must be crossed by each in turn to reach the top.

The falseness of this unrealistic and undialectical way of thinking is demonstrated daily in the development of the native proletariat.

In the recent strike of the laundry workers we witnessed the spectacle of bare-footed workers, most of them from the territories, and saving money in order to purchase wives when they went home, standing together in firm solidarity. In any similar group of workers in secondary industry taken at random, the telescoped development is likely to be found.

While the bourgeoisie cannot hold back the development of the inhabitants while they recruit labor from among them, the nigrophile liberals cannot on the other hand clear a path for development within the framework of capitalism. Only under the slogan of "The dictatorship of the proletariat, leading the oppressed of the countryside", can there be ultimately solved the racial, the agrarian and the social problems of South Africa. In our participation in the daily struggle of the workers and oppressed peoples, our practical partial demands must be for the abolition of the tyranny of the chiefs and magistrates, for democratic rights for Africans in the territories as well as in the rest of the Union, for equal right for all races.

R. LEE

JOHANNESBURG, December 1934

* * *

Due to the sudden illness of comrade Shachtman, as well as to a number of technical difficulties we were forced to skip the April issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. The addition of several new comrades to the staff has, however, been secured and the regular appearance of the magazine in the future is thus assured.

The June Number of the N. I. will be out *on time* and will contain among many other valuable articles, a new theoretical work on Soviet Russia by L. D. Trotsky.

BOOKS

Toussaint's Era

THE BLACK CONSUL. By ANATOLII VINOGRADOV. Translated by Emile Burns. 438 pp. New York. The Viking Press. \$2.75.

The revolution has need of all kinds of books. *Babouk* was an arrow shooting straight at the heart of the Negro problem. *The Black Consul* is a net that gathers up all lessons of the French Revolution in France and in Haiti, and lays them before us in orderly and related fashion. As *Babouk* is something more than a novel—a poem by reason of its intensity and unity—*The Black Consul* is something less than a novel by reason of its lack of pattern and development. It calls itself a “narrative”, which is fair enough, and it is certainly more than a mere history—perhaps the adumbration of a new art form—but still somewhat embryonic as form.

The moral of *The Black Consul* is that the French Revolution was emasculated and largely wasted by the property clause, especially, in Haiti, by Napoleon's attempt to restore property in the form of slavery. With that one more rewriting that so many almost-excellent books cry for, it would have been possible to draw that thread more clearly and perhaps to shorten the book—at least to pattern and shade it and bring it closer to an art form.

“For decades Haiti, the Land of Mountains and Mother of all Lands, was to Frenchmen a symbol of all that is horrible. . . . For seven years not one French vessel came near the island, and then the island passed from the hands of the French forever. The New France learnt to trade not only in black, but also in white slaves.” This was the hideous vengeance inevitably following the perfidy of Napoleon and the counter-revolution fostered by him.

The book is in three parts: “White France”, covering the time from the winter of 1789 till the deposition of Louis XVI in August 1792; “Red France”, up to the execution of Danton and Desmoulin and Robespierre's decree abolishing slavery in the Antilles; and “Black France”, up to the death of Toussaint L'Ouverture in a Swiss jail in 1803. As a comprehensive text book of the French Revolution, the book is as compactly and vigorously presented as is possible with so great a mass of material, but members of the novelists' union can still complain that vital material is no excuse for amorphous presentation.

Any revolutionist is bound to take a correct line on the Negro problem as long as he confines himself to Haiti, since the disputed points are automatically excluded by the situation. For instance there can be no dispute that an oppressed country like Haiti, should struggle for the right of self-determination. Vinogradov also correctly brings in the then pending Louisiana Purchase as one of the factors militating against French retention of Haiti, but he somewhat glosses over the indisputable historic fact of antagonisms between the Negro and mulatto

population. He would not have needed to do that—as the author of *Babouk* brought out, “a mulatto is a Negro with money”, and the antagonism was produced and fostered by the whites for their own ends—nevertheless Vinogradov softens the situation somewhat. On the other hand, he never misses an opportunity to show that all the antagonisms have their root in class and property relations.

Every phase of the revolution is presented, and it is both shocking and heartening to see how history repeats itself. We see every kind of wobbly liberal being pushed to one side or the other, the clarity of Marat and Robespierre, the wavering and capitulation of Danton and Desmoulin—again, in black France, the integrity and singleness of Toussaint, and after his abduction the gradual demoralization of his less clear followers—the degeneration of Dessalines into a butcher—(in 1804 he slaughtered many of the whites on the island, but not all as the author wrongly says)—and of Henri Christophe into a grandiose tyrant and slave-driver. These men in the service of Toussaint—which is to say in the service of the revolution—were heroes and useful citizens. Without their leader, cheated, bribed and made cynical by the wretched manoeuvres of Napoleon, they lost their line and became a menace to black and white alike, proving once more—as if the slave states in Africa were not sufficient proof—that the corruption is inherent in property and not in the color of the property-owner.

Although there is something a trifle sporadic about the appearances and disappearances of the characters, owing to the above-mentioned lack of a clarifying thread or patterns, the character studies for their own sake, both as portraits and dynamic developments, are excellent. But first, before dwelling on the excellences, one more qualification. The narrative starts with a consistently objective approach, including the appearance of Toussaint in the first chapter; then for a few chapters in the last part of the book we are suddenly admitted into Toussaint's subjectivity. Granted he is the hero and the writer is carried away by him, but this change of procedure is a technical lapse as inadmissible as a singular noun with a plural verb. So far there seems no good reason for changing the simple grammar of novel-writing.

The portraits of Marat, of Toussaint himself, and of the chemist Lavoisier, are especially outstanding. There is an interesting detour into the problems of a chemist sympathetic to the revolution. Lavoisier has sixteen marvellously equipped laboratories, in which he makes unprecedented contributions to chemical knowledge—but a good part of his income is from farming taxes. So eventually he gives up the taxes, although he has no doubt of the validity of his work. Some of the “rats” and aristocratic ladies are worthy of the best Soviet movies. And last but not least, a brilliant portrait of the mulatto Oge, educated in Paris and cut to pieces on the wheel in Saint Domingue for joining the forces of

Negro liberation.

The book is not an elementary one. It presupposes an awareness of and sympathy with the revolutionary approach—but how much easier the Soviet authors have it—They are writing for a trained and eager audience, and a certain calm assurance in their writings, a certain lack of the more fevered propaganda, testifies to this fact. They have incentive to go ahead with developing new techniques. Wut do they have time to read such long books in Russia? It would be just about right as a deck companion between New York and Saint Domingue.

Florence BECKER

“The Defense of Democracy”

THAT WAR is terribly close today need not be stressed to N. I. readers. Daily press reports confirm this estimate with deadly precision. Of cardinal importance in this regard is the attitude and policy of the working class parties towards their own governments before and during the imperialist war. The following paragraphs quoted from the pamphlet “War and the Fourth International” are highly instructive in shedding light on the Marxist position on this question.

* * *

18. The sham of national defense is covered up wherever possible by the additional sham of the *defense of democracy*. If even now, in the imperialist epoch, Marxists do not identify democracy with fascism and are ready at any moment to repel fascism's encroachment upon democracy, must not the proletariat in case of war support the democratic governments against the fascist governments? . . .

19. A modern war between the great powers does not signify a conflict between democracy and fascism but a struggle of two imperialisms for the re-division of the world. Moreover, the war must inevitably assume an international character and in both camps will be found fascist (semi-fascist, bonapartist, etc.) as well as “democratic” states. The republican form of French imperialism did not prevent it from basing itself in peacetime on the military-bourgeois dictatorship in Poland, Jugoslavia and Roumania, as it will not prevent it, in case of necessity, from restoring the Austro-Hungarian monarchy as a barrier against the unification of Austria and Germany. Finally, in France itself, parliamentary democracy, already sufficiently weakened today, would undoubtedly be one of the first victims of war if it is not upset before its start. . . .

21. “The struggle for democracy” in time of war would signify above all the struggle for the preservation of the workers' press and of workers' organizations against unbridled military censorship and military authority. On the basis of these tasks the revolutionary vanguard will seek a united front with other working class organizations—*against its own “democratic” government*, but in no case unity with its own government against the hostile country.

At Home

In reply to our appeal for pledges and contributions to help us stabilize the income of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL and to give some guarantee to the regular appearance of the magazine we received the following letter:

"Am enclosing check for \$10 to help support THE NEW INTERNATIONAL magazine. This theoretical tie with the world proletarian movement fills the spot vacated by the Comintern over a period of years. I am clipping coupons every three months from Soviet-American bonds and every penny of it will go to support the proletarian movement of which the Workers Party is undoubtedly the spearhead in the U. S. (Signed) A. F. Remus, Northville, Mich.

The following comrades, too, came through for the N. I.: C. D., \$10; J. E. W., \$5; J. S., \$1, all contributions from New York City. From New Jersey, W. G., \$3; V. B., \$1. Comrade C. J. of Long Island pledges \$1 per month; Comrade L. of Youngstown pledges \$2 each month and sends three months payment in advance. Comrade Remus, he of the bonds, pledges \$2 per month.

Comrades are still on the job increasing their bundles. Akron writes: "... We want 15 more of March issue and from now on increase our bundle of N. I. to 25." Los Angeles increases its bundle from 50 to 60 per issue. Comrade Davis of New Castle writes in to say, "We would like to have 10 more ... we want our bundle increased to 25." Washington, D. C. starts in with a bundle of 6.

The literature agent of the Cleveland branch writes, "We think the last issue of the N. I. is very good and will do our best to get subs and make sales." From Mississippi a comrade writes: "... comrades here enjoy their theoretical organ immensely; they are proud of it, and will do all in their power to build it and its circulation."

L. D. of California says, "Certainly is heartening to see another damned successful issue of the N. I. ... Interest in the magazine is growing rapidly." From Prince George, Canada a comrade says: "Received the March issue a few days ago. It is fine, keep up the good work."

A comrade writes in asking why this column never carries a knock and ends his letter with, "Is your policy to make each issue better than the one just passed? It certainly seems so."

From Connecticut we get a letter stating, "Incidentally, I missed the Feb. issue the worst way when it didn't show up, but this March issue almost compensates for it." A N. Y. comrade writes, "... certainly the most interesting radical publication that I know of in this country."

Our European comrades remain staunch enthusiasts of the N. I. From Copenhagen they write, "We received your INTERNATIONAL. Everybody who has seen this edi-

tion is really full of enthusiasm. This journal is one of the most important weapons in the fight for the Fourth International. We beg you to send us regularly 15 copies." A comrade in London writes, "The N. I. is the most popular magazine with our comrades here. When we finish reading one issue we find ourselves waiting impatiently for the next."

Circulation is rising; bundles are being increased; subscriptions are coming in; contributions and pledges are being made. We are forging ahead, but not yet at full steam. More in bundle orders, subscriptions, monthly pledges, contributions are needed to assure the regular appearance of the N. I.

THE MANAGER.

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